

**Statement to the Stakeholder Forum,
EITI 6th Global Conference, Sydney, Australia, 24.5.2013.
By Victor Hart, Chair, Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries
Transparency Initiative (EITI) Steering Committee.**

The Honourable Clare Short, Chair of the EITI Board, Mr. Jonas Moberg, Head of the EITI International Secretariat, Distinguished delegates.

It gives me great pleasure to reiterate before this EITI Stakeholder Forum Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to the EITI. The EITI records will show that Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) first made a public commitment to the EITI in 2003 at the First EITI Plenary Conference in London and reaffirmed it in 2005 at the Second EITI Plenary Conference in London and in 2011 at the EITI 5th Global Conference in Paris.

T&T is committed to the development of the EITI process, the expansion of its membership and to the enhancement of governance in the extractive industries sectors. We take this opportunity to commend the EITI Board on the adoption of the new EITI Standard that will give true meaning to the theme of this conference and move this global initiative *Beyond Transparency* to true accountability as the EITI celebrates its 10th year of existence.

As the EITI enters its second decade, the TTEITI has taken particular note of the objective of the new EITI Standard Requirement 1, Paragraph 1.4 (a), which states: 'Multi-stakeholder groups are encouraged to explore innovative approaches to extending EITI implementation ... etc.'

T&T supports the call for implementing countries to take innovative steps and, on its own initiative, already has taken active steps to do so at a national level. In doing so, TTEITI recognized that, whereas some innovation could be implemented at national level, others have to be implemented at the international level through actions by the EITI Secretariat and EITI Board of Directors. Accordingly, the following innovative ideas are presented to the Stakeholder Forum for the consideration of member countries (national innovations) and for the consideration of the EITI Secretariat and Board (international innovations):

National innovations

1. Involve the nation's youth

Aim: The aim of the innovation to involve the nation's youth is to sensitize them to the fact that the EITI is about protecting their patrimony and to recruit them to take the EITI message to their peers.

Action: The TTEITI recruited youths to join a specially formed TTEITI Youth Advisory Committee which targets youths from secondary and tertiary level institutions and representatives of Civil Society Youth Organizations interested in issues of transparency, accountability, participatory democracy etc. From among the recruits, Youth Champions are identified and trained to take

leadership roles in the EITI implementation process. Among other things, they are being trained to promote the first EITI Report when published.

TTEITI has learnt that Liberia also has a youth programme and are in discussions about arranging educational exchange-visits of youth members between the two countries.

2. Involve neighbouring countries

Aim: The aim of the innovation to involve neighbouring countries is to spread the EITI message to T&T's resource-rich neighbours so as to demonstrate the initiative's benefits, encourage new membership and build a strong EITI Americas Region.

Action: The TTEITI Steering Committee assumed the role of Caribbean EITI Champion and targeted and encouraged countries already linked with T&T in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) and by the Caribbean Sea to participate in EITI capacity building workshops in T&T. The countries identified were Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica, The Bahamas and Dominican Republic. The first two countries were invited to a workshop facilitated by the World Bank in T&T in September 2011 with special invitees from Peru and Guatemala. All five countries were subsequently invited to a similar workshop in November 2012 facilitated by the World Bank, IADB and GIZ. An outcome of this initiative is a recent expression of renewed interest by Guyana and interest by the Dominican Republic to join the EITI. This outreach initiative is continuing.

International innovations

1. Peer Mentorship

Aim: The aim of the Peer Mentorship innovation is to assist new Candidate Country members in implementing the EITI by linking each new member with a Compliant Country member as its Peer Mentor to guide it through the implementation process. The Compliant Country member, which should preferably be from the same region or share strong language, business, cultural or political ties, will be encouraged by way of incentives to commit to this guiding role through the development of an appropriate points scoring system to be applied to its annual self-assessments and subsequent validation reviews. The Candidate Country will know that, as of right, it can ask the Compliant Country for help as and when needed. The Compliant Country will know that it has an obligation the help. This initiative will help avoid new countries 're-inventing the wheel' and reduce many implementation delays.

Action: The TTEITI first mooted this idea at the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional EITI Conference in Lima, Peru, in June 26-28 2012. The idea was considered at the EITI 20th Board Meeting and submitted to its Outreach Committee for consideration. Action is required by the EITI Secretariat to determine whether the idea has merit and, if so, make a recommendation to the EITI Board for its adoption.

2. Implementation business simulation model

Aim: The aim of the Implementation business simulation model innovation is to assist new Candidate Country members in implementing the new EITI Standard by engaging them in a business simulation exercise of the implementation process so as to gain familiarity with the requirements and to anticipate possible problems and find solutions.

Action: Action is required by the EITI Secretariat to consider the idea and, if found worthwhile, to develop the project and make a recommendation to the EITI Board for its adoption. Business simulation programmes are common in corporate settings as an experiential learning tool and the principles can be adapted for the EITI implementation to make the process more efficient.

3. Publish more Guidance Notes on solutions to common problems

Aim: The aim of this innovation is to assist Candidate Country members in implementing the EITI by providing additional printed Guidance Notes on solutions to common problems encountered by other countries in EITI implementation.

For example, given the special constraints of confidentiality, as it relates to Income Tax Laws, and the difficulties faced by many countries to overcome this legislative obstacle, consideration should be given to the development of a special Guidance Note for Tax Authorities in implementing countries.

Action: Action is required by the EITI Secretariat to consider the idea and, if found worthwhile, make a recommendation to the EITI Board for the commissioning of a consultant to develop the appropriate Guidance Notes.

4. Special consideration for small countries with limited institutional capacity

Aim: The aim of this innovation is to recognize and respond to the special and different needs of small member-countries and the challenges they face when implementing the EITI because of their limited institutional capacity. Note that thirteen of the 39 member countries of the EITI have populations of 6 million or less.

Action: Action is required from the EITI Secretariat to address this problem and to find solutions. TTEITI recommends that the Secretariat seeks support, via its new Memorandum of Agreement, from the Commonwealth Secretariat (which has special experience in this area of study) and considers the idea and, if found worthwhile, to recommend to the Board that special consideration be given to small countries in the application of the new Standard to the Board for adoption.

Conclusion

T&T is committed to the principles and development of the EITI and looks forward to joining the growing ranks of Compliant Countries of this global good governance initiative in the shortest possible time. TTEITI is also committed to

being the Caribbean EITI Champion and to expand EITI membership among its neighbouring countries.