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FOREWORD

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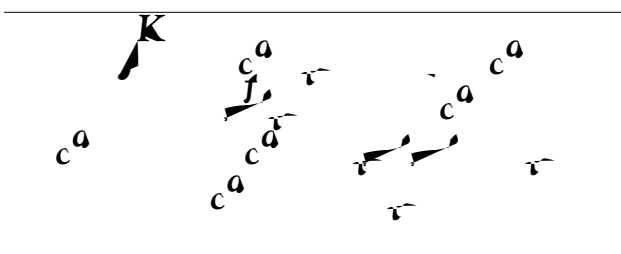
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ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION: AN OVERVIEW OF ISSUES

D. a da R bU

WHY ACCESS RIGHTS MATTER

Access to government information is a fundamental right. It is the right to know what the government is doing, and to participate in the decision-making process. This right is essential for a democratic society. It allows citizens to hold their government accountable and to make informed choices. Without access to information, citizens are powerless. They cannot know what their government is doing, and they cannot hold it accountable. This is why access to government information is so important.

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This paper was first written for The Carter Center's Transparency for Growth Conference, May 1999.

LIMITS TO ACCESS RIGHTS MUST BE DEFINED

As the Commission on Access to Information has noted, the right of access to information is not absolute. It is subject to certain limitations. These limitations must be defined in a clear and precise manner. The Commission has identified several categories of information that are exempt from disclosure. These include information that is confidential, that is subject to the provisions of the Access to Information Act, or that is otherwise protected by law. The Commission has also noted that the right of access to information is subject to certain procedural requirements. These include the requirement that a request for access to information be made in writing, and that the request be specific and clear. The Commission has also noted that the right of access to information is subject to certain substantive requirements. These include the requirement that the information requested be in the possession or control of the government, and that the information be of a type that is subject to disclosure.

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Access to information is a key to democracy
because it allows citizens to know what their
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ACCESS TO INFORMATION: HOW IS IT USEFUL AND HOW IS IT USED?

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INFORMATION, DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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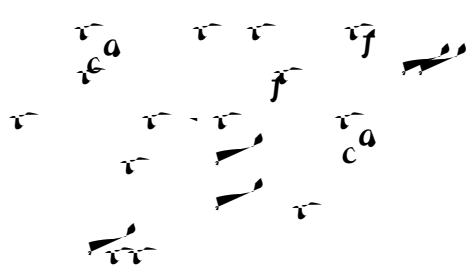
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[Illegible musical notation]

CONCLUSION

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**THE CARTER CENTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROJECT:
JAMAICA CASE STUDY**

Lara A. A.

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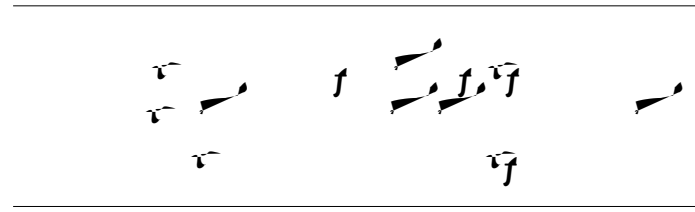
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CONCLUSION

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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The Access to Information Act (ATI) is a landmark piece of legislation that grants citizens the right to know what the government is doing. It was enacted in 1986 and has since been amended several times to strengthen its provisions and address emerging issues. The Act applies to all federal government departments and agencies, as well as certain provincial and municipal governments. It provides a framework for the disclosure of information held by government bodies, subject to certain exemptions for national security, privacy, and other legitimate concerns. The ATI has been instrumental in promoting transparency and accountability in government operations, allowing citizens to make more informed decisions about public affairs.

The Access to Information Act (ATI) was introduced in 1986, following a long process of consultation and debate. It was a response to growing public demand for greater openness and accountability from the government. The Act established the Access to Information Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Act and resolving complaints. Over the years, the Act has been amended to improve the disclosure process and to address new challenges. For example, the 1993 amendments introduced the concept of "harm" as a basis for exemption, and the 1996 amendments clarified the rules regarding access to records. The Act remains a cornerstone of the Canadian democratic process, ensuring that the public has the right to know what its government is doing.

The Access to Information Act (ATI) is a key component of the Canadian democratic process. It provides citizens with the right to know what the government is doing, which is essential for informed participation in public life. The Act has been instrumental in promoting transparency and accountability in government operations, allowing citizens to make more informed decisions about public affairs. The Act applies to all federal government departments and agencies, as well as certain provincial and municipal governments. It provides a framework for the disclosure of information held by government bodies, subject to certain exemptions for national security, privacy, and other legitimate concerns. The ATI has been instrumental in promoting transparency and accountability in government operations, allowing citizens to make more informed decisions about public affairs.

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THE CARTER CENTER AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS THE CARTER CENTER?

The Carter Center was established in 1982 as a non-profit organization. It is a 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to promoting democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution. The Center is named after Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, who were instrumental in its founding. The Center's mission is to advance the principles of democracy and human rights through a variety of programs and activities. The Center has a long history of working with governments and civil society to promote democratic reforms and human rights. The Center's work is based on the belief that democracy and human rights are essential for a just and peaceful world.

WHAT HAS THE CENTER ACHIEVED IN 20 YEARS?

In its 20 years of existence, the Carter Center has achieved a wide range of accomplishments. The Center has supported the development of democratic institutions and processes in over 100 countries. The Center has also been instrumental in the resolution of conflicts and the promotion of human rights. The Center has provided technical assistance and training to government officials and civil society leaders. The Center has also been a leading voice in the international community on issues of democracy and human rights. The Center's work has been recognized by the United States and other countries. The Center has received numerous awards and honors for its work. The Center's impact has been significant and far-reaching. The Center's work has helped to advance the principles of democracy and human rights around the world. The Center's achievements in 20 years are a testament to its commitment to these principles and its dedication to promoting a better world for all.

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HOW IS THE CENTER STAFFED AND FUNDED?

The Carter Center is staffed by a team of experts in democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution. The Center has a staff of approximately 150 people, including a large number of volunteers. The Center is funded by a variety of sources, including the United States and other countries. The Center's annual budget is approximately \$34 million. The Center's funding is used to support its programs and activities. The Center's work is based on the belief that democracy and human rights are essential for a just and peaceful world. The Center's funding is a testament to the support of the United States and other countries for the principles of democracy and human rights.

WHERE IS THE CENTER LOCATED?

The Carter Center is located in Atlanta, Georgia. The Center's headquarters is at 100 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30309. The Center also has a presence in other parts of the world, including Washington, D.C., and various international locations. The Center's work is based on the belief that democracy and human rights are essential for a just and peaceful world. The Center's location in Atlanta, Georgia, is a testament to the support of the United States for the principles of democracy and human rights.