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It is important that we protect whistle-blowers, as the role they play is critical, says W.African regional bloc ambassador

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By Evelyn Kpadeh Seagbeh

MONROVIA, Liberia

An ambassador serving in West Africa's 15-member regional bloc pressed home the importance of fully implementing whistle-blower legislation to better fight corruption in the region.

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"Fighting corruption is everybody's business, but we need to put in place appropriate legislation," said Tunde Ajisomo, the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) ambassador to Liberia, late Wednesday at the close of a weeklong major anti-corruption meeting in the capital Monrovia including 13 West African countries, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Arms, and international partners.

"In this regard that I am calling on the House of Representatives and the Senate of Liberia to endeavor and domesticate and ratify the whistle-blower protection legislation that I am aware the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission has submitted."

Ajisomo said as fighting corruption brings about good governance and enhances democratic processes, member states of the Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA) should pass whistle-blower legislation as a chief tool for fighting corruption.

"It is important that we protect whistle-blowers, because the role they are playing is very critical," he added.

During the meeting, the bloc passed several resolutions for guaranteeing the protection of whistleblowers in the fight against corruption across West African states and state parties' implementation of various legal instruments.

The resolutions call for ECOWAS Member States to meet international standards and apply good practices by following guidelines to encourage whistle-blowing and protecting whistle-blowers, and that whistle-blower protection systems and their implementation should be based on comprehensive, clear, and appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions.

The resolutions further call for all national stakeholders to be consulted in the preparation and development of whistle-blower protection legislation and procedures, and that it should require all employers in the public and private sectors to have a whistle-blowing policy. The policy should provide guidance to employees on where to report wrongdoing.

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