

USA Congressional Delegation Tours NEC Headquarters

(NEC, Monrovia, July 6, 2010) A Congressional delegation from the United States Congress and their spouses on Tuesday paid a working visit to the National Elections Commission (NEC) headquarters to familiarize themselves with the inner workings of the Commission.

During the visit, the Acting Chairman of the Commission, Cllr. Elizabeth J. Nelson briefed the delegation on preparations the Commission is making for the Electoral Boundary Delimitation, Voter Registration and the 2011 elections. Cllr. Nelson also informed the Congressional delegation of challenges the NEC is faced with such as the non-passage of key electoral bills, including the population Threshold Bill currently docked at the National Legislature.

Cllr. Nelson alerted the delegation on work done on the harmonization of the local boundary structures, the drafting of key electoral bills and their submission to the National Legislature and the ongoing preparatory work for the pending voter registration.

The NEC Acting Chairman used the occasion to extend gratitude to the Government and people of America for their continuous support to the building of democracy in Liberia. She singled out the US\$17.5 million five-year electoral support grant that is being managed by USAID and implemented by IFES and the construction of a modern office complex for the NEC, the release said.

Also making remarks during the US Congressional team visitation was the Country Director of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES/ Liberia), Shalva Kipshidze. Mr. Kipshidze said, IFES was working in close collaboration with the NEC to set up the Information Technology Section of the NEC, because, according to him, the Information Technology section is very critical in electioneering, especially when it comes to tallying and tabulation of results. The IFES boss also indicated that IFES was partnering with the NEC in sourcing and procuring election equipment and materials.

The visiting US Congressional delegation, headed by David Price expressed gratitude to the NEC family for keeping the flames of democracy burning and said the experience learned from their visit with the NEC was invaluable and will impact their work when they return to the United States.

Immediately following the briefing section, the delegation was taking on a guided tour of the NEC new headquarters. The new office complex of the electoral management body of the Republic of Liberia, NEC, was recently

constructed at a cost of over three million United States by the US Dollars by the US Government and turned over the Government of Liberia in March 2010.

Since the turning over of the NEC new office complex, this is the first high power delegation from the US government to pay a familiarization visit to the NEC new office complex.