

STATEMENTS OF FAITH O. NWADISHI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KOYENUM IMMALAH FOUNDATION, NATIONAL COORDINATOR PWYP NIGERIA AT THE STAKEHOLDER FORUM OF THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE AT THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE 2011

IMPLEMENTATION OF EITI AND VALIDATION PROCESS THE CIVIL SOCIETY VIEW POINT: NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

Introduction:

Since the first idea for the EITI was mooted in 2002, there has been giant strides and mile stones coverage which the founding persons are proud of, from a base line of countries signing on to the initiative to the development of the criteria and principles.

It has been quite a learning process and I believe we are still learning with the hope that we get it right, and operate a water tight system that would be a model to so many other initiatives out there.

Turning the resource 'curse' to 'blessing' by the accountability and transparency of payments and receipts from the extractive sector is no mean task, coming from the back drop of so much secrecy surrounding the sector and the 'mystery' of operations especially in the oil and gas sector.

It is nine years now into the implementation of this initiative. It is a good enough time to share our experiences, our challenges and air our views on issues and aspects we feel something has to be done.

In 2010, the "publish what you pay Nigeria coalition" supported by PACT/USAID, undertook a study of the EITI implementation and using the Nigeria validation as a reference point to assess the initiative.

This presentation therefore shall be highlighting the thoughts of stakeholders in the EITI process especially on post validation.

We had course to discuss EITI at communities where different activities of the international oil companies are going on, how they perceive it and suggestions for the strengthening of the process.

*"Since joining the multi-stakeholder initiative in 2004 Nigeria has gone through a period of exemplary implementation reaching the zenith to become a global 'shining light' and 'champion' and descending into a cesspit sparking suspicion and heightening risk of commitment failures."*¹

This was the situation with NEITI before the research was undertaken but in the past six months, there have been positive developments that put Nigeria back on track. With this wealth of experience, Nigeria must continue to share with other implementing countries the good, the bad, the ugly and beautiful story of Nigeria.

"Nigeria has gained much more than any other country implementing the EITI by the very nature of the peculiar high standards it set for itself. These standards are obviously beyond the minimum requirements set by EITI Secretariat, given the manner in which they were rooted in the comprehensive economic reform agenda that precipitated them" Garuba Dauda, Abuja.

EITI has become the internationally accepted standard for transparency in oil, gas and mining sectors¹. According to the World Bank survey on EITI implementation ‘those countries that have the most successful implementation have been successful because, among other things, they have consistent, dedicated and high-level leadership and I must add a very vibrant civil society.

Today eleven countries are in the category of compliant countries, including Nigeria, I congratulate the civil society most of whom insisted that the right thing must be done at the risk of losing their freedom or worst still their lives. Also I must appreciate the partners in Nigeria and all others working around the globe, who saw to it that the work of the civil society is sustained.

All these success stories can easily be forgotten if the support dwindles or if we all go to bed to sleep having been adjudged compliant by EITI. Let me share with you some thoughts from Nigeria on Post Validation.

“Indeed, the journey has just begun. Let’s get down to business and let us emphasize more than before, issues that border on solid minerals which we seem to have relegated to the background with everyone’s attention turned towards the oil industry. There is a huge gap in the sector as well and it will be good to build the capacity of CSOs to effectively engage it.” Dudu Manuga from Jos, North Central Nigeria

“We thank God that we were part of the history making event at our level. The question now is when the average man in the street can begin to feel the benefits.” Jude Obasanmi from Ekpoma, South South Nigeria.

“More is expected from Nigerians now, especially CSOs in NEITI. I also say bravo to our able leaders, we will jointly make more moves and changes.” Collect Nwachukwu from Ebonyi , South East Nigeria.

“I hope the compliance status doesn’t become a symbolic thing here but will translate into actual work and courage to straighten out contentious issues relating to extraction and the Nigerian economy.” Nsikan-George Emana, Abuja

“NEITI validation (by EITI) is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It is another way of saying, Nigeria has passed the international EITI exam and we are glad. Nonetheless, the effect of NEITI validation on Nigerian tables is going to be one of the critical yardsticks to measure the validity of the Initiative in Nigeria by Nigerians. In other words, NEITI must begin to put in place all the necessary preparation and programmes to pass the Nigerian validation exam too.” John Ikubaje, Abuja

“We need not relent because the work has really just begun. We need to see this validation translate into poverty eradication, attaining the millennium goals (MDGs) as well as infrastructure development. Without these in place, validation would amount to nothing. ”Pastor Innoncent Adjenughure, Warri, South south, Nigeria.

“Let us all know that it is not yet uhuru! We must see this as a challenge to make the NEITI process translate into an opportunity for Nigeria. We must all work and think creatively and radically to transform Nigeria through focused engagements! “Chima Williams, Benin city, South south Nigeria.

These are the thoughts of majority of Nigerians, these thoughts can remain thoughts only if we put them to work and then, can they translate into reality, meet the aspirations of Nigerians and I guess over 95% of us sitting in this room.

¹ Final Report International Advisory Group, EITI, 2006 (pg.5)

We have learnt our lessons, we want to move forward, we want to add more value to the process and in doing this we all need to agree, all partners must speak together, we need your support. PWYP Nigeria must be repositioned to deliver on her mandate

*I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward. **Thomas Alva Edison***

So much progress in such a short time can only mean that with the right support for institutions and programs, much more can be achieved. Let's put our fears behind, support our work and help to bring the benefit of the EITI to the common people at the community level for whose sake the EITI was initiated.

*"Courage is not the absence of fear, but simply moving on with dignity despite that fear."
Pat Riley.*

Thank you for listening and for the opportunity to share with you.

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