

Concept Note on Southern Africa Governance & Transparency in Extractive Industries Public Dialogue

Background

The extractive industries sector is well known for being the most non-transparent and unaccountable sector in the world. The extractive industries sector is often strong in developing countries where minerals and oil are being extracted in communities that do not benefit directly from the extraction. International and national oil companies often do not publicly declare how much revenue they pay to the host governments where the oil companies are operating. Transparency International estimates that two thirds of the world's poorest people live in resource rich countries. In 2006, oil exports alone were estimated at US\$ 866 billion worldwide¹. These revenues rarely reach the poor or are used in the overall development of the countries where they were extracted.

The oil and mining companies are not the only ones to blame. The national governments do not publish the revenues they receive from these companies. Often the executive exerts excessive powers that undermine the national legislature's oversight role. This is further hampered by the general lack of information in these countries which hinders the legislature and civil society's ability to monitor and lobby national governments and extractive companies to increase their transparency and governance of their operations.

Several initiatives at the national, regional and international level have been established to address the deficits of the extractive industries sector. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Publish-What-You-Pay, the work of Transparency International and Revenue Watch Institute are just some of the various initiatives on this issue. The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in Africa (ANSA-Africa) and its partners recognise these initiatives and do not intend to duplicate existing efforts. ANSA-Africa and its partners intend to convene a series of multi-stakeholder dialogues² that aim at taking stock of existing initiatives and strategise on enhancing the role of citizens in advocating for greater transparency and improved governance in extractive industries. ANSA-Africa hopes to contribute to existing knowledge and practices in the field of extractive industries through providing a platform for engagement of multiple stakeholders.

¹ Transparency International,
http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/promoting_revenue_transparency

² These dialogue series will be taking place at sub-regional level first in Southern, Eastern and West Africa which will culminate later this year in an African Regional Forum on EI and Natural Resource Management.

Objectives of the Public Dialogue

The dialogue objectives are:

1. To share information on the lessons, challenges and achievements of various stakeholders' initiatives on promoting governance and transparency in the sector of extractive industries;
2. To set a plan of action that will enhance country level initiatives and sub-regional networking amongst multi-stakeholders.

Outcomes of the Public Dialogue

The dialogue outcomes are:

1. To provide a platform for initial multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement on governance and transparency initiatives in the extractive industries sector;
2. To establish a framework of future collaboration and networking amongst the various stakeholders present at the dialogue.

Target Audience

The audience will include stakeholders from the Southern Africa (SADC) region:

1. Civil society actors engaged in advocating for transparency in extractive industries;
2. Community representatives where oil and mining operations are currently occurring and have been engaged in making their 'voices' heard on the effects of these operations;
3. Members of national legislatures interested in or have started advocating at the national level for improved transparency and oversight role of national legislatures;
4. Representatives of the oil and mining companies that are interested in or have already made important strides to enhance transparency in their operations.

Dates of the Dialogue

The Southern Africa Governance & Transparency in Extractive Industries Public Dialogue will be held from 27-28th May, 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa.