

**MINUTES/REPORT OF THE MEETING WITH THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION HELD
AT THE NEITI SECRETARIAT IN ABUJA ON MONDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2007.**

The NEITI Secretariat hosted the visiting Norwegian Minister for International Development and his delegation at the NEITI Secretariat on the 29th of January 2007.

The Meeting commenced at about 4.45pm. The Chairperson NEITI and Minister of Education, Obiageli Ezekwesili welcomed the delegation to the NEITI Secretariat. She stated that Nigeria has made appreciable progress in implementing EITI. She added that Nigeria was willing to learn best practices from Norway in managing excess oil revenue. She also commended Norway's interest in assisting resource rich developing countries in managing their natural resources. She went further to express her delight that the EITI secretariat would be domiciled in Oslo.

The Chairperson emphasized the importance of the Nigerian oil sector to the economy. She explained that the present administration was making concerted efforts to ensure that Nigeria's rich gas reserves are managed effectively. She stated that the issues identified by the audit report would be taken into cognizance in managing the gas sector.

She informed the delegation that the NEITI has recently completed the (1999-2004) Financial, Process and Physical Audits and that the procurement process has begun for the 2005 Audit. She also informed the meeting that all discrepancies identified in the financial report had been resolved. The final audit report was presented to Mr. President in December 2006. She noted that this was a positive development considering the fact that in retrospect, the general perception was that the Nigerian petroleum sector was opaque.

She further informed the delegation that NEITI was working with the National Assembly for the NEITI bill to be passed into law. She explained that the lower house had passed the bill but the Senate were yet to pass it and that it is expected that the President will announce the NEITI Act by March 2007.

She informed them that there was an active secretariat which gives support to the NSWG and gave a brief description of the NSWG membership. She added that there was a Civil Society Steering Committee linked to the NSWG and that there was a CS representative domiciled in the Secretariat.

The Minister stated that she was gratified that Nigeria has been receiving accolades both on the regional and international level in its quest for transparency. She stated further that other African countries are taking a cue from Nigeria with EITI implementation.

On an end note, she applauded the Norwegian Oil for Development Initiative. She said that the oil for development program is an idea well conceived, and that it is well supported by the NEITI. She informed the meeting that DFID and the World Bank have been instrumental in their support to the NEITI.

She noted that in order for the NEITI to achieve its objectives, it is important to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat. She said the OFD could assist the Secretariat in this regard.

Mr Erik Solheim, the Minister for International Development, Norway thanked the Minister for her opening remarks and commended her for the substantive progress NEITI has recorded and the commitment of Mr. President in driving the present reforms.

He stated that the rationale for initiating EITI was to curb corruption in resource rich countries that have underperformed. He explained that the Norwegians had no model as such. According to him, Norway already had a robust industrial base before oil was discovered, and that this helped their efforts to operate a good oil program.

He informed the meeting that 3 important lessons that had moved the Norwegian economy forward included:

- Transparency – The Norwegian oil receipts can be traced by its citizens.
- Every raw material found in Norway belongs to the Norwegian people. The citizens and the government are in the driver's seat.
- Strong Civil Society.

In his conclusion, he stated that the Oil for Development program should initiate discussions with the Secretariat to explore ways in which both parties could work together

Questions & Answers

COMMENT BY MR David Ugolor

David Ugolor of Publish what you pay Nigeria emphasized on the need to fast track the passage of the NEITI bill into law. He encouraged the Norwegians to put their support in passing the bill. Mr. Ugolor also expressed concern that the western countries facilitated corruption in Nigeria. He stated that western banks assisted in moving looted funds. In the light of this, he proposed that there was a need for the international community to aggressively tackle the issue

(Q) Mr Jan Borgen of Transparency International Norway asked whether there was any follow up on the Independent Audit.

(A) Already procuring Audit for 2005/2006 and the audits will subsequently become a yearly exercise.

(Q) Is the NEITI looking at expenditure transparency as opposed to revenue transparency?

(A) Expenditure transparency is captured in the public procurement reform of the administration. There is also a yearly assessment of budget implementation carried out by the Ministry of Finance

(Q) Mrs Maduka, an NSWG member asked why oil rich countries were poor. She stated that states are allocated billions of naira and these are published. However, she stated that there was the need to deepen the information dissemination and capacity to the grassroots level. This would enable the people at the grassroots hold their leaders accountable.

(Q) Punch Newspaper- the reporter asked a question about the Oil for Development fund.

(A) The Oil for development fund is there to provide expertise but only Nigerians can help themselves.

(Q) Why is Norway not part of OPEC? Is Norway operating in Nigeria?

(A) Norway is a member of the International Energy Agency and dialogues with other OPEC countries. Statoil (biggest Norwegian oil company) operates in Nigeria. Production is set to commence next year and the company has invested about \$1 billion in Nigeria

Eva Joly of Norad said she was glad that African countries understand the dynamics of corruption. She agreed that western countries were also responsible for the corruption in developing countries

Madam Ezekwesili promised to bring up the issue of Western Capitals harbouring looted funds from developing Countries at the Davos meeting in 2008.

In her closing remarks, the Minister thanked the Norwegian delegation and all present on behalf of the Nigerian government. She assured that fighting corruption can only happen if the country is committed to it and also if the country receives complementary support from other countries like Norway. She further assured that NEITI will not be a passing phase and pleaded with the delegation to ensure that they become ambassadors of things that Nigeria has done well as well as Nigeria's challenges.

The ES, Dr. Bright Okogu, in his vote of thanks informed the meeting that Nigeria was making progress under the administration's reforms and reiterated that Nigeria is taking the lead by instituting its own home-grown reform program which covers both macroeconomic and fiscal reforms as well as governance and anti-corruption aspects.

He asked the media and civil society to continue to work with the NEITI and thanked all for coming.

End.

Attendance list attached.

NEITI MEETING WITH NORWEGIAN DELEGATION AT THE NEITI SECRETARIAT

ATTENDANCE SHEET

29TH JANUARY 2007

S/N	NAME	ORGANIZATION
1	NWADUIGWUU AMAIA	CHANNELS TV (MEDIA)
2	THELMA EGBUNIKE	AIT (MEDIA)
3	GOKE ADEBAYO	AIT (Camera) (MEDIA)
4	OMALE ONOKPO	SILVERBIRD TV (MEDIA)
5	DAN AYONOL	SILVERBIRD (CAMERA) (MEDIA)
6	CHRIS OGBOR	RHYTHM 94.7 (RADIO) (MEDIA)
7	CHRIS ABAH	NANS (CS)
8	NKOLI OBI-OGBOLU	STAGECRAFT (CS)
9	CLARA NWACHUKWU	THE PUNCH (MEDIA)
10	SEBASTINE OBASI	NEWSWATCH (MEDIA)
11	BASSEY UDO	DAILY INDEPENDENT (MEDIA)
12	MUHAMMED MUSTAPHA	PWYP – NIG (CS)
13	EVA JOLY	NORAD
14	CHIOMA ATUOKWU	WANGONET (CS)
15	MAY-ELIN STENER	MFA, NORWAY
16	KARI RUSDEN	MFA, NORWAY
17	JAN BORGEN	TI-NORWAY
18	DAVID UGOLOR	PWYP – NIG (CS)
19	EVA JOLY	NNAU, NUWY
20	IMO J. ITSUELI	NEITI (DUBRI)
21	JOANNA MADUKA	NSWG/NEITI
22	BRIGHT OKOGU	NEITI SECRETARIAT
23	OBY EZEKWESILI	NSWG/NEITI
24	ERIK SOLHEIM	MINISTER OF INT'L DEVT. MFA, NORWAY
25	ANITA UTSETH	DEP. MIN. OF OIL & ENERGY, NORWAY
26	TORE NEDRES	AMBASSADOR, NORWAY
27	TOROEIR KNUTSEN	MPE, NORWAY
28	LEIV LONOE	O.I. FOR DEV. NORWAY
29	HALVOR HUSAEUS	NORWEGIAN EMBASSY
30	STAN RERRI	NEITI SECRETARIAT
31	ROY F. ANDERSEN	MIN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
32	JOHN ONYEUKWU	CONCERNED PROFESSIONALS
33	UCHE IGWE	NEITI SECRETARIAT
34	MARYAM I-UWAIS	NEITI SECRETARIAT
35	FATIMA CIROMA-UMAR	NEITI SECRETARIAT
36	OBO IDORNIGIE	NEITI SECRETARIAT