



**Gender Action Comments:
The EITI's Strategy Working Group Public Consultation
Integrated Gender Dimensions**

Gender Action supports the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative's (EITI's) critical efforts to increase oversight, transparency and accountability of extractive industries (EIs) worldwide. We commend the Board's decision to establish a Strategy Working Group and conduct a public consultation. Gender Action's comments for this public consultation focus on the **EITI Principles and Criteria**, which provide the framework and scope for EITI's beliefs and aims.

Gender Action seeks to highlight the conspicuous absence of gender within the **EITI Principles and Criteria**. In particular, the first principles states that the prudent use of natural resource wealth should be an important engine for sustainable economic growth, but "if not managed properly, can create negative economic and social impacts." While true, this statement dilutes such negative "social impacts" by neglecting to explicitly acknowledge the highly gendered nature of both resource extraction and the mismanagement of natural resource wealth.

With regard to resource extraction processes, Gender Action research has demonstrated that EIs tend to employ mostly male, and often migrant, workers. Volatile cash flows into project areas and demographic changes disrupt the gender dynamics of local economics by propelling subsistence communities into cash-based economies that favor men. Women not only lose their livelihoods as land is appropriated to EIs and their economic opportunities disappear, they also have to increase their unpaid care work—such as providing food for their families, fetching firewood and water, and caring for children and elderly—as men abandon their subsistence activities to earn quick cash wages. When employed by EI projects, women tend to receive only the most menial of tasks such as cooking and cleaning, which they carry out within male-dominated and dangerous working conditions. Consequently, extractive industries have been linked to deepened poverty for women, as well as detrimental increases in gender-based violence, prostitution, human trafficking, sexual harassment and STI/ HIV transmission.

Gender Action field research has also demonstrated that women face severe discrimination in the hiring and compensation schemes of extractive projects. They are rarely, if ever, consulted in the design and implementation of EI projects and receive little to no compensation for their losses. This exacerbates gender inequalities and presents immense risks for already marginalized poor women. In many resource-rich developing countries, women have highly precarious to non-existent rights. They have limited access to resources such as credit, education and technology; seldom enforced legal protection; and restricted influence in decision-making spheres at local and national levels. Resource extraction exacerbates these gender inequalities by robbing women of critical livelihoods, economic opportunities, and land access; excluding them from resource management; and degrading the environment on which they depend. This disproportionately undermines their potential to benefit from "economic growth that contributes to sustainable development and poverty reduction" when compared to men.

Women also play a critical role in environmental and resource management. As the majority of subsistence farmers in most developing countries, women's livelihoods are tied to their environments; their ability to provide much-needed sustenance for families and communities is compromised by the land appropriation that accompanies EI projects. Resource extraction also causes serious environmental degradation, which negatively impacts, for example, women's remaining farmland, crops and water sources. Further, EIs contribute to climate change, to which women and girls are disproportionately vulnerable due to their limited mobility, access to information systems, and resources with which to

prepare for and cope with environmental disasters. At the same time, women have a wealth of knowledge regarding resource management and conservation that should be harnessed for solving the world's pressing environmental challenges.

Rampant or pervasive corruption causing mismanagement of natural resource wealth has substantial gender differentiated consequences as well. Economic distortions caused by mismanaged wealth in resource-rich countries—whereby a tiny elite government and multinational companies profit enormously off resource extraction while de-prioritizing citizen needs—constrict the social spending (eg. health and education) on which poor women and girls especially rely due to gender inequalities that restrict their mobility and economic opportunity.

In sum, “sustainable development” and “poverty reduction”—phrases used in **EITI's Principles and Criteria**—mean very different things to women and men. EITI supporters, implementers and other stakeholders must recognize that resource extraction and management are not gender-neutral spheres. Women suffer massively around EI project sites and rarely, if ever, benefit from the economic growth that can accompany resource extraction. Such negative gender impacts are so entrenched in extractive industry processes that unless the promotion of women's rights features more prominently in EITI's framework and scope, the EITI will unintentionally help perpetuate gender inequalities, undermining its otherwise commendable efforts. We thus urge the EITI to embed gender considerations firmly into its **Principles and Criteria**. To facilitate it doing so, see the following Gender Action resources:

- [Gender Toolkit for International Finance Watchers](#)
- [Gender, IFIs and Extractive Industries Link](#)
- [Broken Promises: Gender Impacts of the World Bank-Financed West African and Chad-Cameroon Pipelines](#)
- [Boom-Time Blues: Big Oil's Gender Impacts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Sakhalin](#)
- [Governing Climate Funds: What Will Work for Women?](#)
- [Doubling the Damage: World Bank Climate Investment Funds Undermine Climate and Gender Justice](#)
- [Empty Promises: Gender Scorecard of World Bank-managed Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Indonesia](#)
- [Gender Action/WLSLAC's Joint Gender Audit of a Representative Sample of 50 IFI Investments in China](#)
- [Gender, International Finance and Climate Change Link](#)
- [Gender, IFIs and Gender-Based Violence Case-Study: Democratic Republic of Congo](#)
- [Gender, IFIs and Indigenous Rights](#)
- [Gender, IFIs, and Food Insecurity: A Primer](#)
- [Gender, IFIs, and Food Insecurity Case-Study: Ethiopia](#)
- [Gender, IFIs, and Food Insecurity Case-Study: Haiti](#)
- [Gender, IFIs, and Food Insecurity: Kenya](#)
- [Speaking Up for Gender: A Step-By-Step Guide to Holding IFIs Accountable](#)
- [Gender Justice: A Citizen's Guide to Gender Accountability at International Financial Institutions](#)