

## **ACC MEETS REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY**

The senior management team of the Anti-Corruption Commission has concluded Public Education and External Outreach Meetings with Civil Society and Community Based Organisations for the East, North and South Regions of the country. The Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission Lawyer Abdul Tejan-Cole said the aim of the meeting is to solicit support of the Civil Society in the fight against corruption. He disclosed that the Commission is undergoing restructuring to effectively execute the mandate and functions of the Commission, which are to investigate corrupt practices, prevent corruption and to educate the public on the evils of corruption and the benefits of a corrupt free society.

Commissioner Tejan-Cole briefed the meeting on the new dispensation of the Commission based on the recently launched Anti-Corruption Strategy paper. He revealed that the revised Anti-Corruption Act has now been gazetted and it will soon be introduced in Parliament for promulgation.

He said this new Act will give prosecution powers to the Anti-Corruption Commission, remove the influence of the Attorney General in the Anti-Corruption cases, make the declaration of assets by public officials compulsory and ensure the protection of whistle blowers and informants. The Commissioner also spoke on the problems and challenges facing the Anti-Corruption Commission which included the lack of funding, equipment and sufficient trained personnel.

The Director Prevention, Systems and Processes Review Mrs. Neneh Dabo said to effectively fulfill the mandate of prevention the directorate has been divided into three units, monitoring and compliance, systems and processes review and policy and ethics units.

She stressed on the significance of corrupt practices prevention and urged the civil society organisations to support the Commission to achieve its mandate.

The Director Public Education and External Outreach Dr. Ivan Ajibola Thomas said his directorate is mandated to educate the public on the evils of corruption and to solicit public support in the fight against corruption. He said the directorate intends to work with every institution and community in the country in the bid to minimize corruption so that it will not adversely affect the country's socio-economic development. Director Ivan Thomas revealed that when the new Act has been legislated, his directorate will be

conducting national and regional consultative conference with civil society organisations to design and implement the ACC's public education strategies.

The Head of Investigation of the Anti-Corruption Commission Ms Evelyn Walker outlined and elaborated on the definition of corrupt practices. She disclosed that the revised Act will increase the provision of corrupt practices from nine to twenty-nine. She said the power to prosecute given to the Commission means that the Commission will investigate and take its cases to court but it is the court that will do the trial and pass judgment as the rule of law is supreme in Sierra Leone. Chief Investigator Walker appealed for funds to train more investigators and prosecutors to enhance the quality of work in her department.