

**NIGERIA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY  
INITIATIVE (NEITI)**

**3<sup>ND</sup> INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY  
SOUTH WEST REGION**

**Lagos, 1-2 December 2005**

**Goodwill Message from the  
UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank**

**Delivered by Ilaria Chessa**

*Protocol*

I feel honored to be here today. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Interactive Session with representatives of civil society in the South West Region of the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (the N-EITI). Events like this are an invaluable opportunity for sharing information and engaging in a constructive dialogue around issues of public interest. The extraordinary turnout today is a demonstration of the interest that the people in the Centre of Excellence and the South West region have for the work that the N-EITI is doing to open to greater public scrutiny sectors, such as oil, gas and now mining that are so crucial to the wellbeing of Nigerians. Greater openness, transparency is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end; it can lead to greater accountability and in turn translate into real, tangible improvements in the living standards of Nigerians.

The two agencies I represent here - the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank - are delighted to be associated with the N-EITI and encourage its ambitious agenda. The World Bank and DFID commend the path-breaking commitment of President Olusegun Obasanjo to the

principles of the N-EITI and to its implementation. We also wish to praise the excellent work of the National Stakeholders Working Group (the NSWG) and that of the N-EITI Secretariat in driving the Initiative forward and setting an international best practice standard for its implementation.

The N-EITI is one of the fundamental components of Nigeria's ongoing reform agenda. Other countries, whose economies are based on extractive industries, look to Nigeria's N-EITI as a model. As the first country to sign up to the global EITI, Nigeria is in fact leading the way in its implementation. A number of countries have recognized Nigeria's leadership and followed her example by signing up to the Initiative. Some have also sought Nigeria's guidance to establish and implement their own EITI, like for example the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe and the Republic of Guinea.

The N-EITI is about transparency in the oil business and much more. It includes gas and the emerging solid minerals sector, whose development has the potential to generate employment and wealth in several parts of the nation. The establishment of transparent and fair rules at the outset for the functioning of this emerging sector will help creating a better environment to do business and attracting investment; it will further contribute to economic and social progress by enhancing democratic participation in revenue allocation and monitoring.

At this Interactive session we will hear about the objectives and activities of the N-EITI, its actors and achievements to date. In particular, we will discuss the role that civil society has in the scrutiny of the revenues generated from extractive sectors, but as importantly in the scrutiny of how these revenues are utilized by the three tiers of government to the benefit of all Nigerians. Clarity about how much revenue is generated from extractive sectors can only be useful if the same clarity also exists with respect to how these revenues are appropriated and spent.

The N-EITI will facilitate this public scrutiny in so far as revenues generated from extractive sectors are concerned. This will be done through the publication of the findings from the three independent audits of the oil sector; a speedy passage into law of the EITI bill by the National Assembly would further guarantee that these audits and the public scrutiny they can generate are not just a one-off exercise but a system sustained over time.

But the N-EITI cannot do everything. It will not be able to say how revenues are distributed to the various tiers of government and how these are utilized. This information is available elsewhere. The allocation of resources to all tiers of government from the Federation Account is published every month in the newspapers and yearly audited financial accounts provide information of how government spends public resources.

Civil society groups that are interested and engaged in the N-EITI have therefore an important role to play within and beyond the remits of the N-EITI. They can request information on revenues and expenditures, where this is not already available; they can analyze it and understand what it means in practice for the constituencies they represent; and they can use it as a tool to monitor the use of resources and to hold their respective governments more accountable. The N-EITI – like all other efforts to promote greater openness in the way government operates – can only succeed and be sustained in the future if this is pursued with the collaboration of civil society. The NSWG is convinced of this and this belief is at the basis of today's Interactive session.

Your Excellency, the international community and certainly the World Bank and the UK Government look at Nigeria as the lead implementer of the EITI and follow its progress closely. In days like the present ones, we are reminded of how easy it can be for the actions of a few individuals and the related media

coverage they receive to undermine the reputation of a rich and diverse nation like Nigeria. In days like these as ever we must ensure that we keep the focus on the part of this Nation that is made of many people with drive, enthusiasm and commitment, working selflessly to reform and strengthen the public and private institutions that can move Nigeria forward. Today more than ever it is important that all stakeholders apply even more effort to deepen this process further and faster. As it relates to the N-EITI, this means engaging constructively in the process, adding to it within our respective organizational remits, covering it honestly and extensively in the media. It further means applying the underlying principles of the EITI within but also beyond the Initiative itself, extending these principles to all spheres of our public and dare I say individual life.

I hope the next two days will generate a rich, frank and constructive debate. And I wish you fruitful deliberations.