

**GOODWILL MESSAGE BY AMANDA 'LUMUN FEESE, EITI CONSULTANT,
WORLD BANK ON THE OCCASION OF THE NIGERIAN EXTRACTIVE
INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (NEITI) SOUTH EAST ROADSHOW
AT OWERRI ON NOVEMBER, 3RD 2009**

Protocols

It is my pleasure to be present at the South East edition of the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) roadshows on the presentation of the 2005 NEITI Audit report. I feel honored to be given the opportunity to deliver this goodwill message on behalf of the World Bank.

To Your Excellency, Governor Ikedi Ohakim, and Your Excellencies, Governor Sullivan Chime, Governor Theodore Orji, Governor Peter Obi, Governor Martin Elechi, all distinguished speakers on the high table and to all of the participants, I bring the best wishes and the continued commitment of the World Bank to work with the Government of Nigeria to promote governance and engender transparency and accountability in the country at large.

There is no gainsaying that the Government has been committed to exposing the hitherto highly confidential Nigerian oil and gas industry to greater public scrutiny. This is of course evident through the commendable reform programme of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua through the Petroleum Industry Bill which seeks to institute governance, accountability, and transparency in policy making, regulation and commercial operation of the entire Nigerian oil and gas industry.

This is further demonstrated through the activities of NEITI to increase the capacity of all stakeholders to access, understand and participate in the dialogue on extractive industry accountability as well as stimulate and facilitate demand for revenue accountability. In this regards, the World Bank also commends the efforts of the National Stakeholders Working Group (NSWG) and that of the NEITI Secretariat to work with all stakeholders to seek to maximize development gains from oil revenues and ultimately reduce poverty to its barest minimum. It is for the aforementioned that along with DFID, the World Bank, which is in turn supported by a Multi Donor Trust Fund of many donors has been working closely with the Nigerian Government through support to NEITI to achieve this laudable mandate and ideal.

In Nigeria, the implementation of EITI has been largely geared towards the Oil and Gas sector. However, plans are underway to extend this into the emerging solid minerals sector. The aforementioned sectors have the great potentials to generate and spur a multiplier effect on development and employment in the South-East region with the recent emergence of the region in the production of oil as well as the presence of solid minerals. What better time than now but to establish transparent and fair rules at the onset of economic activities in both sectors within the region. The benefit is the creation of an attractive investment climate for sustainable business investment, promotion of accountability of the Federal, State, and Local Governments to its citizenry, improvement of the ability of citizens to scrutinize the budgets and monitor implementation of the budgets through reliable information on earned revenues.

The multi-stakeholder structure of the EITI and its participative nature means that all stakeholders-Governments, Industries and Civil Society groups are actively involved in designing, steering, and governing the process. This in essence has served as a fast knowledge base for stakeholders to differentiate between myth and facts of the technical and commercial issues involving revenues and payments covered by EITI. The role of each stakeholder cannot be discarded as each is important and imperative to the EITI process.

It is therefore our hope that the various stakeholder groups here present are better integrated into the EITI process following the event today. I urge you all to fully engage the NEITI Secretariat today and beyond so as to deepen your understanding of what role you can play in the process of demanding for revenue accountability as well as monitoring how these revenues are ultimately spent towards meaningful and sustainable development of your council, local government, state, region and Nigeria at large.

Thank you all

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