



# NDI-LIBERIA E-NEWSLETTER

**Working for Democracy  
and Making Democracy  
Work**



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## **Should a New Elections Law Include an Independent Court for Electoral Complaints?**

On September 19<sup>th</sup> NDI convened a well-attended policy seminar for legislators on Elections Law Reform. After the elections of last year, many suggestions for improvement were made. NDI's seminar focused on important topics the Legislature might take into account when the law is reviewed.

The special guest at the seminar was *Olufunto Akinduro*, from the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). She shared best practices from other African countries and called on lawmakers to cooperate on electoral reform with the National Elections Commission, civil society organizations and international partners. Representative *Gabriel Smith* (Chair of the House Committee on Elections and Inauguration) tabled some concrete proposals, such as an alternative method for selecting members of the Elections Commission, which would regulate presidential appointments. Senator *Jewel Howard Taylor* (Chair of the Senate Committee on Autonomous Commissions and Agencies) proposed essential reforms as those that would promote the full participation of women and provide for a continuous civic education program. The National Elections Commission was represented by *Josiah Joekai* who discussed the NEC's recent public consultations in five counties to gather wide input. It was reported that the consultations heard many calls for establishment of an electoral court to review complaints, completely independent of the NEC.

Representatives of six political parties made presentations on the role of parties in the electoral

## **Legislative Spotlight**

*Every Wednesday  
Truth FM - 96.1  
11:00 - 12:00 am*

- *10 October: Elections Law Reform*
- *17 October: The Women's Participation Bill*
- *24 October: The Legislature's Modernization Plan*
- *31 October: Topic to be determined*



process. The liveliest discussion was on the topic of public funding of political parties. While all parties agreed on the need for such a law, there were differing views on how the law could be implemented. Akinduro's presentation also raised questions about what the funding should be used for. Should such funding only be used for strengthening policy making within parties, democratizing their internal structures, and skill training for their partisans, or should it also be used for election campaigns?

If you wish to receive a summary report of the seminar by e-mail, please contact Nannoh Seekey: [nseekey@ndi.org](mailto:nseekey@ndi.org).

### Know Your Lawmakers!

NDI has compiled a directory of the members of the House and Senate. The directory was distributed to legislators and their staff, ministries, local civil society organisations, and international organizations. The directory will also be available online on the Legislature's website: <http://legislature.gov.lr>



*Lawmakers and participants at the elections law policy seminar*



*A housing project in Buchanan*



*Lawmakers at the housing investigation mission in WestPoint*

## Legislators' Investigation Mission on Affordable and Adequate Housing

In September an investigation mission of the Legislature, in partnership with NDI, examined housing conditions of low income earners in the country. The goal was to gather evidence that will lead to improved policy and lawmaking in the housing sector. Members of the mission were Sen. Peter Coleman, Sen. Oscar A. Cooper, Rep. Johnson Toe Chea, Rep. Munah Pelham and Rep. Charles Bardyl.

The mission undertook consultations on many levels to understand the nature of the housing problem and its possible solutions. Lawmakers spoke with the National Housing Authority, the National Social Security and Welfare Cooperation, the Liberian Bank for Development and Investment, the Ministry of Public Works, and County Superintendents from Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Bomi. The mission also visited housing projects in Buchanan and Schiefflin Town, as well as in the biggest slum in Liberia in WestPoint, Monrovia, where 70,000 people live.

The legislators' mission explored the wide variety of problems associated with the need for affordable and adequate housing, such as overcrowding, lack of water, electricity and sanitation, availability of construction materials, land access, squatting and dispute resolution, and challenges in the rental sector and financing. The mission was assisted by experts who will further assist lawmakers to develop proposals to improve housing conditions in Liberia.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> of October**  
**Policy Seminar on Youth Development and Job Creation**

- What policies and laws can be put in place to create more jobs for young people in Liberia?
- How can the government pay more attention to the position of youth?
- How can government motivate private companies to take up their responsibilities to create more opportunities for youth?
- How can laws and policies reach the most vulnerable youth?
- Which youth activities and services are most essential?
- How can the Legislature enhance youth participation in policymaking?

These and other questions will be addressed at NDI's upcoming policy seminar on *Youth Development and Job Creation*. If you would like to participate, please send an e-mail to Nannoh Seekey: [nseekey@ndi.org](mailto:nseekey@ndi.org). Confirmed participants will receive a Reader with very useful background information and the definitive seminar program.

**Useful Links**

- [The Legislature's Modernization Plan, 2009-2013](#)
- [How Laws Are Made](#)
- [The Constitution of Liberia](#)
- [News from the Senate and House of Representatives](#)



- [The National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government](#)
- [Find your Representative](#)
- [Find your Senator](#)



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