

For Immediate Release

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-For Midterm Senatorial Elections

ECC CALLS FOR VOTER ROLL CLEANING & UPDATE

JUNE 10, 2020: The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) is deeply worried that if financial resources are not provided by the Executive Branch of Government, the December 9, 2020 proposed date to conduct the midterm Senatorial -Elections may not take place. Any further delay in conducting the election could create a Constitutional crisis because the tenure of fifteen of the thirty senators would have expired and the law requires that each county is represented by two senators.

The ECC recognizes that the legal basis for the postponement of elections in Liberia was established by the Supreme Court's opinion in 2014 when it ruled that a joint resolution signed by the National Legislature and the President was lawful. That led to the suspension of the 2014 Special Senatorial elections from October to December 2014. At the same time, the ECC has observed that between 2018 and 2019, joint resolutions were used to conduct three by-elections outside of Constitutional required timelines.

While these extreme measures are understandable during health crises such as Ebola and Coronavirus, but it sets a dangerous precedence when the underpinning reasoning for joint legislative resolution to postpone an election is purely financial. This practice and has implications for the conduct of future elections particularly when the country is anticipating holding general and presidential elections in 2023. The ECC warns that the practice of using joint resolutions to change Constitutional directives and mandates on when to conduct elections is undermining the country's young and fragile democracy.

In preparation for the conduct of the midterm senatorial election in December, the ECC is calling on the National Elections Commission (NEC) to begin cleaning up the voter roll in keeping with the Supreme Court's directive in its opinion of 2017. Any plan to conduct the 2020 senatorial election without cleaning up the voter roll will be a recipe for political conflict, instability and will undermine the integrity of the results.



At the same time, Article 77B of the Constitution mandates that all eligible voters who turned eighteen years of age in an election year should be registered to vote. The ECC calls on the NEC to inform the Liberian people whether it has the time to conduct a voter roll update in keeping with Section 3.1 of the New Elections Law if the government provides the needed funding.

The ECC urges the National Legislature to exert its oversight function to ensure that the government provides the needed resources to the NEC to implement activities because elections are time-bound and a delay in the implementation of one activity undermines the timely completion of other activities.

The ECC further calls on the NEC to present a comprehensive plan to the National Legislature on how it intends to organize the election if and when it is pushed to December 9, 2020.

Rushed activities in an election year may lead to unprofessionalism and which will manifest itself on the day of election and this could undermine citizens' trust in the election process and potentially threaten the democratic gains the country has made over the past twelve years.

Finally, the ECC admonishes the President to nominate the Chairperson of the NEC so that the leadership of the Commission can be complete.

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) is a civil society platform, comprising seven (7) organizations that observe elections in Liberia. The members include: Actions for Genuine Democratic Alternatives (AGENDA); Center for Democratic Governance (CDG); Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP); Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD); NAYMOTE-Partners for Democratic Development (NAYMOTE-PADD); West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), and the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL).

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