

New Report Finds Action Needed to Manage Natural Resource Revenues

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LONDON, Oct. 11 (AScribe Newswire) -- Governments and oil, gas, and mining companies must keep their promise to make industry revenues more transparent, says a report released today by Publish What You Pay (PWYP), a coalition of anti-corruption activists and charities.

In a new report, PWYP examines progress made on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in the 21 countries that endorsed the agreement four years ago. Eye on EITI outlines the steps necessary to curb the corruption that prevents citizens from benefiting from their country's natural resource wealth. The report finds that while two countries - Nigeria and Azerbaijan - have made significant progress in implementing EITI, in about half of the countries, governments have failed to match their rhetoric with tangible measures.

"The EITI process has given key stakeholders a global stage to make commitments to help ensure that natural resource revenues alleviate poverty," said Henry Parham, International Coordinator of PWYP.

Launched in September 2002, EITI brings together representatives from governments, oil, gas, and mining companies, and civil society to address the paradox that has come to be known as the "resource curse" in which two-thirds of the world's poorest people inhabit countries rich in natural resources. EITI aims to ensure that these countries use the vast revenues from oil, gas, and mining to improve the living conditions of millions of their impoverished citizens. By developing a process to publicly disclose the revenues governments receive from these industries, EITI provides citizens with critical information to hold their governments to account for the way that money is spent.

The report is being released to coincide with the third EITI conference in Oslo, Norway on October 16-17. It identifies issues that pose a fundamental challenge to the successful realization of EITI, such as the intimidation of civil society activists engaged in the struggle against corruption. In Congo-Brazzaville, for example, the government has detained and is currently prosecuting two prominent activists campaigning for more responsible management of the country's oil wealth-Christian Mounzeo and Brice Mackosso.

In its report, PWYP calls for Congo-Brazzaville to immediately drop all charges against Mounzeo and Mackosso and for all stakeholders to ensure that no civil society activist is persecuted for their work to promote transparency and fight corruption.

"The third international EITI conference in Oslo is the perfect opportunity for governments, companies and civil society to work together to live up to their promises made on EITI," Parham said. "To take steps to reduce poverty, we need more than words. Now in Oslo, the world is watching. Delegates need to show that they're taking concrete actions to implement the initiative."

The report is available online at <http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/>. The Publish What You Pay (PWYP) coalition campaigns for full transparency in the payment, receipt, and management of revenues paid to resource-rich developing country governments by the oil, gas, and mining industries. Greater transparency is an essential first step in order to ensure that natural resource revenues serve as a basis for sustainable development, economic growth, and poverty reduction in these countries, where there are often high levels of corruption, conflict, and human suffering. PWYP is supported by over 300 anti-corruption,

development, environmental, human rights, and faith-based civil society organizations for more than 50 countries worldwide and national civil society coalitions from across Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Europe, Latin America, North America, and South-East Asia. On the Web at: www.publishwhatyoupay.org.

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