

IDLO LAUNCHES PROJECT TO COMBAT SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN LIBERIA

(Monrovia, Liberia) February 10, 2016 - The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) today held a meeting to launch its first program in Liberia, aimed at helping to combat and promoting accountability for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

The program is part of the United States Government's Accountability Initiative which was launched by Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014 at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Accountability Initiative seeks to decrease impunity for sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected environments, scale judicial capacity and promote public confidence in the rule of law. Under this Initiative, the United States has committed \$8.35 million for projects in Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia.

Under the SGBV program, IDLO will work with the judiciary to enhance the efficiency, transparency and accountability of Criminal Court "E" in Montserrado, the special court designated to deal exclusively with sexual offences established in 2008, and improve access to justice and protection mechanisms for victims of SGBV. It will also work to enhance the capacity of offices under the Court Administrator to support efficient, transparent and accountable processing of SGBV cases, and will provide scholarships and other educational opportunities to increase the education of women in the Liberian National Police. Finally, IDLO will help link and improve justice, support and protection services by strengthening civil society organizations specializing in providing services for victims and witnesses suffering from SGBV.

For this program, IDLO will work in partnership with the Judiciary of the Republic of Liberia, the Ministry of Justice, and the Liberia National Police, as well as a variety of civil society organizations focused on addressing SGBV in Liberia. Today's meeting marks the completion of the inception phase of IDLO's program in Liberia, which allowed IDLO to consult with project partners in a participatory manner before the program commenced.

Reeva Thompson, IDLO's Field Program Manager in Liberia, said "IDLO works to support transparent and accountable justice institutions around the world. This is an important opportunity to work with the Liberian government and civil society partners to help improve access to justice for survivors of sexual violence".

The program will last two years and is funded by the United States Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and the Secretary's Office for Global Women's Issues.

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Notes to Editors

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) is the only intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law. IDLO works to enable governments and empower

people to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity.

IDLO was established in 1988 with its Headquarters in Rome, and was granted United Nations Observer status in 2001. Today IDLO has 30 member parties.

IDLO has a solid track record of delivering effective gender, law and justice sector reform programs in complex environments that target gender discrimination, in particular sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). IDLO's recent and ongoing programming in this field is benefitting countries including Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Honduras, Liberia and Somalia.