

MSG MEETING MINUTES

The First Meeting of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Group (MSG) of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) was held on Tuesday, October 9, 2018, at 11:00am in the Conference Room of the LEITI, Old Budget Bureau Building, Monrovia, Liberia.

Attendance:

GOL

1. Hon. C.Mike Doryen FDA
2. Hon.Gesler E. Murray MME

CSO

1. Cecelia T.M. Danuweil PWYP
2. Rev. Joseph Johnson CSO
3. Daniel Nyankonah PUL

Private Sector

1. Esiaka B. Konneh Gold/Diamond Brokers &Dealers Association
2. Raymond Gwenigale Firestone Liberia INC
3. Eric Swen Arcelor Mittal
4. E. Ekema Witherspoon Liberia Timber Association
5. Ansu Konneh Western Cluster

LEITI

1. Hon J.Gabriel Nyenka
2. Jeffery N. Yates
3. McDonald S. Kerl
4. Emmanuel K. White
5. J.Kennedy Kolubah

Preliminaries: The first regular meeting of the Multi- stakeholders Steering Group (MSG) of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) was held on Tuesday, October 9, 2018, in the LEITI Conference Room.

Commencing at 11: 32 am, the meeting was called to order by the MSG, Hon. C. Mike Doryen. The Chair asked the Head of Secretariat to read the agenda. The agenda was read as requested. Following the reading, the Chair presented the agenda and asked for the body's will towards the agenda. Mr. Ekema Witherspoon asked that the agenda as read be opened for discussion. Mr. Ansu Konneh requested that clarity be provided on the use of Report in the agenda. The HOS provided the clarity that the Report in the agenda refers to the draft 9th EITI report. The Agenda was, at this point, opened for discussion. Without additional concerns, the agenda was accepted by the body. Members offered a silent prayer. This was followed by a self-introduction of members of the MSG and observers present. The HOS welcomed the MSG members and stated that they were the governing body. He emphasized that the HOS and the Secretariat cannot do anything without the approval of the MSG. He said he is prepared to do everything to ensure that the MSG is comfortable.

The Chairman, Hon. C. Mike Doryen, in a short statement, welcomed everyone on behalf of the President, H.E George M. Weah, and himself. He stressed that Liberia is the only country we have, and we all have to work to make it stable. He emphasized that LEITI is a transparency framework that seeks to promote the accountable management of the country's natural resources. He stated that the practice of transparent resource management prevents conflict and promotes stability of the state. He urged his fellow MSG members to put Liberia's interest first despite our diverse political and religious views. He encourages all to build a relationship and mutual respect for progress.

Agenda implementation

The Chair mandated the Secretariat to provide hard and soft copies of the MSG Policy Manual to all members. He stated that the MSG Policy Manual appears to be a document in progress. However, Mr. Ansu Konneh clarified that the MSG Policy was not a document in progress as the Previous MSG endorsed it in the presence of officials of the International Secretariat at the RLJ Hotel at a retreat in 2015. He advised that it will take time and money to go over the MSG Policy Manual review process.

Mr. Esiaka B. Konneh asked that his colleagues accept the Manual instead of making changes /amendments to the document, which takes time.

For his part, Mr. Daniel Nyankonah said that he has some problems with the MSG Policy Manual. He stated that there are some provisions he would not be prepared to go by, and there are some he is ready to abide by. He, therefore, called for a review of the Policy Manual.

The Co-Chair, Hon. Murray advised that the MSG Policy Manual available should be worked with and that there was no need to reinvent the wheels. For his part, Mr. Raymond Gwenigale urged his colleagues to read the available MSG Policy Manual. After reading the Manual then they can discuss it at a later meeting. He argued that this was the right way to proceed. The Chair closed

the discussion on the MSG Policy Manual by stating that the document was not cast in stone. There can still be changes as time goes by. The MSG **by a consensus agreed** to the decision of the Chairman.

Update for the Secretariat—HOS

1. Validation

- The HOS stated that the MSG is the governing council. PWYP is a statutory member of the MSG, and that the International Board / Secretariat cannot recognize any document not approved by the MSG.
- The HOS stated that Validation is due at the end of November. He indicated that our last Validation was not thorough as expected. He explained that Validation is a process by which a country's performance is checked against specific benchmarks. He said that Civil Society must be active in the EITI process as a critical requirement for effective MSG governance.

2. 9th Report

- The HOS stated to the MSG that Liberia was suspended for not publishing its 9th EITI Report on time.
- He revealed that the Independent Administrator identified some gaps in the last LEITI Report and that we are trying to fill the gaps to avoid issues during the Validation.
- He said he appealed for an extension to the International EITI Board during its meeting in Berlin, Germany but was rejected because it did not come from the MSG.
- He argued that the political transition in 2017 affected the Country's EITI process in the Extension appeal.

Financial Position

- The HOS disclosed to the MSG that LEITI's budget was reduced to USD380 000 in the current budget from around USD600 000.00 in the previous year's budget (2017/2018).
- He indicated that the Independent Administrator had written twice to get their balance payment, but no favorable response from LEITI. He disclosed that of the 95,000USD to be paid, only 36,000USD has been paid, thereby resulting in a balance of 59,000.00
- He lamented that LEITI only operates with one vehicle. He stated that he has requested the MOS for cars to facilitate the work of LEITI but has gotten no favorable response to date.
- The HOS informed the MSG that he was in regular contact with Pablo Valverde and Edie Rich of the International Secretariat. He stated that they were excited about this first MSG meeting and would appreciate contributing via telephone if necessary.

At this point, the Chair thanked the HOS for the updates.

GIZ observer in the meeting said GIZ was happy that Liberia had started the MSG process. She stated that the process leading to the formation of the MSG was not up to EITI standards. She said that observers were not notified of the MSG process. She encouraged the Civil Society to nominate their individual to the MSG publicly. She called on the Government to follow the rules in establishing the MSG to avoid problems during Validation. She urged the LEITI to write the Report and fill the gaps if necessary.

In response to GIZ observation, Mr. Ekema Witherspoon stated that the GOL went through the proper process as far he knows. He noted that his group received a letter for nomination to the MSG from the MOS and was nominated. He suggested that the MSG write the President to inform him of the urgent need to publish the 9TH EITI Report, the endorsement of the HOS by the MSG, and the preparation of the annual Report and emergency work plan by the Secretariat.

Mr. Ansu Konneh informed the GIZ observer that the request for nomination to LEITI MSG was on the e-mansion website. He requested that the MSG write the Liberian Senate and the Cabinet to prioritize the LEITI issues. He stated that the MFDP presence on the MSG is very cardinal, especially on financial matters.

Mrs. Cecelia Danuweli from PWYP was recognized at this point to speak. She stated that partners such as UNDP, GIZ, AfDB, WB, and EU, once we set programs, can help with specific programs and funding of LEITI activities. She also stated that Civil Society could not confront Government in its operations and with the EITI Process. She mentioned that Civil society needs dialogue and urged her colleagues to work cooperatively to ensure that Liberia does not miss out on Validation.

Rev. Joseph Gardea Johnson urged his fellow MSG members to stick to the rules as an integrity institution and asked that the MSG do the right things and not hurry. He urged his colleague to allow everyone to speak their minds and avoid responding to every comment made.

Mr. Raymond Gwenigale stated that there were gaps in the 2016 EITI Report. He noted that financial support would come if we demonstrated that we were serious. We don't work in a vacuum. There are standards we need to follow so that we cannot be seen as a rubber stamp. He advised that observers who are willing to fund their comments should be incorporated and taken seriously.

The Chairman, at this point, indicated that the President followed the procedure in the appointment of MSG members. He said that all comments would be seriously considered.

The HOS stated that the Secretariat and the MSG all share the same goal. He noted that everyone wants to see the suspension lifted. Since the EITI International Secretariat is in regular contact with the Secretariat, let's do all we can to get out of suspension, the HOS

pleaded. He clarified that legislators are not on the MSG because their inclusion will violate the Constitution.

The Chairman recognized Mr. Esiaka Konneh at this point, and he pleaded with his colleagues to love Liberia. He indicated that every EITI process has its problem. He called on his colleagues to build around the new Secretariat as they did with the previous.

Mr. Raymond Gwenegali urged his colleagues to focus on progress while looking for possible reasons for our suspension and take corrective measures. He appreciated the openness in the meeting and requested the MSG to get to business to ensure that the 9th Report doesn't come back to us.

Mr. Witherspoon suggested that the body agrees that the MSG write the International Secretariat stating that the MSG has been constituted and requested an extension, develop a six-month work plan, and see how partners can buy-in. The Chairman advised all in the meeting not to develop preconceived notions that certain people are prone to mistakes. UNDP observer said that UNDP is excited that the MSG process has started. She indicated that they are willing to support the process and the emergency work plan when developed.

The Chairman suggested that the next meeting be held on the 18th of October and was accepted. The meeting adjourned at 1:35pm.