



**Republic of Liberia**

**Independent Information  
Commission**

**Annual Report**  
COVERING THE PERIOD 2013 – 2021

**Presented To:  
The 54th National Legislature**





National Commission on Disabilities	Yes	No	No	Yes
Lib. Refugees, Repatriation & Resettlement Commission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia Revenue Authority	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liberia Maritime Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Port Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia Telecommunication Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Forestry Development Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Transit Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia Domestic Airport Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Housing Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Lottery Authority	Yes	No	No	Yes
Civil Service Agency	No	Yes	No	No
General Services Agency	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Cooperative Development Agency	No	No	No	No
Environmental Protection Agency	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Center for National Records & Documents	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia Agency for Commission Empowerment	No	Yes	No	No
John F. Kennedy Medical Center	No	No	No	No
Liberia Medical & Health Product Regulatory Authority	Yes	No	No	Yes
National Bureau of Concession	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Executive Protection Service	Yes	No	No	Yes
Monrovia Consolidated School System	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Social Security & Welfare Corporation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liberia Electricity Corporation	No	Yes	No	No
Liberia Petroleum Refining Corporation	No	Yes	No	No
Liberia Water & Sewer Corporation	No	Yes	No	No
Monrovia City Corporation	No	Yes	No	No
Paynesville City Corporation	No	Yes	No	No
Central Bank of Liberia	No	Yes	Yes	No



His Excellency  
**DR. GEORGE M. WEAH**  
 President, Republic of Liberia





**CLLR. MARK BEDOR-WLA FREEMAN**  
**COMMISSIONER**  
**Independent Information Commission**

Freedom Of Information Compliance Progress Report Card Agency/Body	Public Information Officer	Functional Website	Current Annual Report online	Internal Review Body
<b>LEGISLATURE</b>				
Office of the Vice President	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
House of Senate	No	No	No	No
House of Representatives	No	No	No	No
<b>JUDICIARY</b>				
Supreme Court	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>EXECUTIVE</b>				
<b>Ministries/Agencies</b>				
Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs	No	Yes	Yes	No
Ministry of Justice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Finance & Development Planning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Defense	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ministry of Transport	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ministry of Post & Telecommunications	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ministry of Gender	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Commerce	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Labor	No	No	No	No
Ministry of Public Works	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Agriculture	No	Yes	Yes	No
Ministry of Youth & Sports	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ministry of Mines & Energy	No	Yes	No	No
Ministry of Education	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Lib. Inst. of Statistics & Geo-Information Services	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia National Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bureau of Immigration & Naturalization	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Liberia National Fire Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
General Auditing Commission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Governance Commission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Public Procurement & Concession Comm.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Independent Information Commission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Law Reform Commission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
National Elections Commission	Yes	Yes	No	No
Independent National Commission on Human Rights	Yes	No	No	Yes
National Commission on Small Arms	No	No	No	No

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61.	Laurenzo N. Karteh	Grand Cape Mount County
62.	Amos Gbannah	Nimba County
63.	Johnson S. Ndupellah	Lofa County
64.	Jose Benson Josiah	Margibi County
65.	Chriatian K. Cooper	River Gee County
66.	Sobert Wesseh	Sinoe County
67.	Anthony S. Blamo Jr.	Maryland County
68.	Eddie L. Williams	Grand Bassa County
69.	George K. Sancho	Bomi County
70.	Habibu Barry	Grand Gedeh County

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**Republic of Liberia  
Independent Information Commission**



**Commission's Letter**

July 15, 2022

**Hon. Bhofal Chambers  
Speaker  
House of Representatives  
Republic of Liberia**

Dear Hon. Speaker:

I herewith present my compliments and in keeping with Section 5.3 of the Freedom of Information Act of 2010, submit the first cumulative Annual Report covering the period 2013 to 2021. The rationale of this report being cumulative is due to the low use of the FOI law by the public, which makes it impractical for institutions covered under the Act to report to the Information Commissioner on an annual basis of the number of requests for access to documents or records as required by Law.

However, under the period in review, the Commission directly received complaints from individuals, civil society organizations, and journalists. Consistent with Section 5.4 of the Act which states: "The Independent Information Commissioner shall include in its annual report to the National Legislature a full account of the status of implementation of the Act", we are pleased to implement said provision.

In consonance with Section 15 (c) of the 1986 constitution of Liberia, that "No limitation shall be placed the citizens' right to know about the functionaries of government", the National Legislature in 2010 enacted the Freedom of Information Act, which gave access to information to all Liberians and others residing within our borders. As a tool for good governance and development, access to information makes government open and transparent, thus reducing speculations and false accusations on public officials entrusted with public funds.

The interest of the public in access to information is growing, and as such, this report is intended to enlighten you and your Honorable Colleagues on the need for more support to the Commission to make Liberia a transparent democracy.

Kind regards.

Sincerely yours,

**Mark Bedor-Wla Freeman (Cllr.)  
Commissioner**

Tower House, 10th Street & Jallah Town Road, Monrovia, Liberia  
Tel: 0886511 170 / 0886 512 870 / 0776 204 953 / 0555 210 067 / 0886 721 920  
Email: independent.info\_commission@yahoo.com / mbedorwla@yahoo.com

41.	Nicholas Faryombo	National Bureau of Concessions
42.	Kaipee Newray	Center for Records & Docs Agency
43.	James M. Blamah	Civil Service Agency
44.	Tina Mason	General Services Agency
45.	Richard Mulbah	Liberia Agency for Community Emp.
46.	Musthapha M. Konneh	Liberia Institute of Public Administration
47.	Jestina Harris Page	LISGIS
48.	Gordon Graway	LACRA
49.	Abubakar Konneh	LPRC
50.	Kelvin Johnson	Monrovia Consolidated School System
51.	George Y. Nyanzeo	Monrovia City Corporation
52.	Jeremiah Dikken	Paynesville City Corporation
53.	Miatta Sarnor	National Social Security Welfare Corp
54.	James Crayton	John F. Kennedy Medical Center
55.	J. Kennedy Kolubah	LEITI
56.	Leon T. Harris	Bong County
57.	Jefferson D. Tweh	Grand Kru County
58.	Sampson B. Bono	Montserrado County
59.	Isaac B. William	Rivercess County



**Public Information Officers Appointed**

21.		Ministry of Foreign Affairs
22.	Jarsea Burphy	Liberia Telecommunication Authority
23.	Malcolm Scott	National Port Authority
24.	D. Kaihenneh Sengbeh	Liberia Revenue Authority
25.	Francis F. Kpaka	Liberia Airport Authority
26.	Momo B. Siryon	Liberia Medical, Reg. Authority
27.	Robert Wilson	National Transit Authority
28.	Mulbah K. Yogboh	Liberia Maritime Authority
29.	T. Maxwell Davis	National Housing Authority
30.	Washina Soad	National Lottery Authority
31.	Massa O. Lymas	Forestry Development Authority
32.	James P. Kwabo Jr.	LCAA
33.	George Barpeen	General Auditing Commission
34.	Summerhill Karzon	Land Commission
35.	Parker Johnson	Governance Commission
36.	Desmond K. Ville	Public Procurement Commission
37.	Denise Love Dennis	Environmental Protection Agency
38.	Edward Kemokai	Liberia Repatriation, Refugee Commission
39.	Edwin J. Clarke Jr.	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission

## Acknowledgements

The Commission extends sincere thanks to the Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Internews, and the European Union for their support under the Liberia Media Initiative in producing this Annual Report to the National Legislature by the Independent Information Commission. We look forward to more collaboration and cooperation in the future as we together make access to information work within the governance structure of Liberia.

The Commission also extends thanks to the National Legislature for the support given the Commission through legislative appropriations over the years.

The Commission had to take years to collate this report because effective use of the FOI Law has been low which made data for reporting to the Honorable Legislature difficult. We are however grateful to our partners for the support we have received in compiling this report.

The Commission also extends appreciation to its entire staff that worked overtime to collect data and draft this report. Your commitment to duty is well recognized.

## **Executive Summary**

Freedom of Information (FOI) is a fundamental human right for all persons irrespective of gender, religion, creed, or race. This right is protected by national and international human rights instruments. The establishment of an Independent Information Commission (IIC) in Liberia was an effort to ensure that this fundamental right is exercised as enshrined in Article 15(c) of the Liberian Constitution. As a part of the creation of the Freedom of Information process, the IIC was created by an Act of the National Legislature on September 16, 2010. The passage of the Act made Liberia the first West African country to enact a Freedom of Information Law. The Liberian Act has been characterized as the fourth best in the world by the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) after its passage in 2010.

The FOI Act places a responsibility on the Information Commissioner to make an Annual Report to the National Legislature on the implementation status of the Act in Liberia. To perform this task, the Commission is also required to receive annual reports from all public bodies and private entities that are subject to the Act. This report is in fulfillment of the Commission's statutory obligations as defined under the Act. The access to information process is fundamental to fostering democracy and ensuring good governance. Its importance to national development cannot be overemphasized. An effective access to information regime brings immense benefits to the wellbeing of the state and its people. Such a regime is not only a fundamental human right, it promotes citizens participation in governance processes. It also encourages foreign investment and fosters more efficient and effective public administration. It increases transparency and government accountability and improves the use of scarce resources.

Access to information is immensely beneficial to the population of any country. It helps ensure that people can more fully participate in public life, help set priorities for government spending; understand decisions taken in their name and hold leaders to account. It also helps people be more involved in setting the development agenda for their communities and the country. The FOI Act as it currently exists gives everyone the right to request any information from government's agencies or private entities that provide public services or receive public funds. Moreover, a person, under the FOI law has the right to know about their country. A wide array of information can be requested and received under the Act.

During the year under review, the IIC endeavored to achieve its vision "to ensure that all parties understand the FOI law". The Commission also sought to work in line with its mission of receiving and adjudicating complaints made to it with the view to ensuring that the Act is complied with by all parties. As a new Commission, the administrative and financial structures were put in place and the necessary staff recruited for effective implementation of the FOI law.

As part of its Outreach and Sensitization programs, during the period under review, the Commission was successful in reaching twelve out of the fifteen counties where town hall meetings were held with local authorities, civil society actors, women and youth groups, and the student community.

For the period 2013 to 2021 the IIC received a total of ninety-two complaints from individuals and organizations. Of this number, thirty-seven complaints were sent back because of failure of the complainant to submit to the internal review process. A total of fifty-five of these complaints were heard by the IIC. Of the complaints heard, the agencies in question were ordered to release the information sought in ten cases. The number of cases that are pending adjudication are twenty-three. Appeals were taken to the civil law court in four cases the IIC ruled in. Complainants abandoned eighteen complaints they filed with the IIC.

The Commission during the period under review undertook the assessment of ministries, agencies, and commissions. The assessment was meant to determine those that are in compliance with the FOI Act. The results of this institutional assessment showed that six were in full compliance, fifty-nine in partial compliance, and seven in non-compliance with the Act.

## **Public Information Officers Appointed**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>ENTITY</b>
1.	George Saah	Office of the Vice President
2.	Zito Slebah	The Judiciary
3.	Patrick Mulbah	Executive Protection Service
4	Anthony K. Nyanlue	Liberia National Police
5	Abraham Dorley	Bureau of Immigration
6.	Philip Noah	National Fire Service
7.	Abraham S. Kromah	Ministry of Internal Affairs
8.	J. Maxime Bleetahn	Ministry of Education
9.	Jonathan Williams	Ministry of Information
10.	N. Macaulay Paykue	Ministry of Youth & Sports
11.	Joe Y. Leesolee	Ministry of Posts & Telecom
12.	Robert Cooper	Ministry of Transport
13.	Maude D. Somah	Ministry of Justice
14.	Augustus D. Ben	Ministry of National Defense
15	Prince Nyenoh	Ministry of Labor
16.	Felecia Gbesioh	Ministry of Health
17.	Stephen Garley	Ministry of Commerce
18.	Patience S. Kumah	Ministry of Finance and Development

52.	Mr. Roland Y. Worwee	Dec. 10, 2021	Request to Hon. Nathaniel McGill Minister of State, on his salary amount; office budget; travel expenses; assets declared;	Respondent failed to appear after three citations
53.	Mr. Roland Y. Worwee	Dec. 10, 2021	Request to Hon. J. Fonati Koffa, Dep. Speaker, on salary and benefits as Dep Speaker; assets declared; full report on the \$4.1M for task force he headed; office budget	Respondent complied with the request. Resolved.
54.	Mr. Roland Y. Worwee	Dec. 10, 2021	Request to Mrs. Emma Glasgow, Director General of National Fisheries on her salary; entity and office budget; assets declared; financial support from donors.	Respondent failed to appear after three citations On-going
55.	Respondent failed to appear after three citations	Dec. 10, 2021	Request to Mr. Lenn Eugene Nagbe, Commissioner of Maritime, on his salary; budget of entity; assets declared; travel expenses;	Respondent complied with the request. Resolved.

The IIC is mandated “To evaluate existing laws and regulations relating to access to information, and to make recommendations for reform and harmonization of the laws.” In this vein the Commission notes that the period provide by the Act for responses to be provided to information may be too long for some purposes. These lengthy periods of response tend to place bureaucratic bottlenecks on people wishing to make use of the FOI Law. This situation affects the work of journalists especially as they sometimes need immediate facts checks. A recommendation is pending to review this section of the law for reduction in the number of days to respond, to encourage citizens to make effective use of the Law.

Funding constraints have hampered the IIC since its inception in 2012. This has made the Commission to lack the capacity to conduct most of what it is mandated to do as per its statutory functions. Nevertheless, the IIC is poised to move on with a commitment to achieving its mandate.

*FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2010 12, s 5.2 k).*



## 1.0 Introductory Background

The civil war destroyed the Liberian governance system. While corruption was a problem in the prewar era, it became the order of the day during the war era. When democracy was restored in January 2006 with the inauguration of the government of Mrs. Ellen Sirleaf, the governance focus shifted to building the democratic processes strengthening public trust in government and building strong transparency and integrity institutions. Recognizing that access to information is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of Liberia and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the National Legislature of Liberia enacted into law the Freedom of Information Act in 2010. The passage of the Act came about as the result of the strong advocacy by civil society organizations, the media and development partners. The Act is based on a range of principles which “govern the construction, exercise, and protection of the right of access to information” in Liberia.

Convinced that a dedicated statute on the right of access to information is essential to affirming and promoting the effective, equitable and inexpensive exercise of this right; the government established the Independent Information Commission (IIC) to oversee the implementation of the Law in 2012. This Report covers the activities of the Independent Information Commission over the period 2013 – 2019. It focuses on the functions of the Commission, and its activities and programs.

Finally, due to the budgetary constraints, most of the activities of the Commission were not executed and the low visibility of the Commission remains a challenge. The need to expand the Commission beyond Monrovia cannot be overemphasized. Reforms in the law remain a particularly important issue to encourage citizens to make effective and timely use of the law. Heads of entities that have not appointed their Public Information Officers are encouraged to do so, and work on their programs of proactive disclosure as mandated by law.

## 2.0 Scope of the Report

This report covers the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. It covers various requirements laid down in the Act that speak to its enforcement as it relates to public and private entities that are subject to the Act. The report provides information related to compliance with the Act across the government. The report also covers people's knowledge of the law.

## 3.0 Structure of the Independent Information Commission

While rolling out the Freedom of Information Act, a Technical Secretariat was set-up, and a Five-Year Strategic Plan was carved with technical assistance from the Carter Center Liberia office. The plan developed three operational departments of the Commission. These are the Administrative and Finance Department, Compliance and Enforcement Department, and an Outreach and Sensitization Department. These three departments are geared towards enhancing the smooth implementation of Liberia's Access to Information Regime.

### 3.1 Department of Administration

The Department of Administration is responsible for developing budgets, managing financial transactions, compiling financial reports, and ensuring that personnel, logistics, and other administrative arrangements and documents are in place. The Executive Director heads this department. It is comprised of the personnel section, and the finance section.

#### 3.1.1 Personnel Section

The Personnel Section of the Commission is responsible to administer the affairs of its employees. It tracks their work and ensures that they are properly supported in the implementation of their duties. The section is comprised of twenty employees that bring a range of expertise to the work of the commission.

43.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Ministry of Public Works	Jan. 17, 2018	The S. D. Cooper Women Group requested information on the selection of feeder roads rehabilitation and what qualifies a community to benefit	Pending
44.	The Center of Background Check of Public Officials VS The Senate	April 14, 2018	Requested copies of resumé of selected officials for confirmation before the Senate	Pending
45.	WOAH & ASSOCIATES LAW FIRM INC, VS EPA	July 17, 2018	Requested results report of the tests conducted on the soil, drinking water and creek water around the Sein River by other environmental institutions.	Commission ruled for compliance but case taken to the court on appeal. Pending.
46.	The Concern Citizens of Tappita, Nimba Co., VS Jackson F. Doe Hospital	Sept. 20, 2018	Requested the amount of money spent on drugs by donors; total personnel listing; salaries; and number of Specialists with benefits	Complied partially. Awaiting additionally documents
47.	Liberia Scrap Association VS National Investment Commission (NIC)	Jan. 2, 2019	Requested for document/profile that Sethi Fabrik Inc., presented that qualified it for the incentive investment in steel making in Liberia	Abandoned
48.	United Women Development Association (UWODA)	Oct. 12, 2021	Request for annual reports for 2017-2020 from the Independent Information Commission	Overview of the status of the IIC presented
49.	<b>RESUBMITTED</b> United Women Development Association (UWODA)	Oct. 12, 2021	Request to the Drugs Enforcement Agency for copy of the Anti-Drug Law	Pending
50.	<b>RESUBMITTED</b> United Women Development Association (UWODA)	Oct. 12, 2021	Request to ELBC on its social corporate responsibility to the City of Paynesville	Pending
51.	<b>RESUBMITTED</b> United Women Development Association (UWODA)	Oct. 12, 2021	Request to Paynesville City Corporation on measures taken to curb pollution on the S. D. Cooper beach	Pending
52.	<b>RESUBMITTED</b> United Women Development Association (UWODA)	Oct. 12, 2021	Request to Public Works on the selection process for feeder roads rehabilitation and how communities can benefit.	Pending



34.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Liberia Immigration Service (LIS)	Jan. 17, 2018	Requested statistics on number of women that cross the borders for trade; number of major border points; and number of women arrested 2015-2016	Pending
35.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS)	Jan. 17, 2018	Requested copies of income and expenditures from the rent of MCSS schools auditoriums	Pending
36.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS)	Jan. 17, 2018	What is the corporate social responsibility of LBS to the community of Paynesville as requested by the S. D. Cooper Community women	Pending
37.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS J. J. Roberts Foundation	Jan. 17, 2018	Requested the number of students currently on the scholarship 2016/2017; criteria for eligibility on the scholarship; and if there are still scholarships available.	Pending
38.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Ministry of Education	Jan. 17, 2018	Requested information on how the establishment of kindergarten division in public schools is done by the Ministry	Pending
39.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Paynesville City Corporation	Jan. 17, 2018	Requested information on the role of the PCC in curtailing garbage and toilet on the S. D. Cooper community beach.	Pending
40.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Monrovia City Corporation (MCC)	Jan. 17, 2018	The Po River Women Group requested MCC for the contract agreement and financial records between MCC and Monrovia City Parking for 2015-2016	Pending
41.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Ministry of Health	Jan. 17, 2018	The Montserrado Women Group requested information on the procedures to open private clinics in communities	Pending
42.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency	Jan. 17, 2018	The Women Group of S. D. Cooper Community requested the copy of the Anti-Drugs Law and the process for communities to control drugs abuse in affected areas	Pending

### 3.1.2 Finance Section

The Finance Section is responsible to administer the financial lifeline of the Commission. Despite its mandate, the work, and activities of the Independent Information Commission is to be funded by the National Budget. Despite this clear mandate of funding from the government, the Commission's core mandate areas of civic education, compliance and legislative engagements have not been funded. The government has provided funding only for salaries over the years.



Some Staff of the IIC during and Outreach Activity

Annexed to this report is a matrix of budgetary allocations that have been made for the Commission for the fiscal periods 2017/2018; 2019/2020; and 2021.

### 3.2 Department of Compliance and Enforcement

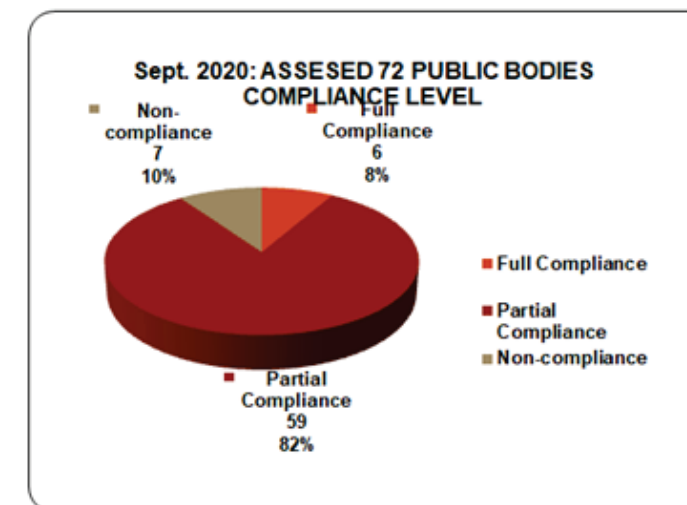
This Department of Compliance and Enforcement is the legal arm of the Commission. Its tasks include undertaking research to review existing laws, provide legal advice to the Commissioner; draft opinions/decisions; and make legal representations on behalf of the Commission to defend its actions or ensure compliance.



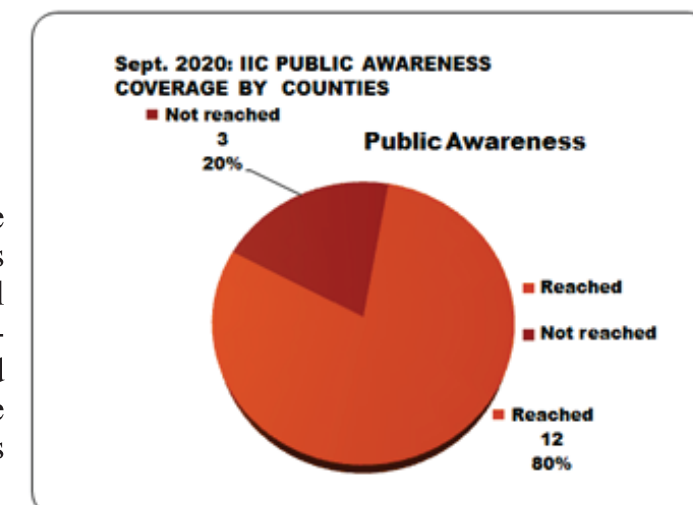
The University of Liberia vs Mr. Peal Nyenkan Hearing

This Department is further charged with developing a system to track all complaints and establish a database of received, actions taken and actions pending as well as the results of actions taken. The Department also monitors the publication scheme that the Act demands

of public and private bodies that fall under its ambit. The Commission's Freedom of Information Officers pay periodic visits and make checks on entities covered under the Act. The freedom of information officers work to ensure compliance with the publication scheme which requires eight classes of documents to be automatically published by every public authority.



The Department's work leads to the publication of the FOI Compliance Score Card. The Score Card is published twice yearly. It identifies entities in full compliance, partial compliance, and non-compliance. It is published in local newspapers and copies sent electronically to the entities covered. The full list of assessed public bodies is attached to this report.



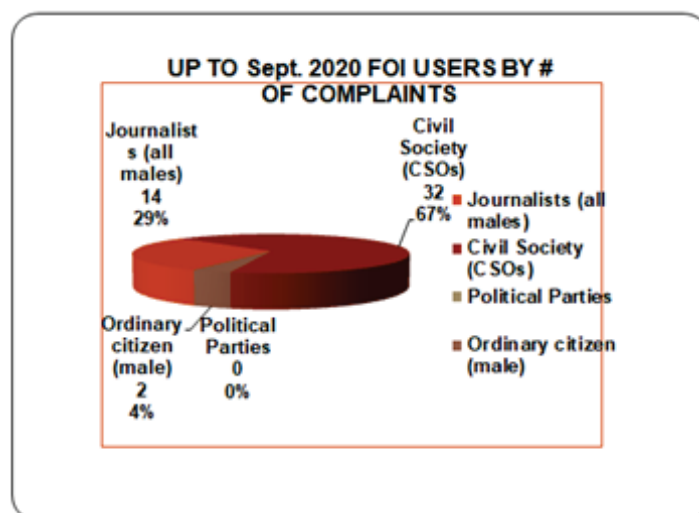


Another cardinal function of the Department is to ensure the appointment of a Public Information Officers (PIO) in each entity covered under the Act. The Act requires that every public and private body appoint a staff that is responsible to receive and respond to access to information requests. In light of this provision, the Commission has been successful in engaging public authorities and entities to appoint their PIOs and to date, a total of 62 Public Information Officers have been appointed out of the 108 public bodies assessed by the Information Commission. The full list is attached to this report.

Within the Department of Compliance and Enforcement is the Documents and Records Section. The primary responsibility of this Section is to catalogue and preserve all records of complaints. It is also responsible to handle FOI reports from entities covered under the Act as well as the IIC Annual Reports for easy access. It is headed by a supervisor who is an archivist.

### 3.2 Department of Outreach and Sensitization

The Outreach and Sensitization Department is responsible to perform two basic functions linked to stakeholders' engagement. The first is to interface with government agencies and institutions to ensure that they understand the FOI law and are compliant as required. The second function is to conduct awareness and sensitize the public on the mandates and functions of the Commission as well as provide detailed steps on how to access information or file complaint to the Information Commissioner. A director heads the Department.



This Department is the nerve of the Commission, as its visibility and interaction with the public is very fundamental to the work of the Commission. In spite the lack of full budget support from the central government for the work of the Commission, this department still succeeded in conducting some of its functions. During the period under review, the Department with assistance from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), conducted Outreach activities in 12 of Liberia's 15 counties.

The counties reached were Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Bomi, Margibi, Bong, Nimba, Rivercess, Lofa, Maryland, Sinoe counties. During these engagements, the local authorities, chiefs, women groups, youth groups, religious institutions, the physically challenged, civil society actors, the transport and motorcyclists' unions were all in attendance.

Engagements were also held with students at the University of Liberia; Intellectual centers in the counties and Monrovia; African Methodist Episcopal University; the Zion University; Cuttington University; Bong Community College; Nimba Community College; Grand Gedeh Community College; Tubman University; Grand Bassa Community College and Lofa Community College. These targeted groups are important to begin knowledge of openness in public service and the need to let those governed to have access to information.

Over the years, the Outreach Department was also able to spearhead the hosting of International Right to Know Day with support from several of its partners like The Carter Center, Internews, IREX, etc.

#### Brief Summary of Outreach Activities of the IIC

During the reporting period, the IIC was involved in a series of outreach activities. These activities took place in many places around the country; and brought together a variety of individuals and groups.

A day long outreach and sensitization activity was held in Kakata, Margibi County on January 28, 2017. The

23.	Movement for the Protection of Citizens' Rights VS National Watchdog	Nov. 23, 2016	Requested information on contract and procurement process for the construction of NASSCORP head office and contract value.	Complied with and resolved
24.	Movement for the Protection of Citizens' Rights VS Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	Jan. 12, 2017	Requested assets of FDA; financial statements; all logging companies operating under FDA; and report to the Legislature (2014-2016)	Complied with and resolved
25.	Movement for the Protection of Citizens' Rights VS National Transit Authority	Jan. 12, 2017	Requested list of all vehicles; employees assigned areas; daily income reports; and expenditure report to the Legislature (2014-16)	Complied with and resolved. Respondent fined L\$6000 to LRA for delay
26.	Movement for the Protection of Citizens' Rights VS Ducor Mineral Water Company	March 2, 2017	Requested water quality test report for all products to LWSC; laboratory review and Lab technician qualification	Complied with and resolved
27.	Movement for the Protection of Citizens' Rights VS Liberia Coca Cola Company	Jan. 12, 2017	Health benefits and risks associated with long term consumption of the products; information on products quality	Abandoned
28.	Bush Chicken VS Assistant Superintendent for Dev., Mont.	July 6, 2017	Requested detailed information of budgetary allotment of US\$380,000 from County Dev. Funds	Abandoned
29.	The News Newspaper VS The Liberian Senate	July 12, 2017	Procurement plan for the Senate 2015/2016	Abandoned
30.	The News Newspaper VS NOCAL	July 12, 2017	Requested reports on budget and expenditure for FY 2015/2016, 2016/2017	Abandoned
31.	The News Newspaper VS Ministry of Health	July 12, 2017	Requested report on the Global Fund for the fight against AIDS, TB, and malaria 2014-2016	Abandoned
32.	Frontpage Africa VS Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs	July 12, 2017	Requested copies of the budget, procurement plan, contracts and status of the Mansion renovation	Abandoned
33.	Women Secretariat of Liberia VS University of Liberia	Jan. 17, 2018	Requested information on the amount generated from entrance exams 2015-2016	Pending



10.	J. Cephas Miller Jr. VS Minister of Internal Affairs	July 30, 2014	Requested for copies of bidding documents for the Gaye town Road construction by East Group of Companies	Abandoned
11.	Center for Media Studies and Peace (CEMESP) VS Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)	Oct. 13, 2014	Requested copy of the West Point shooting incident report by the Board of Inquiry.	Abandoned
13.	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS Superintendent of Margibi County	March 27, 2015	Requested report of Ebola funds received from the Ministry of Finance	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
15.	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS Ministry of Finance	March 27, 2015	Requested information on County Dev. funds made to Bong, Margibi, Montserrado, Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu; and River Gee to fight Ebola	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
16..	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS Grand Gedeh Superintendent	March 27, 2015	Requested report of Ebola funds received from the Ministry of Finance	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
17.	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS River Gee Superintendent	March 27, 2015	Requested report of Ebola funds received from the Ministry of Finance	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
18.	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS Bong Superintendent	March 27, 2015	Requested report of Ebola funds received from the Ministry of Finance	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
19.	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS Montserrado Superintendent	March 27, 2015	Requested report of Ebola funds received from the Ministry of Finance	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
20.	Liberia Civil Society Ebola Response Task Force VS Gbarpolu Superintendent	March 27, 2015	Requested report of Ebola funds received from the Ministry of Finance	Commission ruled for compliance, but Respondent failed to appear.
21.	Alliance for True Representation VS District # 9 Dev. Council, Mont.	July 11, 2016	Requested report on Social Development funds received and projects undertaken	Complied with
22.	Movement for the Protection of Citizens' Rights VS Paynesville City Corporation (PCC)	July 11, 2016	Requested list of assets; bank accounts and statements; Article of Incorporation and expenditure reports.	Commission ruled for compliance and PCC obeyed. Paid fine of L\$6000 to LRA.



County FOI Citizens' Engagement in Kakata, Margibi County

activity was aimed at local leaders, chiefs, women and youth groups, civil society actors and students. It was well attended with 70 participants in attendance including the County Superintendent and other local officials.

In Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, the 1st Regional Sensitization Training Workshop was held for 100 participants from Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, River Gee, Maryland, and Grand Kru counties. The development superintendents of Maryland and Grand Kru counties and the administrative assistant to the superintendent of Grand Gedeh

and the City Mayor of Zwedru were also in attendance in addition to chiefs and local leaders from the other counties. The workshop took place from February 26 – 27, 2017.



Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County, Regional FOI Workshop

The 2nd Regional Sensitization Training Workshop was held in Gbarnga, Bong County from March 25 – 26, 2017. The gathering saw 80 participants from Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties come together. The local authorities from these counties including the administrative assistant to the superintendent of Bong County, district commissioners from Bong, Lofa and Nimba as well as the Gbarnga City Mayor were present.



The Commission held a student-focused FOI dialogue at the Cuttington University in Suakoko, Bong County on March 27, 2017. Over 200 participants including students and faculty members were in attendance. The student-focused public interaction continued with the United Methodist University (UMU) in Monrovia on May 16, 2018. It was also extended to the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU) and the University of Liberia respectively on June 4 and July 3. More than three hundred (300) students and dozens of faculty members attended these FOI dialogue forums at the different institutions.

The 3rd Regional Training Workshop was held in Buchanan from April 24 - 25, 2018. Sixty (60) participants from Rivercess and Margibi Counties were in attendance, including county authorities, chiefs, commissioners, and civil society actors. The final Regional Workshop for public information officers was held in Monrovia on July 29, 2018. All appointed public information officers were in attendance. They received training in records management and handling public information requests during the workshop. The Commission's outreach activities continued from August 16 – 18, 2018, with interactions at three designated



Intellectual Centers (Hytaai Centers) in Monrovia and at the Slipway Community Town Hall.

With funding from OSIWA, a Radio & TV talk phone – in program was started in early May 2017 and continued to the end of August 2018. Arrangement was reached with the Liberia Media & Democracy Initiative (LMDI) to produce and air the program on local radio and television stations for 28 weeks. The programs focused on airing FOI related messages and challenges around Liberia's FOI regime.

In late 2021 and early 2022, the IIC held public outreach activities in Grand Bassa, Bong, and Bomi counties. At these engagements, the FOI hubs were reactivated in each county with the appointment of an FOI coordinator. Radio appearances in the counties informed the citizens of the importance of the law and the need to use it. The activity was carried out with support from the European Union through Internews and CEMESP under the Liberia Media Initiative project.

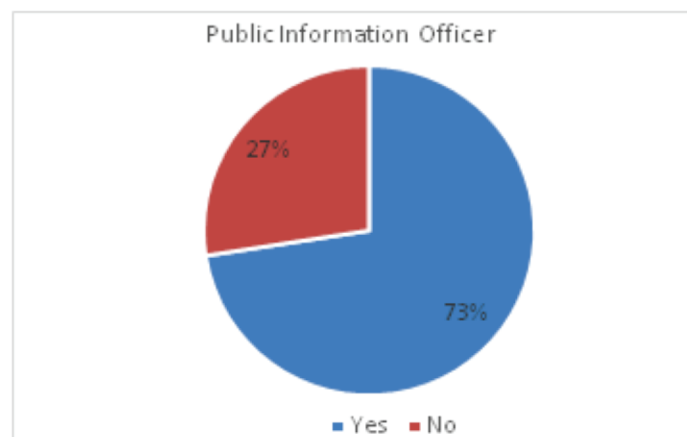
### 3.3 Department of Planning and Research

The Planning and Research Department is responsible to carve and direct the programs and strategic activities of the Commission. It is the bridge between external partners and the IIC.

This Department devises and monitors the strategic plan of the Commission, and designs implementation roadmap. It also conducts the evaluation of outcome outputs of those plans. Under the auspices of the Department the implementation of the Commission's the initial 5-year Strategic Plan ended in 2017. The Commission is currently in the process of formally evaluating the previous strategic plan and working out modalities to craft the strategic direction for the next five- years.

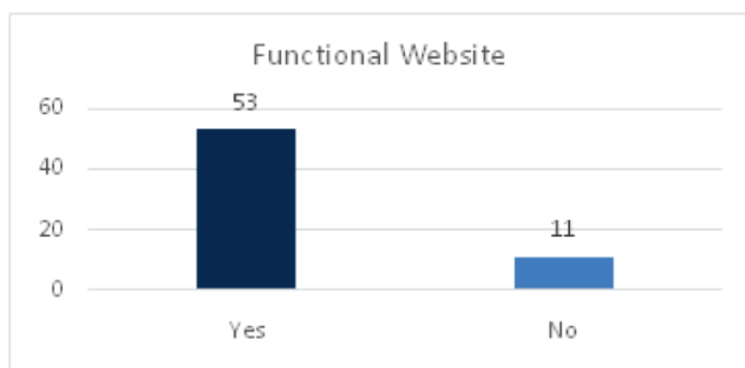
### 4.0 Measurement of Sectorial Compliance with the Act

During the period under review, the IIC tracked sectorial compliance with the Act. The assessment was based on four indicators. These indicators were: 1) the appointment of Public Information Officers, 2) the existence of a functional website, 3) the publication of the entity's annual report on the website, and 4) the existence of an internal review body within the entity. The review considered government agencies ranging from the Legislative, Judiciary, and Executive branches.



The review found that 73% of the government institutions assessed followed the Act since they had appointed a Public Information Officer. Disappointingly though, 27% of these institutions have not complied with the law. The institutions that have not designated an information officer must be encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

Like it is the case with the appointment of Public Information Officers, the review found that most government institutions have functional websites. Most of such institutions, accounting for fifty-three of



Just eleven of such institutions were found not to have a functioning website. This component of the law plays a key role in the proactive disclosure requirement. Hence all institutions across the government must strive to have functional websites.

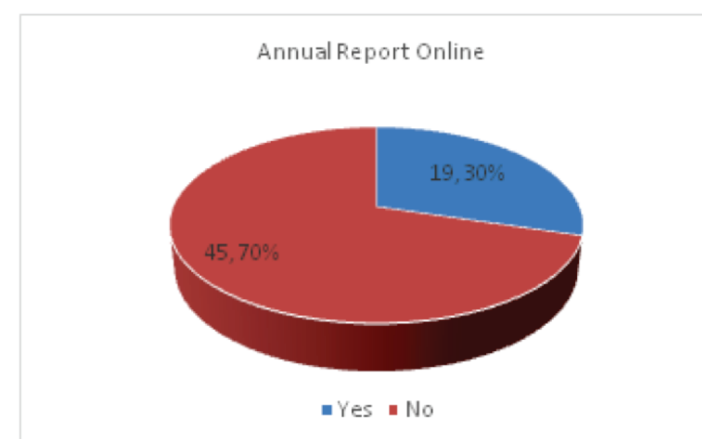
The overwhelming majority of government institutions were found not to have published their reports online.

### List, Summary and Status of Cases Brought Before the Commission 2013 – 2021

NO	CASE	DATE	SUMMARY OF CASE	STATUS
1	Center for Media Studies and Peace (CEMESP) VS Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC)	1 June 2013	Request for copies of assets declared by Cabinet Ministers and other Officials	Commission granted the request, but LACC took appeal to the Court. Still before the Court
2.	Mr. George E. S. Boley VS Ministry of Foreign Affairs	27 June 2013	Request of copies of Immigration documents that led to his deportation from America to Liberia	Case abandoned by Complainant after Commission ruled that it was under the exemptions
3.	Action for Genuine Development (AGENDA) VS Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC)	24 Oct. 2013	Request for audited financial statements (2008-2013); documents of LEC contribution to National Budget; Board Minutes; dividends	Commission ruled for compliance but LEC took appeal to the Court. Pending.
4.	Action for Genuine Development (AGENDA) VS National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL)	Nov. 7, 2013	Request for copies of oil deals signed; financial transaction records	Commission ruled for compliance, but NOCAL reneged. No action
5.	Action for Genuine Development (AGENDA) VS Robert International Airport (RIA)	Nov. 22, 2013	Request for audited financial statements (2008-2013); approved annual budget; payment made to the National Budget	RIA fully complied
6.	Mr. Peal Nyenkan VS University of Liberia	Dec. 5. 2013	Access to full details of the UL entrance results (questions, answer sheets, method of grading) where he was alleged to have failed.	Commission ruled in
7.	Mr. Roland Worwee VS the Managing Director of Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC)	June 12, 2014	Request for LPRC contract with Mother Well; awarded contract to concrete pave LPRC facilities; number of travels made; allowances received	Commission ruled in Complainant's favor, but Respondent took appeal to the Court.
8.	Mr. Roland Worwee VS Director of Liberia Civil Aviation Authority (LCAA)	June 2, 2014	Requested charges for aircraft landing and documents for all contracts awarded	Abandoned
9.	Mr. Roland Worwee VS Minister of Finance	June 2, 2014	Request for reports on foreign trips; amount spent on renovation of Minister's office; cash value of monthly gas and scratch cards	Minister failed to turn up for hearings

## Budget Allocation for 2017/2018; 2019/2020; 2021

Row Labels	FY 2017-18	FY2018 2019	FY2019 2020	FY 2021
Dept : 01 : Administration and Mangt				
211110 :General Allowance	340,896.00	340,896.00	214,744.40	214,774.40
221101 :Foreign Travel-Means of travel	-	-	-	-
221102 :Forgn.Travel-Daily Sub. Allowa	-	-	-	-
221105 :Dom. Travel-Daily Subsis.Allow	5,700.00	-	-	-
221201 :Electricity	4,620.00	4,200.00	4,200.00	-
221202 :Water and Sewage	900.00	-	-	-
221203 :Telecommunications, Internet	4,200.00	-	300.00	-
221208 : Internet Provider Services	-	-	1,200.00	-
221303 :Office Build. Rental and Lease	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	-
221401 :Fuel and Lubricants - Vehicles	20,760.00	-	-	-
221402 :Fuel and Lubricants – Gener.	7,265.00	-	-	-
221502 :Repairs and Maintenance - Veh.	3,000.00	-	-	-
221504 :Rep\&Maint.Mach\&Equip,Furniture	800.00	-	-	8,588.00
221601 :Cleaning Materials and service	2,400.00	-	1,800.00	-
221603 :Printing, Binding,Publication	4,800.00	-	-	-
221604 :Newspapers, Books and Periodic	612.00	-	-	-
221606 :Other Office Mat. and Consum.	4,200.00	-	1,200.00	-
222102 :Workshops,Conferences,Siminars	5,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	-
222130 :Civic Education and Legislatio	5,000.00	-	5,506.00	-
223101 :Personnel Insurance	3,300.00	-	-	-
223106 :Vehicle Insurance	750.00	-	-	-
265505 :Transfer to Freedom of Informa	-	-	-	-
	429,203.00	362,096.00	245,950.40	223,362.40

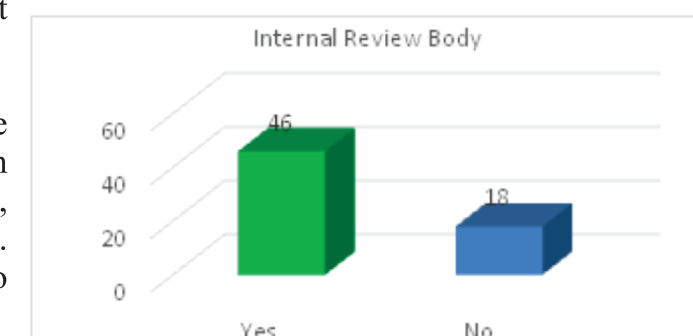


This accounted for 70% of such institutions. Just 30% of them provided online access to their reports. While this high number of is commendable, it is the hope of the IIC to have all government institutions publishing information online as it aides the proactive disclosure requirement under the Act.

Most government institutions were found to have an internal review process in place as is required by the Act. While forty-six institutions have an internal review process in place; eighteen of them do not have any such process operational. Again, it is the hope of

the IIC that all government institutions will have a functional internal review process in place in the soonest. Internal review is a fundamental component of the Act.

Section 3.7 of the Act requires public and private bodies to submit an annual report to the Information Commissioner. Despite this statutory requirement, no institution required to submit such a report did. There was no cogent explanation for this failure to comply with the statute.



### 5.0 IIC Achievements

As was noted earlier in this report, the Independent Information Commission has received limited budgetary support over the years. Despite this, the IIC was still able to make some strides during the period under review. The dedication of the Commission's staff must be commended for being able to achieve the limited success that it did.

During the period under consideration, the Commission's internal administrative structures were set up and operationalized. This was an achievement of huge significance as the structural existence of the Commission is key to the continued successes of the IIC.

The IIC, with support from its partners crafted and implemented a Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Plan gave structure to the Commission's activities and served as a point of guidance for its work. As part of the Commission's strategic direction, it developed and validated the Guidelines to Hear and Resolve Freedom of Information Cases. These Guidelines have helped to provide structure to the IIC's handling of access to information complaints. The Commission also developed and validated the Guidelines for Access to Information Records Management which is a major achievement for the management of the access to information process.

As a testament of being accorded international recognition, the IIC was welcomed in the fold of the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) in 2019 After joining the ICIC Liberia rose to the status of Vice Chair of the Conference of African Commissioners. The ICIC is a body that connects institutions “charged with overseeing the implementation of Access to Public Information legislation.”

### 6.0 Partners' Support

In addition to government's support, there were specific technical supports from our partners. This included support received from The Carter Center, IREX, OSIWA and Internews.



Under its Liberia Media Development (LMD) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, Internews supported the Commission in building a website, procuring internet infrastructure and training journalists and PIOs. Internews' support to the IIC led to an FOI reporting fellowship for 25 journalists that filed requests and published stories utilizing FOI. Training benefitted practicing journalists as well as student journalists. The project also contributed towards the hosting of the International Right to Know Day in 2017, 2018 and 2019.



LMI Project Director, Sanuka V. Konneh, addresses the roundtable

Under the Liberia Media Initiative, co-financed by the European Union, Internews is currently working with the IIC on different frontlines. The international media development organization, through CEMESP, is running another journalism fellows on FOI. 25 reporters are trained to utilize FOI as a tool to conduct investigative journalism. They have undergone training and mentoring and are reporting stories on different thematic issues.



FOI & Admin training, Buchanan, Grand Bassa County

under the LMI support is being provided for the conduct of Public Information Roundtables, under the theme: 'Building Networks to Increase Demand for FOI Use in Liberia.' The forums provide networking opportunities among PIOs, CIOs, and journalists to increase demand in the use of the FOI law. This is in addition to conduct of physical outreach forums, designed to reach wider and diverse audiences and be able to take direct questions from citizens. Participants include women, youth and people living with disabilities.

And, also, there are series of radio engagements across the country.

## 7.0 Conclusion

Access to information globally is a tool for good governance and public participation in decision making. Since the establishment of the Independent Information Commission of Liberia in 2012, strides have been made to educate stakeholders and seek the participation of the political leadership in implementing the FOI law and facilitating the functions of the Commission.

The Freedom of Information law seeks to guarantee the rights of people to access information as enshrined in Article 15(c) of the country's Constitution since the concept of access to information in Liberia is premised on the principle that public information is not the property of those holding it, but for the citizens whose tax dollars are used to finance public projects and social services. In other words, those who hold public information as simply trustees of that information.

Despite the challenges that have been faced in the implementation of the Act, it is worth noting that the Commission made strides. The full implementation of the law, though, warrants the cooperation of public officials as it will immensely contribute to opening the democratic space of Liberia and win the confidence of its international partners.

The Independent Information Commission, through its various departments, is making every effort to guarantee the fundamental human rights of the citizens of Liberia by ensuring that information sought under the Act is provided in a timely manner without hindrance. As a way of inspiring confidence, the Commission has worked to ensure that the process is fair to all sides.

The Commission's activities, like those of many other sectors, were hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused many entities like the IIC to close to the public. With the pandemic winding down, the activities of the Commission have resumed. The IIC is presently fully open and receiving complaints from the public.

## 8.0 Recommendations

The Commission is pleased to proffer the following recommendations for the kind consideration of the Honorable Legislature for the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act of 2010 of Liberia:

1. Provide adequate budgetary support to expand the offices/activities of the Commission outside of Monrovia. Initially this expansion could be on a regional basis with a cluster of three counties forming a region. At least one staff with internet access could run the regional office.
2. Consider amending the existing Freedom of Information Act. This recommendation specifically focuses on Chapter 6 "Appeal Procedures". It is the Commission's considered opinion that it is in the best interest of the country for the time of response to an access to information request be reduced from 30 days (which can go up to 60 days in some instances) to fifteen (15) days
3. That the legislature further amends the Act to make provision for at least two additional commissioners to be appointed by the President. These additional Commissioners will have oversight responsibilities for thematic areas. One of the three shall be appointed the Chairperson of the IIC.
4. That heads of entities strengthen and support the appointed Public Information Officers to effectively respond to requests from the public to the entity.
5. Heads of public and private bodies that have not appointed their Public Information Officers be required to do such appointments.
6. The proactive disclosure provision of the law is complied with by all institutions that are not currently in compliance.
7. Hence all institutions across the government must strive to have functional websites.