



The Liberia Local Governance Toolkit

Released in Monrovia, Liberia and Washington, D.C. on November 17, 2008

Poor governance and corruption were among the principal factors fueling the civil war that wracked Liberia for over two decades. Corruption devoured the basic fabric of the state, leaving in its wake poverty and a growing disenchantment with institutions and systems meant to deliver basic services to citizens. Recently, the Liberian government adopted a new zero-tolerance anti-corruption policy, pushing for strong institutional reforms – showing an increased interest in devolving power away from the national government. Yet, actionable data to inform those decisions at the local level is rare.

A new study, prepared by Global Integrity and the Center for Accountability and Transparency in Liberia (CENTAL), captures a crucial moment in Liberia's battle against corruption and poor governance. With support from CIPE, the survey was developed into the Liberia Local Governance Toolkit. The toolkit is at the cutting edge of an agenda to support local anti-corruption efforts by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of anti-corruption and good governance mechanisms at the sub-national level through more than 250 actionable indicators in each of Liberia's counties.

The toolkit's county scorecards provide an entry point for understanding the anti-corruption and good governance safeguards in place at the county level – what is working, what is not, and what can be improved. The toolkit reveals the following as key areas in building strong local governance:

- Strong civil society organizations involved in county-level governance.
- Greater public access to information.
- Whistle-blowing measures.
- Strong property rights regime.

The findings were released simultaneously in Washington, D.C. at the Brookings Institution and in Monrovia. In Monrovia, Dr. Amos C. Sawyer, former interim president and chairman of Liberia's Governance Commission, served as keynote speaker, joining many other Liberian leaders to mark the event. In Washington, D.C., John D. Sullivan, CIPE executive director, introduced the launch event; Nathaniel Heller and Raymond June of Global Integrity presented the study's findings; and Liberian Ambassador to the United States Nathaniel Barnes placed the findings in the context of the Liberian Government's current priorities. Ambassador Barnes noted that the toolkit complements the government's current move to strengthen governance institutions by building the country's human capacity to deal with issues of corruption and poor governance.



Liberian Ambassador to the United States Nathaniel Barnes relates the Liberia Local Governance Toolkit to current government priorities.

In the months following the toolkit's launch, CENTAL will be using the toolkit as a starting point for its advocacy work with local government officials. To reach the broader public with its message of good governance and transparency, CENTAL will discuss the toolkit and the study's findings on national and community-level radio talk shows.

For the full toolkit, visit www.liberialocalgovernance.org.