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Actions for genuine democratic alternatives, (inc).

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CAUTIOUS COMMENDATION FOR LIBERIA'S ANTI-CORRUPTION ACT

Monrovia, Liberia, May 14, 2008 0700 GMT: The Actions For Genuine Democratic Alternatives (AGENDA), on behalf of Civil Society Coalition Friends of the UNCAC (CSCF-UNCAC), an international coalition of activists fighting corruption, is cautiously commending the lower House of the 52nd Legislature for passing into law the act seeking to establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) that was forwarded eight months ago by the Governance Commission to the House's Committees on the Judiciary, and on Good Governance.

The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission is aimed at reducing financial fraud, and at implementing appropriate measures and undertaking programs geared toward preventing, investigating and prosecuting acts of corruption, including educating the public about the ills of corruption and the benefits of its eradication.

However, **AGENDA** is keen to observe that without the passage of other complementing legislations, some of which are currently before the House, such as **access to information, whistle blowing protection** and **code of conduct legislations**, as well as ensuring financial autonomy of the incoming commission, the commission would find it difficult to achieve its mandate. There is also the need to begin the internalization of the **National Anti-corruption Strategy (NAS)** earlier promulgated by the Government, on the individual agency level. It is worth to note that although the NAS calls for multi-agency or sectoral approach in addressing the issue of corruption, Ministries and Agencies are yet to announce any customized initiatives to address the menace of corruption or to cut bureaucratic red tape.

Therefore, **AGENDA** humbly beseeches the Liberian Senate to ensure that before it concurs with the House of Representatives on the Anti-corruption Agency bill, it must ensure that enough safeguards are inserted in the Act to ensure the commission's independence and autonomy. It is important to clearly define how the commissioners are selected and appointed, lest the Commission becomes an extension of the President's office and a reinforcement of the imperial presidency.

Meanwhile, **AGENDA** wishes to commend all opposing sides in the House of Representatives, including Representatives Snowe, Dorbor, Dunah, Wolokolie, Jallah, Seah and others of the Liberian Chapter of the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC) who were previously at diverse ends of the bill, for exercising statesmanship in agreeing on a way forward. We also commend the Liberty Party, Congress for Democratic Change and the Unity Party for working together to ensure the passage of this bill.

The Actions for Genuine Democratic Alternatives (AGENDA) is a collaboration of local and international activists working together to promote citizens participation in governance, with the aim of promoting good governance, transparency and accountability in the administration of public trust. It also seeks to harness public and private sectors views in a way that influences public policy, thus putting people first at the center of public policy-making.

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