NEC and Registered Political Parties Sign Memorandum Of Understanding To Bolster Existing Relationship

(Monrovia, February 19, 2016); The National Elections Commission (NEC) and the 20 registered political parties in the country have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Monrovia.

The MOU was signed Friday, February 19, 2016 at the headquarters of the Commission.

The MOU is aimed at encouraging and promoting consensus building between and among political parties and the Commission through the February 2005 institutional framework known and referred to as the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC).

The MOU also provides the platform for structured and multi-party dialogue between political parties and the commission on issues relating to the organization
and conduct of elections and the general electoral environment as well as advance the efforts of the IPCC by establishing an inter-party dialogue environment for political parties.

Under the terms of the MOU, political parties and the Commission will identify the gaps and shortcomings in the laws and procedures governing the electoral process and adopt a consultative and proactive approach in making suggestions for improvements.

The Inter-Party Consultative Committee will seek support from local and international partners in order to build the capacity of Liberian Political parties and promulgate a new code of conduct which will guide the behavior of political parties and their supporters before, during, and after elections.

Under the terms of the MOU, each political party will be represented at the IPCC by two executive committee members, one of whom must be a female; meetings of the IPCC would be held once every two months in non-election years and once a month during election years.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Chairman of the National Elections Commission (NEC) Cllr. Jerome G. Korkoya said the critical responsibilities of every EMB are the commitment to the management of free, fair, credible and peaceful elections and the development of appropriate strategies or platforms to interact with and increase collaboration with political parties.

The NEC Boss said it is in this regard that the NEC, in its six-year strategic plan (2012-2018) identified as one of its pillars, the strengthening of political parties and their relations with the Commission with the aim of enhancing the integrity of the electoral process.

He said to achieve this plan, the Commission, with support from its partners, established the IPCC as a framework for collaboration between political parties and itself in February 2005.

Chairman Korkoya said since its establishment, the IPCC has served as a very useful tool for conflict management and information sharing between and among political parties on the one hand and the political parties and the Commission on the other.
“The IPCC has brought political parties and the Commission together to identify challenges in the electoral process and where legally feasible, find a common solution. Our experience with the IPCC arrangement has shown that when political parties and the Commission work together, it reduces suspicion and promotes trust and cooperation,” The NEC Boss said.

He stated that the idea of establishing a platform of this nature is not new in emerging democracies. He named Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mali, Zambia, Ghana and Uganda as countries in which platforms of similar nature exist.

“The signing of this revised MOU could not have come at a better time than now. As we prepare for the conduct of a crucial Representative and Presidential Election in 2017, the Commission is of the view that this forum (the IPCC) will provide the avenue whereby the Commission and Political Parties will be able to identify short comings in the electoral process and work together to correct those shortcomings. Working closely with political parties in such manner will not only help to foster a sense of ownership of the electoral process but will also reduce, if not totally prevent, mistrust and complaints triggered by the lack of understanding of the process,” Chairman Korkoya Concluded.

In attendance at the signing ceremony were the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Farid Zarif, European Union Ambassador to Liberia, Tiina Intelmann, Information Minister Eugene Lenn Nagbe, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Elections and Inauguration, Representative Gabriel Buchanan Smith, and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Public and Autonomous Agencies, Senator Jonathan Kaipaye, among others.

The MOU was witnessed by the UNDP and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The process was supported by the European Union (EU) through UNDP and the USAID through IFES.