

**Coalition of NGOs "Improving Transparency in Extractive Industries" (ITEI)
to International Board of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)**

Honorable Board members,

In the coming days you are going to discuss a fateful issue for Azerbaijan, and especially its local civil society and make decision. Therefore, on behalf of ITEI Coalition we would like to deliver our position and call your attention to the status of execution of Corrective Actions Plan for Azerbaijan, which you adopted at the meeting dated April 15, 2015.

As you are aware, our Coalition combining nearly 150 NGOs, is the only specialized entity engaged in EITI implementation in Azerbaijan and has been making consistent contribution to the attraction of this initiative. Nevertheless, starting from summer 2014 amendments to legislation regulating NGO activity in Azerbaijan created problems for civil society in practice. Such problems had impact on the activity of ITEI Coalition.

We would first like to thank you for active discussions conducted within the Board and attention paid to local civil society during that period. In fact, former Chair of the EITI Board Mrs. Short's visit to Baku and her meeting with President Ilham Aliyev made significant contribution to improving situation as well as solution of problems ITEI Coalition and its members faced with.

The majority of ITEI Coalition members' problems were resolved after Mrs. Short's visit and adoption of Corrective Actions Plan. Screening of Coalition members at border checkpoints has been stopped, 17 NGOs – members of Coalition which were waiting for state registration have been filed in the registry, tax penalties applied to the Coalition members were lifted, bank accounts were unblocked and grant contracts were registered. Each of Coalition members obtained extract from the State Registry. Arrests of personal bank accounts of Coalition members have been lifted. At the same time,

documents and property of NGOs confiscated by law-enforcements agencies during investigation were returned to owners. First steps are made towards liberating Coalition members involved into criminal responsibility for various reasons (not related to their activity in EITI).

As a result of the negotiations with the Government, Decree of the President of Azerbaijan tasked the Government to amend the legislation regulating NGO activities, registration of international donors in order to avoid problems emerging from application in practice, the rules of receiving grants from international donors and registration of grant contracts, in order to simplify the grant registration system. (<http://www.president.az/articles/21504>).

Such abovementioned changes form the basis to restore the activity of civil society. Taking into account stated changes, we call you to restore compliant status of Azerbaijan in EITI.

Members of the Coalition Council for "Improving Transparency in Extractive Industries" (ITEI):

1. **Ruhangiz Huseynova**

2. **Sevil Allahverdiyeva**

3. **Mammadhasan Hasanov**

4. **Alimammad Nuriyev**

5. **Elshan Naghiyev**

