

Press Release

EITI Chairman congratulates Liberia on progress

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EITI International Secretariat Monrovia, 8 October 2009

MONROVIA, 8 OCTOBER 2009 Liberia has taken giant steps towards complying with the global standard for transparent management of revenues from its extractive industries under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). In Monrovia, the Chairman of the EITI, Peter Eigen, congratulated the Government, the private sector in the extractive industries, and activists of civil society, who have together accomplished what he described as an incredible job in implementing the EITI standard.

Dr Eigen and Deputy Head of the EITI, Eddie Rich, visited Liberia to review the progress the country has made since the country started implementing the EITI two years ago. Liberia is one of 30 countries worldwide currently in the process of implementing the standard.



Addressing the media following a meeting with the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Dr Peter Eigen observed that too often problems associated with the use of natural resources are based on the greed of people, who like to get hold of these natural resources.

Dr Eigen praised Liberia for the progress which he attributed to the commitment of political leadership in Liberia and the professionalism of the stakeholder group, whose tireless efforts have accelerated the progress Liberia has made in transparent, predictable, and stable governance. It is this rapid progress, Dr Eigen emphasised, that has made Liberia a leader not only in Africa but globally in the progress towards achieving more transparency in the extractives sector.

The President welcomed the visit to Liberia, which she noted, serves as a motivating factor to review the progress that would help Liberia continue on the path of progress. She commended the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) team, headed by Negbalee Warner, for the progress. The President spoke of the commitment and dedication of the country's EITI team in implementing its functions, making sure that all concession agreements and major contracts in the extractive sector are vetted, and "going beyond the mining sector where EITI started, but to include our forestry."

She continued, "They have done such a good job, that they've won Liberia a very high standing." Liberia, the President said, has excelled under the EITI programme. She expressed hope that a similar programme with more dedicated people would be able to work on the country's anti-corruption strategy.

Notes to Editors

1. Media enquiries, requests for interviews, can be addressed to Communications Manager Anders Tunold Kråkenes at the EITI International Secretariat, +47 4666 2888 akrakenes@eiti.org.
2. Dr Peter Eigen is the Chair of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the international initiative for improving transparency in oil, gas and mining industries. He was also the founder of Berlin-based Transparency International, a non-governmental organization dedicated to increasing government accountability and curbing corruption.
3. The EITI is a coalition of governments, companies, civil society groups, investors and international organisations. All these constituencies are represented on the Board, which is chaired by Peter Eigen. The EITI Secretariat is hosted by the Norwegian Government in Oslo and was formally opened on 26 September 2007.
4. 3.5 billion people live in countries rich in oil, gas and minerals. With good governance the exploitation of these resources can generate large revenues to foster growth and reduce poverty. However when governance is weak, it may result in poverty, corruption, and conflict. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) aims to strengthen governance by improving transparency and accountability in the extractives sector. The EITI sets a global standard for companies to publish what they pay and for governments to disclose what they receive.
5. The 30 countries that are underway in implementing the EITI are: Albania, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Republic of the Congo, São Tomé e Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Yemen and Zambia.
6. 25 September this year, the G-20 leaders expressed their support of the EITI in their statement from the summit in Pittsburgh. The G20 leaders stated that disclosure of payments and revenues through the EITI strengthens support for the most vulnerable and to contributes to reducing poverty.
7. This press release and other EITI publications are available on the EITI website at www.eiti.org. If you would like EITI Newsletters and other important EITI updates to be sent to you automatically by email, you can subscribe to this service on the website.
8. Non-media enquiries can be addressed to the EITI International Secretariat on +47 22242105 or by e-mail to secretariat@eiti.org.