

**MINUTES REGULAR LEITI MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS STEERING GROUP MEETING HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE LEITI, OLD BUDGET BUREAU BUILDING REDEMPTION, ROAD, MONROVIA, LIBERIA Thursday, NOVEMBER 24, 2022**

Present in Attendance were:

**GOL**

- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. C. Mike Doryen | FDA   |
| 2. Carlton Miller | MME   |
| 3. Eric Daniels   | NOCAL |
| 6. Ansu Konneh    | MOA   |

**CSO**

- |                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. Loretta Pope Kai  | NSCL  |
| 2. Abraham B. Gappie | MCSCL |
| 3. Cecelia Danuweli  | PWYP  |
| 4. Winston Wreh      | LLC   |

**Private Sector**

- |                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. Evis Morris       | GVL   |
| 2. Marcus S. Wleh    | AML   |
| 3. Ekema Witherspoon | LibTA |

**Observer**

1. Max Hatzold GIZ

**LEITI**

1. Jeffery N. Yates/HoS
2. McDonald S. Kerl Sr.-Technical Officer
3. Cedrick Kpadeh/Communications

**Others**

- |                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|
| 1. Jambu D. Laih     | MME         |
| 2. Samson Tokpah     | SRG         |
| 3. Francis K. Zayzay | Baker Tilly |

**Preliminaries:** The call meeting of the LEITI Multi-stakeholders Steering Group (MSG) was held on Thursday, November 24, 2022 in the LEITI Conference Room. Commencing at 12:055 GMT, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman of the MSG, C. Mike Doryen of the Forestry Development Authority who immediately after notification of a quorum, instructed the HOS to read out the agenda for adoption

1. **Reading and Adoption of the Agenda:** - The HOS, Jeffrey Yates read a 15-item agenda that mainly focused on the presentation of the draft 14th EITI Report for Liberia and the updated Feasibility study report. The Presiding then sought a motion for the adoption of the agenda which came from Madam Loretta Pope Kai of the NCSCL who motioned for an unchanged agenda. Her motion was seconded by Ekema Witherspoon of LibTA. Thus, the agenda was adopted without addition or subtraction.
2. **Welcome Remarks:** The Presiding at this juncture, invited the Co-chair, Mr. Carlton Miller of MME to do the welcome remarks. Mr. Miller in his statement especially

welcomed Mr. Samson Tokpah of SRG Consult to Liberia acknowledging the role he is playing in the EITI implementation in Liberia and also did a special recognition of Mr. Max Hatzold of GIZ who was attending to the sitting for the first time.

3. **Review and adoption of minutes:** The HOS presented three past meeting minutes representing the last quarter before the current sitting. After the presentation, the Presiding put it on the floor for discussion. After a period of complete silence across the floor, the Presiding asked for a motion of adoption. To this, Eric Daniels of NOCAL motioned for the minutes to be received and archived since no addition had been made. Ansu Konneh of MOA, seconded.
4. **Report on the Recruitment of DHOS:** The Committee chair, Mr. Ojuku Nyenpan of the MFDP who was to make the presentation to the Body was absent and therefore the Body agreed to skip this item until he joins the meeting later.
5. **Secretariat Update:** The HoS provided update for the last quarter. (See annex)
6. **Discussion of the Update:** A motion was sought for the update to be placed on the floor for discussion and came through Loretta Pope Kai and seconded by Abraham Gappie of MCSCL. With that motion, the update was opened for discussion with the following highlighting the discussions:
  - I. **Funding inadequacy:** During his update, the HoS informed the Body that the Secretariat was grossly challenged by inadequate funding. According to him, even the funds provided through the national budget, does not come in totality. In the current allotment for this year, 119 thousand was still outstanding. Elvis Morris asked whether the Secretariat had exhausted all available means to get the remainder of the funds from the MFDP. The HOS answered in the affirmative stating he had all relevant documents in regard. Another concern came from Madam Loretta Poe Kai who asked as to how the Secretariat was operating in the absence of money. Again, the HOS stated that the staff were mainly sacrificing their resources to get the Secretariat up and running. Ansu Konneh at this point suggested that for the MSG to be keen on taking actions, the Updates should be projected to highlight action points where necessary so that members will come to the meeting knowing what actions to take on a particular issue. But the Co-chair quickly pointed out that the updates are intended to provide information on the operations of the Secretariat and most often not need actions to be taken. The Body did not take a definite stand on both suggestions however.
  - II. Speaking on the low salary issue, the Co- chair inquired whether the LEITI Secretariat had taken any concrete actions to address the issue of low salaries due to the national harmonization exercise. To this the HOS stated that the Secretariat, with mandate from the Body had worked through the Administration and Finance Committee to develop a three-way scheme that should address the issue and that process is still with the committee to act. At this point, Eric Daniels suggested a complete restructuring of the

MSG's committees to be more proactive on matters pertinent. At this point the Presiding intervened suggesting that the committee be given another two weeks to report to the Body. That two-week will coincide with the launching of the 14<sup>th</sup> EITI Report.

- III. On the visit of the Executive Director of Open Ownership and his team to Liberia, the Presiding inquired as to why the FDA was included on the list of officials visited by Townsend and his team. The HOS offered his apologies and stated that the omission was due to the absence of the Managing Director, the Presiding from the Country during the time of the visit.

7. **Mainstreaming Feasibility Study Report:** Samson Tokpah was the consultant hired to develop the report and he presented a report to the HOS indicating that he had completed all the tasks appertaining to the assignment and thus the report was ready for implementation. After his presentation, the HOS in turn presented the study to the Presiding for decision from the Body.

A motion was then sought for the endorsement of the report, after the HOS' presentation. Ansu Konneh made a motion for the report to be received and endorsed for full implementation by the MSG. His motion received a back up from Eric Daniels and thus, the report was endorsed. The Presiding then asked Madam Cecelia Danuweli of PWYP to officially receive the report on behalf of the Body.

In brief remarks, Madam Danuweli lauded the consultant for his time and effort put into the report and assured him of the Body's commitment to the full implementation of the study.

8. **Presentation of the 14<sup>th</sup> report:** Like the study, the draft 14<sup>th</sup> EITI Report for Liberia was presented by Samson Tokpah of SRG Consulting on behalf of the Independent Administrator. Two issues took center stage during this presentation:

- I. **Quality assurance:** Mr. Tokpah informed the Body that the IA was informed prior that the General Auditing Commission would sign off on all templates provided by the GoL as a means of assuring data quality but in the later stage of the reporting process, the Secretariat informed the IA about some schedule bottleneck from the GAC that could delay the production process. At current, the standard procedure as mandated by the MSG is for both a high-profile manager to sign off as well as the GAC. After several deliberations, the MSG by consensus agreed that either of the two is enough for quality assurance.

- II. **Conflict in figures:** The Presiding who is the Managing Director of the FDA noted that he observed that revenue figures coming from the FDA data are higher than those coming from the LRA. He pointed out that this is due to different systems being used by both entities. He said it is not fair for the LRA to be understating revenue figures coming out of the FDA and suggested a system harmonization.

Ekema Witherspoon suggested that the FDA does a report to explain the variances in the two accounting systems in addition to the 14<sup>th</sup> report. But the FDA Managing Director refused to buy in that stating that the EITI Report will always be considered as correct due the independence and credibility.

After several suggestions, the MSG concluded with all in agreement that the IA in the next report does a full reconciliation of revenue data from the forestry sector.

**III. Date of publication of 14<sup>th</sup> Report:** The IA asked for the report to be finalized and published on December 19, 2022 to accommodate the changes and necessary corrections as mandated by the MSG. But the Body noted that beyond December 15, most public officials and private businesses are on Christmas breaks and therefore mandated the IA to finalize the report for publication on or before December 15, 2022.

9. **AOB:** Under AOB, the Presiding again made a special recognition of Max Hatzold of GIZ and asked him for a brief remark since it was his first time attending an MSG sitting in his new role at the GIZ. Mr. Hatzold expressed gratitude to members of the MSG for the recognition and promised to work the LEITI, the Government and key civil society actors in fostering more developmental gains the governance of the extractive sector in Liberia. He disclosed that the GIZ will be rolling out new programs for the next 33 months in Liberia.

Next, the HOS appealed to the MSG to fast forward the production of the 15<sup>th</sup> EITI report for Liberia by approving the procurement process since 2023 is an election year. The MSG granted this appeal though a consensus across the three-cardinal membership. And with that, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 GMT

**Summary of key decisions:**

- MSG endorsed the Mainstreaming Feasibility Study report promising to implement the findings
- MSG approved the draft 14<sup>th</sup> EITI Report for Liberia mandating the IA to finalize for publication on or before December 15, 2022
- MSG agreed that either the GAC or top managers sign off on reporting templates as a means of assuring the quality of the data
- MSG mandated the Finance and Administration committee to make report to it on the recruitment of the DHOS and staff salary proposals in the next two weeks
- 15 persons including two females were in attendance at the November 24<sup>th</sup> sitting
- The MSG adopted the minutes of the last quarter with no changes

## ANNEX: SECRETARIAT UPDATE

### **LEITI SECRETARIAT UPDATE AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2022**

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Below is the summary of the LEITI Secretariat's activities for the period August 29 to November 2022:

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Report**

The MSG in August received and approved the scoping of the 14<sup>th</sup> EITI report for Liberia. The scoping report was presented by the Independent Administrators, SRG Consulting LLC and Biker Tally Liberia, CPA. The Secretariat has worked with the Independent Administrators to finalize the final draft of the report that will be presented today.

The Secretariat has also received the final copy of the Updated Mainstreaming Feasibility Study report from the consultant.

#### **Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Roadmap**

As part of the 2021 workplan, the Secretariat along with other members of the National Steering Committee has worked with the EITI Secretariat and Open Ownership to achieve the following in relations to Beneficial Ownership Transparency: Creation of Public Awareness around the concept of Beneficial Ownership Transparency in five counties( Bong, Nimba, Bassa, Capemout and Monterrado), hosted a Consultation Session with relevant stakeholders to discuss a draft Beneficial Ownership Regulations and Declaration Forms, hosted a Capacity Building session around Beneficial Ownership for staff of the Liberia Business Registry and the LEITI, and met with high-level government officials to include the Speaker, Minister of State, Minister of Mines, the Chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on Natural Resources, the Head of the Liberia Anti- Corruption Commission, and the National Oil Company of Liberia to inform them about the progress the Liberia is making to achieving Requirements 2.5 of the 2019 EITI Standard.

#### **Administration**

During the period under review, we are pleased to inform the MSG of the following: The recruitment of a new procurement officer, the hiring of a Security Firm in line with PPCC advise, the restoration of strong and effective internet facility at the Secretariat, the visitation of the US Ambassador to obtain firsthand information about the progress and challenges we are facing, the visitation of the Executive Director of Open Ownership to ascertain the progress Liberia is making in implementing Beneficial Ownership Transparency, and the visitation of a Technical Lead from Open Ownership to help with the presentation of the Beneficial Ownership Declaration Forms during the consultation. During the period under review, the HOS was cited and appeared before the Senate to provide the body with updates on the workings of the Secretariat.

## **Work Plan**

As part of the process in preparing the 2023 MSG Workplan, the Secretariat hosted Publish What You Pay coalition to discuss activities for the workplan. Similar thing will be done for all constituents/members of the MSG before the finalization of the workplan. The Workplan will address mostly the corrective actions from the last validation to ensure compliance as Liberia's next validation is scheduled for 2024.

## **Funding**

The Secretariat received a grant of 10,000.00 USD from GIZ to build the capacity of journalists from around the country in understanding and disseminating the EITI Report. The training brought together 28 journalists from the country and it was held in Bong County. The Secretariat has submitted both financial and theoretical reports to the GIZ. We are pleased to inform the MSG that the GIZ has cleared the reports presented by the LEITI Secretariat.

As of date, the Secretariat is yet to receive a total of US 119,000.00 of its budget from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. This has resulted into the Secretariat not being able to clear the payments for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> EITI reports, meet up with cost for disseminating the reports and operations of the Secretariat.

## **Foreign Trips**

The Head of Secretariat attended the EITI National Coordinator Meeting in Oslo, Norway with full sponsorship being undertaken by the EITI Secretariat. The HOS also attended the Open Government Partnership Conference in Morocco to provide an expert opinion on Beneficial Ownership Transparency. Lastly, the HOS attended a capacity building initiative in Rwanda. This was paid for by the African Development Bank under the IPFMRP II grant support to the LEITI.

The Administrative Manager represented the Secretariat at a round table discussion around improving natural resource governance in Ghana during the period under review. The trip was fully sponsored by the Africa Center for Energy Policy.

**PREPARED BY: THE LEITI SECRETARIAT**