

**Statement by Dr. Siyan Malomo, Chairman of NEITI at
Northeast Road-show Press Conference Held at Zaranda
Hotel, Bauchi on 30 August 2007**

Distinguished Members of the Press,

It gives me great pleasure to share a few words with you today. Let me start by placing on record our profound appreciation for the outstanding support provided by the press to NEITI and the campaign for extractive revenue transparency in Nigeria. We are immensely thankful for your solidarity so far. Like Oliver Twist, we shall continue to ask for more, and we are hopeful that you will continue to oblige us, in the interest of the overall development of our dear country. On our part, we shall continue to cherish and nourish this partnership. This is because we fervently believe that the Fourth Estate of the Realm is a major stakeholder in this important campaign.

You have all been witnesses to the great cross-fertilization of ideas here in the past two days. The highpoints of the submissions have been captured in the communiqué, copies of which will be made available to you. The enthusiasm reflected in this gathering and the salient points raised here have reinforced our belief in the need for the buy-in of all stakeholders. For us to succeed in this mission, we need constant sensitization and consultation. This is the idea behind the road-shows, which will now move from the zonal to sub-zonal levels, and will be complemented with other public outreach activities. Our ultimate goal is to reach Nigerians across the board, engender support for our mandate and ensure compliance with the demands of the NEITI Act.

Apart from serving as a platform for spreading the message about NEITI, this road-show has also provided a great opportunity to receive inputs from stakeholders in the zone and across the country on the implications of and mechanisms for operationalizing the NEITI Act, which was signed into law on May 28 this year. It has

also served as a veritable forum for demonstrating the relevance of NEITI to all sections of the country. As you all know, the extractive sector covers oil, gas and mining. Even when there is still a possibility of discovering oil in this zone, the Northeast is rich in solid minerals. It is therefore not a surprise that concerns about solid minerals dominated discussions here. It is gratifying that the message of extractive revenue transparency resonated with the people of the Northeast going by the quality of participation here. We are thankful for the robust contributions and suggestions from the resource persons and the participants, and we promise to factor them into our planning for the next phase of NEITI.

With the great foundation already laid by my predecessor, Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili, the growing appreciation by a cross-section of Nigerians and the backing of the law, NEITI is poised for more groundbreaking work. We are bracing ourselves for the challenges ahead, as we develop a new strategic framework for the organization in line with the demands of the Act and deepen and expand the scope of our work. As you know already, the NEITI audit will now be a yearly event. May I also add that as we move forward, we shall go beyond oil and gas and cover the entire gamut of the extractive sector. We shall also continue to link our work with issues of poverty reduction, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and sustainable development to ensure that we connect with Nigerians. In doing all of these, we shall continue to need your support. We urge you to stay the course with us.

Now I can take your questions.