



## Neglect of Mineral Producing Communities Portends Danger – Minister

From Abimbola Akosile and Juliana Taiwo in Abuja, 08.30.2007

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### FCT

Minister for Solid Minerals Development, Alhaji Sarafa Isola, has warned that the continued neglect of communities where natural resources are tapped portends serious danger for the economy.

Isola said this at the opening of the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) North East Road-Show, in Bauchi.

Represented by Director-General of the Mining Cadastre Office, Professor Ibrahim Garba, Isola stressed the importance of taking care of communities where resources are extracted, and urged that they be given a fair share of proceeds from the resources to avoid the repeat of the crisis in the Niger Delta in other parts of the country.

“Before oil became the main stay of the economy, revenue from other resources and taxes were used to develop oil. What is happening in the Niger Delta today will also happen in other regions if government cannot account for revenue, when it comes to taking care of communities,” he warned.

In his keynote address, Governor of Bauchi State, Mallam Isa Yuguda, said transparency matters if Nigeria was to make remarkable progress in the extractive industry.

“Transparency matters, it does for a number of reasons. Transparency matters because power is held in trust on behalf of the people and because the common wealth should be managed in a manner that is transparent to all the trustees. Transparency matters because it engenders trust, thereby facilitating the growth of social capital, a critical ingredient for peace and growth.

Transparency matters because it limits graft in governance, ensure that resource endowments promote the common good, rather than the good of a few. Transparency matters because it guarantees due process and competition, thereby facilitating investment, growth and development,” he said.

Yuguda said transparency holds the key to transformation of the country from a potential rich country to a really prosperous one. “We all know that our dear country is richly endowed with abundant natural resources. Apart from oil and gas, which presently account for the bulk of our foreign earnings, our country has valuable minerals, stones and metals. Despite this super abundance and billions of dollars that have rolled in over the years, our people are still among the poorest in the world, hindered by low per capital income, abysmal infrastructure, and limited opportunities,” he said.