

## **Report on the West African EITI Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria from September 11 – 12, 2008**

---

### **Introduction**

The Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI) hosted the first West African EITI Conference at ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja under the theme: Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative in West Africa, challenges and strategies.

The Conference was attended by about 130 representatives from the Private sector, Civil society Organizations, Government Agencies, African Regional Bodies, Donor organizations, Scholars and the media from 17 African countries as well as representatives from Norway, France and the UK.

Ghana EITI was represented at the Conference by Mr. Franklin Ashiadey, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Mr. Amponsah Tawiah, Minerals Commission and Mr. Kwaku Boa-Amponsem, EITI Aggregator

### **Objectives of the Conference**

The objectives of the Conference were to:

- To disseminate information and deepen public knowledge and awareness about EITI, NEITI and the Extractive industries;
- To sustain a regular forum for sharing experiences on transparency in the governance of resources among EITI implementing countries in West Africa in particular and Africa in general;
- To encourage the acquisition of information and data, and the development of a reservoir of knowledge, on transparency tools;
- To secure the commitment by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to support, fund and host a unit, programme or centre on resource watch in West Africa and
- To secure commitment from the African Union (AU) to pass a resolution in support of the EITI, and also to support the draft UN resolution on EITI.

### **Opening**

The Chairman of NEITI, Prof. Assisi Asobie, welcome all dignitaries and other participants from Nigeria, Africa and other parts of the world to the Conference. In his

welcome address he stated that revenue transparency, the core remit of EITI can only be achieved with the cooperation of companies, host governments and civil society. He noted that a vital approach to successful EITI lies in strengthening the accountability of decision-makers: of host governments and companies to the citizens: and of companies to their investors. In all these, civil society is critical: it needs to closely monitor the process and participate constructively, with governments and companies in eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

The Conference was opened by His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Nigeria on behalf the President. In his keynote address he underscored the fact that extractive resources can indeed promote growth; enhance poverty reduction and drive sustainable development. He however stressed that, desirable as it is, EITI is not a magic bullet. Mere implementation of EITI will not provide the omnibus solution to all the developmental challenges of a society. By the same token, EITI cannot be the stand-alone item on the agenda for development. There is therefore the critical need to strengthen the link between transparency, accountability and overall development.

Other speakers at the opening included Mr. M.H. Khalil Timamy Executive Director, AU; Dr. Ibn Chambers, ECOWAS Executive Secretary; Alberic Kacou, Resident Representative ,UNDP; Mr. Tore Nedrebo, Norwegian Ambassador; Ms Arie van der Wiel , Netherlands Ambassador; Lord Marloach- Brown, Minister for Africa, UK; Mr. Onno Ruhl, Nigeria Country Director World Bank and Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Energy, EU.

## **Presentations**

The presentations at the Conference covered a wide of themes on the Extractive Sector and Transparency. Some of the topics covered during the presentations are:

1. The Nexus between Extractive Revenue Transparency & Sustainable Development,
2. Extractive Revenue Transparency and Corporate Citizenry: imperatives & Challenges,
3. Extractive Revenue Transparency as a Tool for achieving the MDGs in Africa,
4. Challenges of implementing EITI at the country level,
5. Perspectives and roles of regional organizations in EITI implementation,
6. Best practices for resource and revenue
7. Embedding Civil Society into EITI implementation

8. EITI and Civil Society : drilling Down to the Community Level

9. EITI Principles; Validation & Enforcement

10. Strategies for Regional Engagement

The Ghanaian delegation made a presentation on the implementation of EITI challenges and lessons. Some of the challenges identified included inadequate capacity, financial resources for aggregation and reconciliation, data collection for the aggregation and meeting the expectations of Civil Society, Mining Companies and government.

The extension of Ghana EITI to the sub-regional level is one lesson that other country could learn from the Ghana's implementation. Another lesson learnt in the EITI implementation in Ghana is that constant and effective dialogue among all stakeholders is necessary for the successful implementation of the initiative.

Other country experiences presented were by Nigeria, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea, DRC and Mauritania.

## **FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

At the end of the two days deliberation the Conference participants having considered the significance of the EITI initiative to transparency and good governance in West Africa, the Forum has agreed on the following action plan:

1. Disseminate information and deepen public knowledge and awareness about EITI and the extractives industries.
2. Establish an effective regional forum for the sharing of experiences and resources for effective implementation of EITI including coordination of effort in the area of capacity building, Civil Society engagement and other matters that are specific to the region.
3. Encourage the acquisition of information and the development of a reservoir of knowledge on resource reserve in West Africa and embark on resource endowment mapping in collaboration with sub-regional economic groupings in Africa.
4. Secure commitment of ECOWAS to support, fund, and host a unit, programme or center on resource watch in West Africa.

5. Secure the commitment from the African Union and sub-regional economic groupings to pass a resolution in support of EITI and make provisions for assisting EITI implementing countries in Africa
6. Explore ways in which candidate and supporting countries can collaborate in achieving a finger printing, DNA identification of "blood oil" in order to end trade in conflict oil in Africa
7. Build an effective and sustained media interaction.
8. Build capacity for EITI and Civil Society Organizations.
9. Ensure annual budgetary provision for the implementation of EITI principles in Africa.
10. Design a transparency and accountability curriculum for use at all educational levels in Africa
11. Encourage CSOs and international organizations to lobby, and market EITI principles to consumer countries.
12. Form a common monitoring template and a common monitoring group for West Africa EITI members.
13. Mainstream gender issues in EITI implementation.
14. Carry out publication and broadcast of all EITI report findings and related issues in local languages for effective dissemination to the grassroots.
15. Encourage and protect all citizens to advocate for transparency and proper resource governance within the context of the EITI principle.