

## NEC Gender Section Focuses on Disability Inclusion

The NEC Gender Section has made great strides in advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities in



**NEC ED Mr. Lamin Lighe, addressing the gathering.**



**NEC Co-Chairperson, Hon. Sarah Jegede Toe, addressing the gathering**

the electoral cycle over the past year

In July 2016, NEC Gender Section Director Leisel Talery led, with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a series of consultations with disabled people's organizations (DPOs) in the Counties. The consultations resulted in a series of recommendations from the DPOs on how to reduce the barriers that restrict their full and equal participation in political life.



**NEC Gender Director Madam Leisel Y. Talery gives the overview of the workshop, urge participants to voice out their challenges**

To enhance the NEC's focus on including voters, staff, and others with disabilities, in December 2016, the NEC Gender Section began the process of drafting the Guidelines for Disability-Inclusive Elections in Liberia, a strategy that is designed with good practices for increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in the Liberian political process.

In February 2017, the NEC and IFES hosted the first workshop on disability inclusion to bring together NEC officials and disability rights advocates. Activities throughout the workshop included interactive sessions on a variety of electoral topics. Participants learned about and provided their own examples of reasonable accommodations for elections and barriers to participation of persons with different types of disabilities. A session on designing inclusive polling stations focused on assessing physical accessibility and training poll workers to support voters with disabilities.



**IFES Finance Manager, Mr. Barzie Zinnah, addressing the gathering.**

The NEC and DPOs also discussed disability rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Electoral Code, as well as conducting disability-inclusive activities throughout the electoral cycle.

Building on these activities, the NEC Gender Section will lead a series of consultations with DPOs across the Counties in August 2017. The NEC also has been collecting good practice examples of integrating women with disabilities into disability-focused activities and gender-focused activities.