

## Press Release

The National Identification Registry (NIR) in collaboration with the National Elections Commission (NEC) over the weekend had a two-day technical review workshop with political parties, CSOs, and development partners.

The workshop took place on the 1st of April, 2022 in Buchanan, Grand Bassa county under the theme: Implementation of Biometric voters Registration in Liberia. It can be recalled in 2016, there were multiple engagements through the ministry of finance and development planning (MFDP) to review recommendation from development partners about the possibility of voters registration for the 2017 elections. In early 2017, a meeting was organized by the European Union to present its findings from the 2017 elections in which it suggested a consideration of a biometric voter registration system that is linked to NIR.

Making a presentation at the workshop over the weekend in Buchanan, Grand Bassa county, the Executive director of NIR Hon. J. Tiah Nagbe told participants that there was a strong push from NIR in 2019 to use the 2020 senatorial elections to test biometric voter registration and a joint NEC- NIR technical committee set up in 2020 did not work, but commenced in 2021. Since then, much progress has been made over the last two months he said.

Representing the development partners, the EU representative thanked the organizers for the workshop and reaffirmed the European Union position that a passive voter registration system based on a reliable civil Registry thus enhancing participation in elections and addressing uncertainties inherent to active voter registration.

During the workshop, there were three proposals laid out by NIR for collaboration as follows:

- a. That NEC conducts enrollment without NIR, NEC builds a separate biometric system that is compatible with the NIR system after 2023 elections;
- b. That NEC conducts data alone, but uses existing NIR biometric data center for de-duplication; NEC transfers clean data to the Data center to generate voter roll;
- c. That NIR and NEC jointly enroll Liberian citizens of all ages; NEC and NIR de-duplication data using NIR system. Among the three proposals, electoral stakeholders and political parties unanimously agree that option number one which spelled out that NEC conducts enrollment without NIR, NEC builds a separate biometric system that is compatible with the NIR system, allowing for the NEC to share data and equipment with NIR after 2023 elections. Speaking on behalf of NEC, commissioner Erstine Morgan Howard thanked the presenters and participants of the workshop, and stressed the need for further conversation on this matter as it borders on modernization and globalization.