SLEITI
Extractive Industries
Transparency Initiative
Sierra Leone
17 Charles Street, Buxton Compound, 2nd Floor,
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Website: www.sleiti.gov.sl

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Minutes of SLEITI MSG Quarter Three Meeting held on 3rd October 2024
VENUE: Conference Room – Office of the Vice President, Tower Hill

Attendance:

Government:	**Civil Society:**	**Chamber:**	**Secretariat**
Hon Manty Tarawalli – OVP- Chair	Dorcas Sitta Dauda - WoME- SL;	Hussine Yilla – Sierra Rutile	Mohamed B. Koroma - Secretary
Joseph M. Gonda - OVP;	Alphonsus B.M. Gbanie – HRDN-SL	Kumba S. Feika – Koidu Limited	Annie Lansana
Sheku B. Samai- OVP	Gertrude Karimu – WoNES-SL		Nadine Manley
Haji A. Konneh- OVP	Cecilia C. Mattia – NACE		Alie Brima Kamara
Samuel Gandi- ONS	Joseph R. Kailie – NACE		Deborah Massaquoi
Christiana Moiwo - PD-SL;	Samuel J. Turay-WoNES		Marian Turay
Mabinty Sesay - MMMR;	Abu B. Brima - NaRGEJ		Mahawa Bai Kamara
Abu Bakarr Conteh – MoF	Emmanuel Gbondo Esq. – NaRGEJ-SL		Sahr D. Karku
Yusuf Dauda Suma-NMA			
Ramatu B. Massaquoi-EPA-SL			
Sarah Kosseh- MLG&CA			

Apology: Mohamed Salieu Bah – NMA/PMT, Solomon M. Sogbandi – HRDN, Aminata Kamara – Marampa Mines Ltd., Tommy Kaiza Koker – Sierra Diamonds Ltd

Agenda

1. Prayer & Opening
2. Reading of minutes of the meeting of 27/06/ 2024
3. Matters arising from minutes of 27/06/ 2024
4. 2022-2023 SLEITI Report Production
   a. approval of draft inception report
   b. approval of reporting templates
   c. approval of BO declaration form
5. MSG capacity building workshop
6. Signing of SLEITI MSG MoU (2024 - 2027)
7. Update on draft SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill)

8. Update on EITI validation of Sierra Leone
9. Update on the EITI Anglophone and Lusophone Africa Peer-Learning Dialogue in Lusaka, Zambia
10. Other Business:
11. Adjournment

1. Prayers & Opening

The National Coordinator of SLEITI, Mohamed Baimba Koroma called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. and expressed thanks to MSG members for being in attendance. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of State, Office of the Vice President, Hon. Manty Tarawalli who is also chair of the SLEITI MSG.

In her opening remarks the Chair welcomed members and requested for individual silent prayers to be observed.

2. Reading of Minutes of the Meeting of 27th June 2024

The Hon Minister asked the National Coordinator (NC) to read out the minutes of quarter two MSG meeting. Even though the minutes was shared with members ahead of the meeting, it was also projected on the screen for ease, and read page by page. Madam Cecilia drew the attention of members to the first paragraph of page eight which was on the recruitment process of four SLEITI officers. She emphasized that the conclusion of the matter was not properly captured in the minutes and that could be a problem during the EITI validation process when clarification on such an issue comes up. She recommended that the minutes must record what was agreed upon in addressing the concern raised by the CSO constituency on the recruitment of the four SLEITI officers. In response, Mr. Koroma stated that the final sentence of the second paragraph on page eight of the same minutes explained that the CSOs were called to a separate meeting with the Minister Manty Tarawalli to discuss and agree how future recruitment will be done by involving the MSG. He read the text out, which stated that "***Following brief exchanges of views on the recruitment process, the Chair drew the curtain down on the agenda item and invited the civil society constituency to a separate meeting for further engagement on the matter.***

However, Madam Cecilia suggested that the sentence be rephrased in order to reflect exactly what happened to resolve the issue. As a result, Minister Manty requested the NC to liaise with the CSOs to rephrase the statement. This position was adopted by Emmanuel Gbondo and seconded by Dorcas Sitta Dauda. Meanwhile, the NC promised to also share the minutes of the meeting that was held with the CSOs and Minister Manty.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of 27th June 2024

Sahr Dauda Karku, read through matters arising from the meeting of 27th June 2024 highlighting the following action points and their subsequent updates:

i. ***Action point:*** *The SLEITI MSG MoU (2024 - 2027) should be reviewed by the SLEITI secretariat and the MSG Technical Committee in order to be in sync with some aspects that border on the same issues within the SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill).*

Update: *The SLEITI MSG MoU (2024 - 2027) was reviewed by the MSG Technical Committee on the 6th August 2024, and aligned with the draft SLEITI Bill.*

Following this update, the CSOs expressed concerns that they need to meet and consult internally among themselves and will advise the MSG at the next meeting with a name of who will sign the MoU on behalf of the CSO constituency.

ii. **Action point:** *A committee to be set up to review the draft SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill) ensuring that it covers a wide range of areas that will facilitate the implementation of the EITI Standard.*

Update: *A committee was setup and completed the review of the draft SLEITI Bill (Draft Extractive Resources Transparency Bill) on the 6th August 2024 at the SLEITI secretariat. The draft Bill is ready to be taken to the next stage, pending the approval of MSG members.*

iii. **Action point:** *Interested MSG members were to register their names for the workshop to be held in Lusaka, Zambia from the 3rd-5th September 2024. The closing date for registration was Monday, 15th July 2024 for all self-sponsored delegates. The SLEITI secretariat was to share the registration link with members as soon as possible.*

Update: *Interested MSG members registered their names and the eligible members successfully participated in the EITI Anglophone and Lusophone Africa Peer-Learning Dialogue workshop in Lusaka, Zambia from 3rd-5thSeptember 2024. The Sierra Leone delegation included representatives from SLEITI, EPA, State House and WoNES.*

Following the updates, members noted that one action point on the meeting of CSOs with Minister Manty was not included as part of the action points. The Secretariat noted this and agreed to update the minutes accordingly.

4. 2022 – 2023 SLEITI Report Production

The NC reminded members that the Independent Administrator (IA) has submitted the draft copies of the 2022-2023 Inception Report, Reporting Templates and Beneficial Ownership Declaration Form to the SLEITI secretariat which have been shared to the MSG for their review, comments and approval. He said the MSG Technical Committee has reviewed the documents with recommendations made for the MSG to review and approve.

- **Review and approval of the draft Inception Report, Reporting Templates and Beneficial Ownership (BO) Declaration Form.**

The NC informed members that following their approval for the MSG Technical Committee (TC) to review the documents on their behalf, the minutes of the MSG TC meeting and tracked changes of the Inception Reports were submitted to members. The MSG TC spent a great deal of time at the SLEITI secretariat on Tuesday, 24thSeptember 2024 where they reviewed the draft 2022-2023 Inception Report, Reporting Templates and the BO Declaration Form. The NC also informed members that the Materiality Threshold set for the 2022-2023 SLEITI report production by the IA and endorsed by the MSG TC is a minimum of $200,000. It was also noted that a few in-scope mining companies have had their mining licenses either suspended or cancelled, while a few others had changed their names.

Mr. Koroma also informed members that the minutes of the Technical Committee meeting on the review of the draft 2022-2023 Inception Report, Reporting Templates and the BO Declaration Form were also sent to the MSG ahead of the meeting for their attention and comments. For ease of reference the draft 2022-2023 Inception Report, the Reporting Templates, BO Declaration Form and the minutes of the Technical Committee were projected for members to review.

Mr. Abu Brima of NaRGEJ commented that the Materiality Threshold should be reduced to $150,000 so that more companies can be brought into the scope of the report. However, Mr. Koroma stated that this would be challenging because having more companies in the scope of the report would not allow quality and detailed analysis of the data considering the tight deadline

Madam Cecilia said that members should consider how the Bank of Sierra Leone can be incorporated into the work of the MSG especially as they currently publish production and export data which have created issues in previous validation as the figures published by them differs from those held by the National Mineral Agency (NMA) who is the primary source of the data. She stated that a coordination meeting should be held between the two institutions in order to agree on the figure that should be published.

On the matter of tax reform policy and the mining lease agreement, there were concerns about the inconsistencies of the various Acts and lease agreements which mining companies are taking advantage of in order to avoid taxes and other payments due to the Government and the communities where the mining activities are carried out. In their view, such inconsistencies are not helpful to the sector as it creates a situation where mining companies are at liberty to choose what is best for them between the Mining Act and the Lease Agreement. Following the discussion, Madam Cecilia requested that there should be a provision that would ensure CSOs are involved in the negotiation process between the GoSL and the mining companies.

Mr. Brima also raised concern that mining companies are quick to implement laws that favour them, but take a lot of time in implementing those that are not in their favour. He referenced the 1% of turnover for Community Development Fund (CDF) which companies should be paying for community development of areas affected by mining activities. Mr. Suma explained that the EIRA was passed in order to have a holistic fiscal regime for the extractive sector. He stated that as a way of encouraging investment by the Government, mining lease agreements are entered into with some favourable fiscal terms for the companies. After listening to the discussion, Minister Manty noted that following the discussion and submission made by Mr. Suma, it is perfectly legal for the companies to choose whether to apply the mining Act or the Lease agreement as they are both legal documents, and are therefore not acting contrary to the constitution of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Abu Bakarr Conteh of the Ministry of Finance gave clarity of the interpretation of the Finance Act of 2020 and why the corporate income tax was reduced from 30% to 25% across all corporate entities including the mining industry. He said before, the 25% reduction was not applicable to mining companies but now the scope has been broadened to incorporate them.

Mr. Abu Brima observed that he noticed that each time there is a law that instructed for tax to be reduced as in the case of the Finance Act of 2020 the mining companies will quickly draw reference to such regulation in order to reduce their tax obligation. On the contrary, if an amendment is made

to any mining Act that requires tax to be increased, the mining company will revert to their lease agreement with the GoSL which works in their favour.

After the perusal and clarity given to some sections of the entire draft 2022-2023 Inception Report, the Reporting Templates and the BO Declaration Form, the MSG endorsed the documents and authority given to the IA to carry on with the processes towards the production of the 2022-2023 SLEITI report.

5. MSG Capacity Building Workshop

The NC informed members that after sharing the 2024 SLEITI work plan with development partners, GIZ expressed interest in supporting SLEITI with three key activities including the MSG capacity building workshop, the redevelopment of the SLEITI website and the recently sponsored peer-learning and exchange mission to Liberia on Beneficial Ownership which is one of the seven corrective actions of the last EITI validation.

The NC went on to explain the concept note and the draft agenda of the capacity building workshop while it was also projected on the screen. After the NC had shared the capacity building workshop and its agenda items, Madam Cecilia noted that the proposed date of the capacity building workshop slated for the 13th and 14th November 2024 seems to clash with the National Climate Change Conference that has been planned long ago by the GoSL. With that said, the proposed date was shifted by a week to the 20th and 21st of November 2024 respectively. It was also agreed by members that instead of having the workshop for one and a half day, it should be extended to two full days. Following this, Minister Manty requested that the MSG Technical Committee should meet to review the agenda of the workshop so that it can last for two full days, and advise members accordingly.

6. Signing of the SLEITI MoU (2024-2027)

The NC presented the revised draft copy of the SLEITI MoU (2024-2027) informing the members that it was part of the matters arising from the MSG quarter two meeting that the MSG Technical Committee synchronizes the SLEITI MoU (2020-2024) with the SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill). He also informed members that the MSG Technical Committee met on the 6th August 2024 at the SLEITI secretariat where the MoU was reviewed with various comments and additions made were necessary. The updated SLEITI MoU (2024-2027) was shared with the MSG members in order to get feedbacks before the meeting so that it will be ready for signing at the MSG quarter three (3) meeting. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the MSG Technical Committee for taking their time to diligently review the SLEITI MoU (2024-2027).

Following his submission, the CSOs requested for a time allowance to have their internal consultations and update members with a name of who will sign the MoU on their behalf. Cecilia added that a week should be given to them for that. Hussine Yilla, from Sierra Rutile also informed members that the next meeting would be a good time for the Chamber of Mines to also produce their representative to sign the MoU as they are in the process of registering the Chamber. Therefore, it was agreed by all that the SLEITI MoU (2024-2027) will be signed at the MSG quarter four (4) meeting which is expected to be held in December 2024.

The NC appealed to the MSG members that they should be taking time to read documents sent to them by the SLEITI secretariat and make inputs to them ahead of time as this will expedite the discussions at meetings.

7. Update on the Draft SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill)

Mr. Koroma intimated the members of the MSG that the draft copy of the SLEITI Bill has also been reviewed by the MSG Technical Committee on the 6th August 2024, and is now speaking to SLEITI MoU (2024-2027). He went on to state that upon the approval by members, the Bill is ready to be escalated to the next stage for further consideration. However, Minister Manty stated that since the Bill and the MoU should be speaking to each other, but have noticed that there are still minor inputs to be made in the MoU by the CSOs, she proposed that the review of the Bill be moved to a time when the MoU is ready. This was endorsed by members.

8. Update on EITI Validation of Sierra Leone

The NC informed members that the 2022-2023 SLEITI report will be produced in accordance with the new 2023 EITI Standard. He said the Standard include provisions such as energy transition, anti-corruption policy, domestic revenue mobilization, gender equity, environment, BO, etc.

He informed members that the EITI has postponed the validation of SLEITI from 1st January to 1st April 2026. He said this is to give more time to countries to implement the 2023 Standard.

9. Update on the EITI Anglophone and Lusophone Africa Peer-Learning Dialogue in Lusaka, Zambia

Mr. Koroma informed members that he would like to allow co-attenders to update the Group regarding the workshop in Zambia. He stated that a total of four people from Sierra Leone (SLEITI, WoNES, EPA and State House) attended the program. Madam Gertrude Karimu from WoNES and Madam Ramatu Massaquoi from EPA were requested to give update of their participation at the workshop.

Madam Gertrude acknowledged that the EITI is new to her and expressed appreciation for attending the workshop. She said it was a great opportunity for them to learn about the EITI and to hear implementation experiences of other countries. She highlighted the following as some of the key observations and takeaways:

- There were more representations from other countries than Sierra Leone.
- The mining companies from other countries had representations, but there was none from Sierra Leone
- Many lawyers were represented on the MSG of some countries and shared ideas of how they review mining contracts and simplify it for the understanding of mining communities.
- The Zambia CSO representing 'Publish What You Pay' encouraged other CSOs in implementing countries to move away from protest against governments to positive engagements with them for effective dialogue, as proper engagement could provide better dividend.

- Emphasis was placed on the appointment of people with integrity and high standing to be on the MSGs as was the case with many EITI countries at the workshop.
- Artisanal miners should be a part of the MSGs as was the case with Zambia MSG and other countries.
- The MSG set up should be extended to the local communities.
- BO regulation should be developed in order to strengthen data collection.

Madam Ramatu stated that Madam Gertrude had already given a detailed update of the workshop. However, she added that there was also a high level of government commitment to the EITI process in Zambia, Nigeria and few other countries, including a strong public sector coordination and support to the EITI process.

10. Other Business (OB)

- Madam Cecilia gave a brief update regarding her attendance at the ***Future of Energy Conference (FEC)*** in Accra, Ghana on the theme; ***Harnessing Africa's Resource Wealth: Fueling Innovation for Equitable Energy Access*** held from the 26th-28th August 2024. She stated that research study should be considered by Sierra Leone to get abreast with the current innovation of equitable energy access. She said that a lot was learnt from the trip regarding the harnessing of Africa's resource wealth.
- The NC updated the members of the SLEITI Secretariat's visit to the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources to engage them about the possibility of their incorporation into the scope of the EITI process in Sierra Leone. He said as the EITI encourages countries to be innovative and free to expand their scope into natural resources, he thought it was appropriate that the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources be approached. He told members that the meeting was successful and the Ministry was happy and expressed its willingness to be incorporated into the EITI process in Sierra Leone. In his update, he also said that the MSG had initially discussed the possibi'ity of expanding its scope into the quarry, timber and fisheries sectors, but have not been able to do so due to capacity challenge.
- In addition to the visit by the SLEITI Secretariat to the Ministry of Fisheries, Minister Manty also added that she spoke with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources recently on the same issue and she affirmed her willingness to be a part of the EITI process.
- Mr. Abu Brima thanked the Minister Manty for her pro-active step in speaking with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to be part of the extension of the EITI scope so that transparency and accountability will be observed within the Fisheries and Marine Resources sector.

In conclusion, the NC encouraged the MSG members that in addition to the monthly progress reports sent to them, they should also be visiting the SLEITI social media handles to keep abreast with the activities of the SLEITI secretariat and to 'like' and 'share' after reading the items published on such platforms.

11. Adjournment

With no other item to discuss, the motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Madam Gertrude Karimu and was seconded by Madam Hussine Yilla.



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Signature of Chair



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Signature of Secretary

Action Points

No.	Action points	Update
1	*To indicate in the minutes of the MSG quarter two meeting that a meeting was agreed to be held between the Hon Minister Manty Tarawalli and the CSOs to address the recruitment of the four SLEITI officers.*	*This has been completed and added as the fourth action point in the SLEITI MSG quarter two minutes.*
2	*The NC to share with participants the minutes of the meeting between Minister Manty and the CSOs on the recruitment of the four SLEITI Officers.*	*The minutes of the meeting has been shared by the NC with all members of the CSO constituency.*
3	*The SLEITI Secretariat to inform GIZ of the revised date for the capacity building workshop.*	*This action was completed and the capacity building workshop was successfully held on the 20th and 21st November 2024 at the Family Kingdom Resort.*
4	*The CSOs to meet and conclude on the reviewed SLEITI MoU and submit a name to sign the MoU on behalf of the CSO constituency.*	*This action is yet to be completed even though several follow ups were done by the secretariat to the CSOs.*
5	*The Chamber of Mines to also review the MoU and get a representative that will sign on their behalf.*	*This action is yet to be completed, the secretariat awaits the response of the Chamber of Mines as they are still in the process of formally registering the Chamber of Mines.*
6	*Minister Manty to have further engagement with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to discuss the ministry's incorporation into the EITI process.*	*Due to her busy schedule. Minister Manty has not yet had further engagement with her colleague Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources.*
7	*SLEITI to rephrase a statement on page eight of quarter 2 minutes of the MSG meeting to reflect the discussions around the recruitment of the SLEITI officers.*	*This action has been completed with the rephrased sentence indicated in the minutes of the SLEITI MSG quarter two minutes.*