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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUSA URGES GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER THE
'PUBLIC INTEREST' DIMENSION OF THE
PROTECTION OF INFORMATION BILL

BUSA urges government even at this late stage to reconsider the 'public interest' dimension of the Protection of Information Bill to allay fears that transparency and accountability in South African public affairs would be greatly weakened by the exclusion of a 'public interest' clause. As economic performance and good governance are closely bound up with each other, BUSA supports the need for transparent government and supporting institutions.

In particular it is widely recognized that corruption is a serious threat to the achievement of South Africa's socio-economic goals and that the free flow of information is an essential part of combating it. The recent Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum listed corruption as one of the top four most problematic factors for doing business in South Africa.

In view of the joint commitment by business and government to address the challenge of corruption - which ultimately undermines growth, employment and poverty alleviation - BUSA appeals to government to subject the new draft legislation to a 'public interest' test. BUSA believes that such an amendment will go a long way to meeting the serious concerns that have been raised.

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