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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**U.S. Government Hosts West Africa Anti-Corruption Workshop in Sierra Leone**

The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Justice, in conjunction with the Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission, are holding a West Africa Anti-Corruption Workshop at the Bintumani Hotel from December 12 to 16, 2011.

The purpose of the workshop is to increase the capacity of law enforcement officials in West Africa to investigate and prosecute allegations of public corruption and pursue asset recovery cases. Law enforcement officials from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo have been invited to participate. Officials of the U.S. Government, INTERPOL, the Government of Brazil, and the Government of Sierra Leone will make presentations and lead group exercises on a variety of topics including: investigating corruption and conducting financial investigations; prosecuting corruption and bribery; utilizing international tools and networks; making mutual legal assistance requests; and recovering the proceeds of corruption.

The United States Government chose to conduct this workshop in Sierra Leone in recognition of the Sierra Leone government's strong commitment to the fight against corruption and its successful track record in investigating and prosecuting corruption.

Fighting corruption is a central priority of U.S. foreign policy, and the United States is committed to building upon the foundation established by the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) by providing technical assistance to equip law enforcement officials with the knowledge and skills to investigate and prosecute public corruption. This workshop is also part of the United States' effort to assist in building accountable institutions in West Africa as part of the West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI), a new initiative to address the growing threat of trans-national organized crime and drug trafficking in the region.