

# **OPENING REMARKS**

**BY**

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EASTERN REGIONAL MINISTER**

**AT**

**GHANA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES  
TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (GHEITI)**

**AT**

**CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL, KOFORIDUA**

**23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015**

**Mr. Chairman,**  
**Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives,**  
**Coordinating Directors and Finance Officers,**  
**Members of Ghana EITI Multi-Stakeholder Group,**  
**Members of Media present,**  
**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I deem it a great honour to provide some opening remarks at today's dissemination workshop of the 2012/2013 EITI Reports. I am delighted to be part of this event.

**Mr. Chairman,** given the strategic significance of natural resources especially minerals and oil and gas to the economy of Ghana, there is the need for a more transparent and prudent management of revenues from these strategic sectors.

The mining and oil and gas sectors for example contribute substantially to the economy in terms of contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), foreign exchange earnings and employment creation. However, the sector could contribute more to our national development if it is properly integrated into the national economy.

**Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,** the Eastern Region is rich in mineral resources such as gold, diamond, bauxite-tantalite, limestone, kaolin and clay. However, gold and diamond are the only minerals that are mined commercially. For over seventy (70) years, the diamond mines at Akwatia and Takrowase in the Birim River Valley were producing high quality industrial diamonds, but this has however declined considerably and is currently being mined at small scale level.

It may also interest you to know that plans to mine the major bauxite deposits at Kibi on the Atiwa Range are yet to materialize due to financial constraints and ecological and environmental concerns. The Range is the habitat of many rare and exotic flora and fauna, and is the

source of rivers that are crucial for the survival of other parts of the country, such as the Densu River which is the source of water for the Weiija dam in Accra.

**Mr. Chairman,** one of the critical mining activities that is gaining a lot of prominence and could have positive impact on the economy in terms of employment, foreign exchange is the small scale mining sector. According to the Minerals Commission, the sector contributed about 34% of total gold export in 2014. The growing significance of the Small scale mining sector points to the need for proper streamlining of their activities to ensure payment of royalties.

However, there are lot more of such groups that are not registered, often referred to as 'galamsey' engaged in gold mining. The operation of illegal mining activities has devastated most of the lands in the region and left un-reclaimed by the illegal miners. Indeed, I have on several occasions including when I paid a working visit to the Akyem Mine of Newmont Golden Ridge Limited as part of my official tour to the Birim North District appealed to the 'galamsey' operators to cease operations or face the full rigour of the law.

Let me use this opportunity, **Ladies and gentlemen,** to commend Newmont Ghana Gold for practising holistic mining, which ensures mine safety, offering employment to Ghanaians who form ninety-six (96) per cent of the company's works force and for channelling on (1) per cent of its profit into a development fund for the progress of communities in the district.

**Mr. Chairman,** I wish to commend the Ghana EITI Multi Stakeholder Group and the Ministry of Finance for sharing with us the findings of the 2012/2013 EITI reports for the mining and oil and gas sectors. For me, the significant contributions the EITI has made to revenue transparency in the mining sector since its inception in 2003 and when oil was discovered in 2007 and the initiative extended to oil and gas sector in 2010 cannot be over-emphasised. EITI in the mining sector has resulted in the publication of all payments and receipts between mining companies and government for the period 2004 to 2013. For the oil and

gas sector, reports produced so far covered the years 2010 to 2013. These reports have been instrumental in informing many of the reforms both in the mining and oil and gas sectors.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** Government will continue to put in place a robust regulatory framework that reflects global good practice and local concerns that promotes stability, confidence and consensus. To this end, **Mr. Chairman,** a framework is being developed by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Finance to guide the MMDAs in the utilization of mineral royalties disbursed to them by OASL. My team and I will work closely with the MMDAs to ensure the successful implementation of the guidelines when comes into force.

Let me conclude by saying that issues of transparency and accountability are critical pillars of good governance but there is the need to go beyond it to address the social issues in the mining communities such as negative impacts of illegal mining, compensation issues, maintenance of law and order and land disputes.

Thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a fruitful workshop.