

MINUTES
REGULAR LEITI MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE LEITI, OLD BUDGET BUREAU BUILDING
•REDEMPTION ROAD, MONROVIA, LIBERIA • WEDNESDAY MARCH 29, 2017

PRESENT IN ATTENDANCE

GOL

Stephen B. Dorbor	MLME
Alieu Nyei	MFDP
Elvin Frank	MIA
Chea B. Garley	MoA
Al B. Dennis	LRA
Edward S. Kamara	FDA
Richmond Jallah	NOCAL

CSO

Cecelia T. M. Danuweli	PWYP/WANEP
Wynston Benda Henriens	Rights & Rice Foundation
Finda Salay	WONGOSOL

Private Sector

Laurentine H. Bass	ExxonMobil
Ansu Konneh	Western Cluster
K. Emmanuel Yarkpazuo	GVL
Esiaka B.Konneh	Gold &Diamond Brokers and Dealers Assoc.
Zinnah B. Sackie	AUREUS
John S.Deah	LTA

Partners/Observers

Kofi Ireland	UNMIL
Christoph Buchberger	GIZ
Lilieth Whyte	US Embassy

OTHERS

LEITI Secretariat

Konah D. Karmo	HOS/LEITI
Myer W. Saye	LEITI
Cedrick W. Kpadeh	LEITI

Preliminaries - The Regular meeting of the LEITI Multi-stakeholders Steering Group (MSG) was held on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 in the LEITI Conference Room. Commencing at 12:35pm, the meeting was called to order by the proxy chair of the MSG Hon. Stephen Dorbor who welcomed the participants and admonished them to be vigilant, steadfast and focus after two previous unsuccessful sittings due to the lack of quorum.

This was followed by self-introduction where a quorum was established

Adoption of Agenda: The HoS presented a ten item agenda for adoption. The GIZ reminded that a decision was taken in one of the past meetings to always include the item “constituency feedback” on the agenda to afford the three key stakeholder groups on the MSG (Gov’t, CSOs & Industry) to provide feedback from their various constituencies. This was noted and it was agreed that it be included on all subsequent agenda. Kofi Ireland requested that the issue of quorum be placed on the agenda for discussion. It was agreed that it be placed under AOB. With these, the agenda was adopted through consensus.

Draft Minutes: The draft minutes of January 28 Regular Meeting was adopted by the body after the following changes were observed and made:

- Proper spelling of the names Darlington Talery and ChristinaVon Heyden, Harrison Karnwea Sr.
- The full meaning of the acronym PWC (PricewaterhouseCoopers),
- Kofi Ireland cited the omission of the summary section and suggested it be reintroduced.
- Cecelia Danuweli suggested that MSG members read the minutes and come prepared to make changes where needed instead of taking time to go page by page at or during the meetings.

With these corrections and clarification, the minutes was adopted through a motion

- **Matters Arising:**

- It was agreed that members of the MSG will come with hard copies of the minutes and agenda. The Secretariat should only print few copies of these documents to save cost.

Secretariat Update: The HoS presented the Secretariat update summarizing LEITI Secretariat’s activities for the period **January 25 to February 28, 2017.**

EITI Validation

On February 15, 2017, the International EITI Secretariat forwarded to the LEITI the EITI Validation Report on Liberia prepared by the Independent Validator. The Report was forwarded for the LEITI MSG’s formal comments. Upon receipt, the LEITI Secretariat circulated the report via email to MSG Members along with other documents for the February Regular MSG Meeting. Deadline for the LEITI’s response to this report is February 28, 2017.

This report marks the second report to be released since Liberia's second EITI Validation was launched on July 1, 2016, and constitutes an independent review of the Initial Validation Assessment Report authored and released by the International EITI Secretariat in December 2016 to the MSG, consistent with the EITI Validation Procedures.

Meanwhile, in response to the January 25, 2017 MSG request that each sector on the MSG submits comments to the Initial EITI Report by February 7, 2016 in anticipation of the Independent Validator's Report, the Observer and Civil Society Sectors submitted comments to the Secretariat on February 7th and 8th respectively.

On March 1, 2017, the LEITI Secretariat submitted the LEITI's response to the EITI Validation report to the International EITI Secretariat for onward submission to the EITI Board.

The International EITI Secretariat informed the LEITI Secretariat that the response was duly forwarded to the EITI Board, and discussed by the Board's Validation Committee. Additionally, the International Secretariat informed us that Liberia's Validation Report was briefly discussed at the recent EITI Board meeting held in Bogota, Columbia, from March 8-9, 2017.

Further discussion on Liberia's validation report are due to take place at the next EITI Board meeting scheduled for May 2017, at which time we expect a final decision on the validation process.

Global Witness Report

On February 14, 2017 Global Witness shared with the LEITI Secretariat a report it released on the forestry sector titled: *Holding the Line* ; Sub-titled: "All Liberia's large logging contracts are illegal, threatening the country's EU, Norwegian, and EITI reform programmes". On February 21, 2017, the Secretariat circulated the Report to MSG Members via email. Meanwhile, UNMIL's Representative to the MSG, Mr. Kofi Ireland has requested that the Global Witness Report be placed on the February 22nd MSG Agenda for discussion.

Dissemination of Contract Matrix and circulation of 2nd Post Award Process Audit

During the period under review, the Secretariat began a second phase of dissemination of the Contract Matrix Report. The first team of LEITI Staff departed Monrovia for Sinoe and Maryland Counties on February 14 – 20, 2017 for the dissemination. Dissemination of the Contract Matrix is one of the activities under the USAID-LAVI In-kind Grant recently consummated between the LEITI and the USAID-LAVI Project.

Similar dissemination exercises are also planned for Bong, Montserrado and Nimba Counties in March while subsequent ones are planned for Montserrado for April. Also during the period, the Secretariat successfully circulated the 2nd Post Award Process Audit Report all relevant stakeholders including foreign missions.

9th Report TOR

The 9th Report TOR has received substantial revisions based on findings of the Initial EITI Validation report on Liberia, in which several recommendations relating to strengthening the LEITI Reconciliation report were contained. We have submitted the revised draft TOR to the International Secretariat for comments and / or clearance.

Finance Related Issues

The Secretariat has received and forwarded to the Chairperson of the MSG, Hon. Patrick Sendolo, a US\$10,000 funding request from the International EITI Secretariat. The request is in line with an agreement reached by the International EITI Board requiring all EITI implementing countries to contribute a minimum of US\$10,000 annually for the International Management of the EITI, effective 2017.

The proposed Grant from the African Development Bank on local resource mobilization of which the LEITI is one of the beneficiary institutions, we understand, has been signed with the Government of Liberia. However, actual implementation of the agreement has not yet commenced. The Secretariat continues to make the necessary follow-ups with both the AfDB and the Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project (IPFMRP) – the lead implementing agency on information regarding commencement of programs implementation.

The LEITI Secretariat has made a formal request to GIZ to provide technical and Local Subsidy support for the implementation of some of LEITI's program activities. Those activities include:

- 5-year Strategic Plan and 2-year Workplan revision & constituency feedback for annual planning;
- EITI Mainstreaming Exercise and Feasibility Study;
- Development of Monitoring & Evaluation capacities;
- Posting integrated development advisor;
- Radio outreach / extractive hour and
- LEITI Extractive Industry Forum

While we await a formal response to our request, we have been informed by the GIZ that it has begun preparation for implementation of one of the activities contained in our request – the review of the 5-year Strategic Plan and 2-year Workplan, as well as the constituency feedback mechanism.

Administration

During the period under review, the HOS, DHOS as well as other staffs attended series of meetings to include the following:

- Liberia Development Conference held at the Monrovia City Hall on Wednesday & Thursday, February 1 & 2, 2017.

- Study Tour to Liberia Meeting, held on February 14, 2017 at African Development Bank Country office in Liberia. The meeting which was held with Senior Advisors of the African Development Bank was intended to provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of the Bank's strategy for Liberia as well as the Bank's contribution to donor coordination and implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.
- Meeting with NOCAL held, on February 24, 2017 at NOCAL's office in Monrovia. The meeting was held with NOCAL's CEO & Deputy CEO. Issues discussed ranged from:
 - Sharing a draft Beneficial Ownership Disclosure regulation prepared by NOCAL.
 - Recommitment to attend the MSG Meeting at the Level of the ECO/Deputy CEO proposed rotational meeting to be hosted by institutions who are members of the MSG.
 - Issues relating to NOCAL in the ongoing EITI Validation were discussed.
 - Issues relating to general collaboration on compliance by NOCAL with LEITI implementation were also discussed with a firm pledge by NOCAL to be compliant with relevant provision of the LEITI Act.

Meanwhile, on February 28, 2017 the Interim President of NOCAL, through a written communication to the LEITI Secretariat, formally designated Mr. Rufus Tarnue, Vice President for Technical Services, to represent NOCAL at the level of the MSG, to be assisted by Mr. Richmond Jallah also of NOCAL.

- The LEITI Secretariat now has a new Technical Officer, Mr. Sarnyenneh M. Dickson. Mr. Dickson served the LEITI as Industry/Sector Analyst. He emerged as the successful candidate after evaluation, following internal advertisement of the vacancy for the Position of Technical Officer. He replaced Ms. Beneta Ackah who resigned in January 2017.
- The LEITI Secretariat now has a new Industry/Sector Analyst. Mr. J. Elijah Kai commenced work with the LEITI Secretariat on February 8, 2017, having emerged successful in a competitive recruitment process in which scores of other qualified Liberians participated. Mr. Kai has a background in Accounting and has served the Guaranty Bank (Liberia) Limited (GT Bank) as Deputy Banking and Tax Compliance Officer, in addition to other previous experiences within the field of Accounting. Mr. Kai replaced Mr. Roosevelt W. Seedee who resigned in June, 2016 to pursue graduate studies in the United States of America.
- The LEITI Secretariat is also in the process of recruiting another Industry/Sector Analyst to replace Mr. Sarnyenneh M. Dickson who is now serving in the position of Technical Officer.

Discussion of Secretariat update: Following the update, the Presiding thanked the HoS and declared the update opened for discussions. Various comments, concerns and issues were raised in relation to the update as highlighted below:

Cecelia Danuweli:

Madam Danuweli asked on the benefits of paying ten thousand United States dollars as contribution to the international Secretariat of the EITI

HoS

The Hos said there were several benefits such as technical assistance and trainings to be accrued and stressed the need for Liberia to pay this fund.

Kofi Ireland-UNMIL

Mr. Ireland urged the Secretariat to have a plan B so that if government does not pay the amount due to constraints it faces with finances, the LEITI would not be embarrassed.

HOS

The HoS noted that he was confident that the government will pay the amount otherwise; the Secretariat will have to appeal to donors to step in.

Submission of revised TOR for 9th LEITI Report

The HoS presented the document admonishing the MSG to take ownership of the document by thoroughly reading and digesting it as the document needed additional review. In his presentation, he suggested that an emergency meeting be held in mid- April 2017 for approval of the document at which time all necessary clarifications from the International Secretariat shall be made.

After his presentation, the presiding opened the floor for discussion to which Emmanuel Yarkpazuo of Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) expressed the need for the private sector to be a part of any further review of the document.

In response, the Chair of the Reporting Committee, Kofi Ireland suggested that the various sectors meet to synchronize their comments that will be finally reviewed and compiled by his committee.

It was then unanimously agreed that various sectors would meet between 30th, March to 7th April 2017 to further review and subsequently submit comments to the committee for final review and compilation for submission for approval during the April regular sitting.

Global Witness's Report on Liberia Forestry Sector

Briefing the MSG on the report, the HoS pointed out that the issue was made an agenda item based on a request from the Observer bloc on grounds that it was prudent for the MSG to take immediate action. He suggested that a committee be set up to review and come up with recommendations at the next sitting. There ensued a heated cross sectional debate on the matter with John Deah calling on the MSG to halt any further action as the sector concern was taking the Global Witness to court. But Kofi Ireland insisted that the MSG takes action as the issue critically borders on functions of the LEITI therefore, LEITI should come up with a definite position.

Ansu Konneh on the other hand, argued that LEITI is a part of the Executive branch of Government therefore the MSG should through the proxy Chair, encourage the relevant agencies to handle the matter appropriately.

After these exchanges, it was unanimously resolved that the LEITI officially presents the Global Witness' report to the President of Liberia requesting that the Government launches a full-scale investigation into allegations of violations raised in the report and that appropriate actions be instituted by the Government, where necessary. The Secretariat was therefore mandated to work with the Chairperson's office to ensure that the letter was completed and signed by the Chairperson for dispatch and that similar information be made public through a press statement and on the LEITI website for transparency.

Discussion of the MSG sitting fees/ honorarium

According to the HoS, the MSG sitting fees was made an agenda issue through a request from the African Development Bank (AfDB) who wanted to know the amount that has been paid. This was accordingly buttressed by GIZ but with details such as the period of payment, the check number, and to whom were these payments made. He placed it to the MSG for its action on the requests and presented the requested documents to the presiding for MSG action.

The presiding then asked the observer community to elaborate further on why such request was made. Christoph Buchberger of GIZ said they made the request based on speculations and confusion surrounding the issue. He noted that the request is only intended to clarify these speculations and noted that it was only for internal consumption.

The HoS afterwards stated that the payment of honorarium was initiated in 2009 by the Secretariat and included in the workplan. According to the HoS, each member was allotted forty United States dollars (40.00 USD) as sitting fees but was increased to one hundred dollars in the following year. He said the Secretariat was paying the money to all MSG members up to 2015

based on actual number of meetings attended by each member. He was however, quick to note that the observer community and some members from the government and Private Sector declined to accept the sitting fees for the period specified. With this said, most members of the MSG expressed delight but with the insistence that any decision to providing the requested document be made through voting. No vote was however taken on the matter as the presiding took seize of the matter to be concluded in the next regular meeting.

Any Other Business

Kofi Ireland of UNMIL asked that the rule on quorum according to the MSG Manual be revised so that the workings of the MSG will not always be affected by the lack of quorum. After several suggestions were made, it was unanimously decided that the committee on governance revisits the rules and appropriately advise the body at the next sitting.

Summary of Key Points

- There were several corrections made to the past minutes;
- That the draft TOR for the 9th LEITI report be circulated by the Secretariat for additional group review / inputs by MSG sectors till April 7, 2017.
- The Governance Committee was mandated to review and recommend appropriate amendment(s) to the rule on quorum;
- Decision on disclosure of honorarium deferred to next regular meeting;
- That the Secretariat should circulate regular MSG meeting citations by email and that reproduction of circulated documents for meetings by the Secretariat is minimized to few copies. It was unanimously agreed that MSG members come with printed copies of all meeting documents circulated, including minutes and agenda, and
- That the Global Witness' report titled: "*Holding the Line*" be forwarded to the President of Liberia for appropriate actions.
- It was agreed that constituency feedback will be included on all subsequent meeting agenda.

Date and time of next MSG meeting: The next MSG meeting was scheduled for Wednesday April 26, 2017 with a provision that an emergency meeting may be convened by the Chairperson for approval of draft TOR for the 9th LEITI report, if necessary, before the regular meeting date.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:02 pm.