

WEST AFRICAN EITI CONFERENCE

11 to 12 September, Abuja, Nigeria

Background

The West Africa sub-region is rich in natural resources. All things being equal, the sub-region should be one of the richest in the world. This, however, is yet to happen. Rather than propelling growth and development, abundant natural resources have fueled bad governance, conflicts and poverty in West Africa. The situation in the sub-region provides ample illustration for the dispiriting and paradoxical development called the “Resource Curse.”

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global movement aimed at reversing the resource curse syndrome. It is a coalition of countries, companies and civil society (supported by donor countries and organizations) that uses transparency and accountability as instruments for ensuring that natural resources aid poverty reduction and sustainable development in resource rich countries.

More than twenty countries from different regions of the globe have signed on to this initiative so far, with majority of them from the West African sub-region. The different countries are at different stages of implementation. Because of the importance of this initiative to the transformation of the West African sub-region, it is important to sustain the momentum in the EITI-implementing countries, bring non-implementing countries into the fold, and mainstream EITI into existing regional and sub-regional instruments and institutions. This is the rationale for the West Africa EITI Conference.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected at the end of the conference:

- Agreement on a regular forum for sharing experiences on transparency in the governance of resources;
- Development of a reservoir of knowledge and data on transparency tools;
- Commitment by the African Union to pass a resolution in support of EITI;
- Commitment by ECOWAS to support, fund and host a unit/programme/center on Resource Watch in West Africa;
- Development of synergy with professional associations and academic institutions with similar objectives.

Expected Participants

In furtherance of the multi-stakeholders approach of EITI, participants will be drawn from the following constituencies:

1. All ECOWAS member states;
2. All EITI Candidate countries in Africa;
3. Other Oil & Gas/Mineral resource-rich countries in Africa;
4. Representatives of AU, NEPAD, ECOWAS and ECOWAS-sister organizations in Africa;
5. Representatives of Extractive Industry companies in West Africa;
6. Representatives of civil society groups in West Africa, including Publish What You Pay, and professional associations and institutions relevant to the extractive sector.
7. Representatives of Parliamentarians, regional and sub-national administrators, the Judiciary, Regulatory Agencies and Anti-corruption agencies;
8. Representatives of EITI International Secretariat;
9. High level representatives of EITI-supporting governments

Venue

Abuja, Nigeria

Conference Dates:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Arrival Date: | 10 September 2008 |
| Conference Dates: | 11 & 12 September 2008 |
| Departure Date: | 13 September 2008 |