COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF ONE DAY TRAINING FOR MEDIA PERSONS ON COMMUNICATING NEITI REPORT OUTCOMES AND REMEDIATION ISSUES ORGANIZED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) WITH SUPPORT FROM OXFAM IN NIGERIA ON TUESDAY 10TH JUNE, 2014 AT BARCELONA HOTEL, WUSE 2, ABUJA.

PREAMBLE:

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a One Day Training for Media Persons on Communicating NEITI Report Outcomes and Remediation Issues with support from Oxfam in Nigeria. The training drew over 25 participants from various media organizations. It featured the Director of Communications of the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency initiative, NEITI Orji Ogbonnaya Orji, the Chairman Editorial Board of If ThisDay Newspapers Mr. Segun Adeniyi, Mrs. Obiageli Onuorah, Team Leader as Resource Persons. Mr. Celestine Odo, Program Officer, Governance, Oxfam in Nigeria was also in attendance. There were presentations and the session was very interactive with robust interventions after which the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS:

1. In spite of Nigeria’s implementation of the NEITI process and four Audi Cycles, Nigeria continues to witness leakages, corruption and scandalous financial losses in the extractive industry sector of the our economy annually.
2. Between 2004 and 2011, over N1billion naira has been expended on the conduct of several Audit Reports to promote transparency and accountability in the oil sector, however, the recommendations of the Auditors have been ignored and greeted with poor and ineffective implementation resulting in impunity.
3. Presently, there no fiscal regime governing the Solid Mineral sector leaving the Companies with discretion to apply arbitrary tax rates, resulting in huge revenue losses the government and people of Nigeria
4. Lack of political will in combating challenges surrounding oil theft has aggravated it the unprecedented levels with persistent oil theft, pipeline vandalism, and sabotage resulting in further destruction of the environment and colossal revenue loss to the nation
5. Poor regulation of activities in the mining sector has led to increasing levels of illegal mining in the country has encouraged poor mining practices by artisanal small scale miners mining resulting in negative effects on the environment and health of local populations while also causing loss of government revenue
6. In spite of the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Task Team IMTT for the purpose of implementing remedial issues from Audit Reports, Nigerians are yet to feel the impact of their interventions calling to question, their commitment level of effectiveness
7. Inadequate disclosure of the information, poor record keeping and accounting practices statements, low capacity in some government agencies weak and inter agency collaboration, resistant by regulatory bodies, and delay in passage of Petroleum Industry Bill into law continues to hinder efforts to promote transparency in the oil and sector.

8. There is inadequate insightful and investigative media coverage of corruption cases in the media consistent enough to bring offenders to book

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Federal Government, as a matter of urgency should commence and expedite the implementation of remedial actions arising from NEITI audit reports to justify Nigeria’s participation and investment in the NEITI process.

2. The Executive and the legislature should put befitting regulations and fiscal regime in place that would regulate the Solid Mineral sector to ensure maximum government revenue and instill transparency and accountability in the Solid Mineral sector.

3. The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development should establish a more proactive and coordinated regulatory framework in the mining sector to curb the levels of illegal, mining and streamline the activities of artisanal and small scale miners to safeguard the environment and health of vulnerable communities in mining communities.

4. The newly invigorated IMTT should be alive to their responsibilities and expedite remedial actions. Agencies on the IMTT should show commitment and the NEITI secretariat should provide regular updates on the progress recorded in the implementation of remediation to ensure that NEITI audit Reports do not remain glorified audit.

5. Civil Society should continue to demand for accountability and collaborate with the media to ensure follow up on NEITI recommendations until results are achieved and sanity returns to our extractive sector.

6. The Federal Government should demonstrate Political will and implement NEITI recommendation, work towards domestic production of local refining of crude to and expedite the passage of a people-friendly PIB as a means of reducing corruption on the oil and gas sector.

7. The media should be more creative, insightful, and analytical in their coverage of the Extractive Sector. They should undertake deeper investigation and be persistent on issues. They should deliberately track and monitor the implementation of remediation between budget cycles.

CONCLUSION

Participants made a commitment to continue to engage to ensure the implementation of recommendations for NEITI Audit Reports to strengthen EITI implementation in Nigeria and
promote transparency and accountability in the Extractive Industry. They expressed gratitude to CISLAC and Oxfam Novib for supporting this all important programme.

Signed

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