SLEITI
Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Sierra Leone
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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

MINUTES OF SLEITI MSG QUARTER ONE MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2024

VENUE: CONFERENCE ROOM – MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOWER HILL

Attendance:

Government:	Civil Society:	Chamber:	Secretariat
Ramatu B. Massaquoi – EPA-SL - Chair	Esther Kandeh -WoME-SL;	Tommy Kaiza Koker – Sierra Diamond Ltd	Mohamed B. Koroma - Secretary
Swalihu Jusu- OVP;	Dorcas Sitta Dauda - WoME- SL;	Kumba S Feika - Koidu Ltd;	Mohamed F. Conteh
Christiana Moiwo – PD-SL;	Boima Monyeh – WoNES-SL		Annie Lansana
Samuel Gandi – ONS	Cecilia C. Mattia – NACE		Alie Brima Kamara
Josephine M. Saffa – ONS	George Mustapha – SDI		Deborah Massaquoi
Isatu Barbar Bah – NMA/PMT	Joseph R. Kailie - NACE		Marian Turay
Mohamed Sallieu Bah - NMA/PMT	Samuel J. Turay-WoNES;		
Sheku B Samai - OVP;	Emmanuel Gbondo Esq. – NaRGEJ-SL		
Peter Mangoh - ASSL;			
Hon. Emerson Lamina – Parliament			
Mabinty Sesay - MMMR;			

Apology: Manty Tarawalli - OVP; Abu Brima - NMJD; Mohamed A. Salisu – MoF, Alphonsus Gbanie – HRDN-SL

Agenda

1. Prayer & Opening
2. Reading of minutes of meeting of 05/10/2023
3. Matter arising from minutes of 05/10/2023
4. **Short Presentation:** Highlights of the draft Extractive Resources Transparency Bill – *Consultant*

5. Development of 2024 Work plan and Financial Support
6. Update on production of 2022-2023 SLEITI Report
7. Addressing 2020-2021 Report recommendations and 2022 Validation Corrective Actions
8. Update on nationwide dissemination of 2020-2021 SLEITI Report
9. Other Business
10. Adjournment

1. Prayers & Opening

In the absence of the MSG Chair -Minister Manty Tarawalli, the group unanimously requested Mrs. Ramatu Massaquoi to Chair the meeting. Mrs. Massaquoi is a member of the MSG representing the Environment Protection Agency (EPA-SL) and has effectively served the MSG for a long period of time.

The meeting commenced at 10:00am with a brief remark by the Chair. She welcomed her colleague MSG members and explained why the substantive Chair (Minister Manty Tarawalli) and the deputy Chair (Mohamed Salisu) were absent. Mrs. Massaquoi also congratulated herself for her thought to serve as Chair of the meeting prior to her being approached by the National Coordinator. As part of the opening, members were requested to introduce themselves as there were several MSG members who were attending the meeting for the first time.

2. Reading of Minutes of Meeting of 5th October 2023.

The National Coordinator Mohamed Baimba Koroma led the group through the process. The minutes were projected in full view of all members. The minutes were read page by page and in the process, the following corrections were made:

a) To removed Isatu Borbor Bah of PMT from the listing of those who sent in apologies, as she attended the meeting.
b) To add (s) to member on page 4 so it could read as 'members.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of meeting of 5th October 2023.

The National Coordinator also led members through matters arisen. The following were deliberated by the group:

- **Beneficial Ownership Disclosure**: It was reported that a concept note and flow-chart will be developed and presented to the Vice President. The NC updated members that the Secretariat shared a draft with the MSG Chair for review and input. However, this activity was yet to be completed. The MSG resolved that this should be prioritized as Sierra Leone was marked down by the Validation team in 2022 on its BO implementation.
- **Meeting with large-scale and ASM companies:** In order to familiarize with key actors in the sector and to request companies' effective participation in the EITI process, the MSG

Chair was scheduled to meet with key large-scale mining companies. The MSG welcomed this initiative and hoped that the outcome will enhance continued interaction and full participation with companies.

- **Extractive Resources Transparency Bill:** In addition to the NACE- ACEP workshop on the draft bill, it was reported that that the MSG Chair will inform the Antony General and Minister of Justice accordingly.
- **2022-2023 Report production:** The National Coordinator provided update on the recruitment of the Independent Administrator and stated that only two bids were received from Moore SL and BDO LLP. He said the NPPA 'no objection approval' has been received and a meeting will be held with BDO to negotiate on their financial proposal to meet SLEITI's budget. The MSG was of the view that effort should be made to request BDO to cut down other line items included in the financial proposal especially the in-country visit. This is because the MSG believe there is already a partnership with the local BDO who could undertake specific tasks locally.

Regarding ASM representation on the MSG, the group had a mixed reaction. Some members were concerned that the ASM is yet to be effectively regulated and formalized and their activities were a concern to the MSG especially when there is no one to formally engage with from the sector. Therefore, the question was – if they were to be invited to the MSG, how will they be represented?

On the other hand, the Precious Minerals Trading (PMT) unit of the NMA stated that the ASM sector could be represented on the MSG by the Head of Exporters association. He said that Mr. Fasalli should be contacted because he is one of their focal persons. Following deliberations, it was resolved that the regulating institutions-NMA and MMMR be contacted for further information and clarity on ASM representatives.

4: Short Presentation: Highlights of the draft Extractive Resources Transparency Bill

The presentation was done by the Consultant Daniel Gbondo Esq, a well-known practitioner with capacity in extractive sector governance. In his overview, Daniel informed that he was approached by Africa Center for Energy Policy (ACEP) through the National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives (NACE) to review the Draft SLEITI Bill and to further present it to the MSG and other Stakeholders for their input. He said he hoped that his meeting with the MSG will lead to a working session where the Bill will be read and finalized before presenting it to Law Officers department. He recalled that the Bill which he was asked to present was first discussed at a stakeholder's consultative workshop at Mamba Point - Aberdeen, and has been tweaked many times to prevent overlap with other national laws and to also align it with the 2023 EITI Standard.

In his presentation of the draft Bill, the consultant informed that he had prepared his slides in a manner that will guide the MSG on important areas of the draft Bill. In addition to other important issues, below is a listing of the issues highlighted in the presentation:

a) Absenteeism of MSG members without excuse including its consequences

b) Sources that will finance the SLEITI process in addition to government allocations. The EPA, NMA, PD and MMMR were listed to allocate to SLEITI a percentage of the amount they retain from large-scale companies.
c) Discrepancy – the MSG should within seven days of publication of the EITI report flag any discrepancy issue emanated from the report to the Auditor General.
d) Tenure of MSG members including the VP's consideration regarding who might be the Chair as it was not clear whether the MoS is to be considered the only rightful person to serve as Chair.

During deliberations several issues were raised by the group. Prominent among include the following:

- That the Bill did not take into consideration the ASM sector
- Business and human rights issues were not captured
- How to engage with heads of MDAs listed to provide funding support to SLEITI
- That copies of the draft Bill be shared with Parliament as part of the development process to avoid overlaps as in the case of the Land Right Act and the Mines and Minerals Development Act
- That the short title of the Bill had changed from what was agreed at the Mamba Point workshop
- That in the absence of the Chair particularly the MoS, how SLEITI could deal with meetings and implementation
- That the Bill should consider reparation fees be paid into local banks as forex like in the case of Guinea
- That the Bill should be clear on tenure of members to avoid recycled MSG members
- That it should be clear on whether the Chamber was the only rightful group to represent mining companies

5: Development of 2024 Work Plan and Financial Support

The National Coordinator gave a vivid account of the progress made in developing the 2024 work plan. He informed the group that prior to the 28th February meeting, the Secretariat emailed the work plan to stakeholders for comments and feedback. Despite this approach, the National Coordinator said the preferred option was to hold a stakeholder's consultative workshop to develop the work plan. He said he has already assured the EITI International Secretariat that the MSG would endevour to publish the workplan by the end of the first quarter of 2024. Therefore, he encouraged members to have all hands-on deck by ensuring that the necessary logistics are provided to enable the secretariat conduct the workshop and publish the workplan on time.

Following deliberations, the group resolved that a one-day stakeholder consultative meeting be held to finalize the draft work plan followed by the MSG endorsement and publication. To this end, the National Coordinator of the National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives (NACE) was requested to support the Secretariat in the processes leading up to the work plan meeting and to facilitate participation of non-MSG CSOs nationwide and other stakeholders.

6: Update on Production of 2022-2023 SLEITI Report

The SLEITI 2022-2023 Report production was tabled for discussion following a detailed update by the National Coordinator on the progress made thus far. He said SLEITI has received a 'No Objection' approval from NPPA to negotiate the financial proposal with BDO and such a meeting was being planned. He emphasized the need for a systematic disclosure where MDAs can routinely publish data related to the sector as this will bring down the cost of producing the report and make the data timely and more relevant to the public. The National Coordinator informed members that SLEITI is part of the Open Governance Partnership (OGP) which is a body that is expected to help enhance EITI implementation especially with support on systematic disclosure and beneficial ownership transparency. He stated that OGP has not matched his expectation as the full burden of implementation remain with SLEITI. However, he stated that he will engage the institution again in order to work collaboratively to support EITI implementation. Following deliberation, the MSG requested the Secretariat to continue with the OGP process and to submit commitments for the development of NAP V. The SLEITI secretariat was urged to also continue engagement with the Ministry of Mines for effective support in addressing challenges associated with the sector including systematic disclosures of EITI related data.

7: Addressing 2020-2021 Report recommendations and 2022 Validation Corrective Actions

Report recommendations: Following the publications of the 2020-2021 SLEITI report and the 2022 Validation report, several recommendations and corrective actions were recommended for implementation by the MSG. As part of its commitment to the EITI process, the MSG carefully discussed the findings with emphasis on addressing them.

- On the 2020-2021 report recommendations regarding expanding the EITI reporting scope to other sectors, members had mixed views as many stated that the MSG may not have the capacity to expand into timber and marine sectors. Following deliberations, it was resolved that the recommendation is kept in view, but that the scope of SLEITI remain as it is (mineral, oil & gas). However, some members proposed that the Ministry of Fisheries be invited to one of the MSG meetings in order to provide insight into the sector. Following this, there could be a possibility to undertake a feasibility study to assess the potential of the sector. The recommendation of such study would inform the MSG on the way forward.

- On implementation of the recommendations of the Feasibility Study, members stated that this is already in progress as relevant MDAs have already been informed of the recommendations and further engagement will continue on implementation of some of the recommendations. However, some members cautioned that to implement some of the recommendations will require money, institutional willingness and cultural shift. Therefore, continuous engagement with the relevant institutions is necessary.

- With regards recommendation on ensuring that NMA and BSL publish a harmonised data set on production and export volumes and values, the secretariat was tasked to set up a meeting with the NMA, BSL and other stakeholders involved in the collection and publication of such data to agree on a format for publication.

Validation Corrective Actions: Regarding the 2022 Validation corrective actions, members requested the secretariat to extract areas related to the relevant MDAs and share with those MDAs including engaging them to discuss and agree action plans in addressing the relevant corrective actions. The NC informed members that he has recently realized that several institutions will have to work collaboratively in order to fully implement the corrective action on BO. He said besides SLEITI, the other institutions that work on BO are the Financial Intelligence Unit, National Investment Board/Corporate Affairs Commission, Bank of Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, National Revenue Authority, Anti-Corruption Commission etc. The NC stated that he was only aware of this when he attended a workshop on money laundering with some of these institutions. To this end, the NC said there was a planned stakeholder meeting with some of the institutions mentioned on BO implementation, and a peer learning mission to an EITI implementing country that has established a national BO register. He advised that going forward, all of the institutions will have to work together as he believes such method will enhance a drive towards having a coordinated national approach to the BO process and a well-established national BO register.

8. Update on Nationwide Dissemination of the 2020-2021 SLEITI Report

The NC thanked the MSG Chair and members for supporting and participating in the nationwide disseminate of the report. While commending the MSG, the NC singled out CSOs for effectively coordinating the dissemination. Despite this, the NC drew the attention of the rapporteurs to reports submitted. The NC informed that it often took the Secretariat lots of time to clean up and strengthen the reports. The NC expressed dismay at some of the reports noting that with future dissemination, the Secretariat will consider alternative means. In the same vein, the NC called on the CSOs to endeavour to invite participants that matters most. A major concern further raised by the Secretariat was the idea of retiring fuel receipts by MSG members. According to the Secretariat, many MSG members hardly submit returns in a timely manner which adversely affect financial reporting deadline. The Secretariat urged members to always account for disbursements of fuel.

9. Other Business

As part of the group's deliberations, members presented varying issues related to the sector including the MSG governance. The following formed part of the deliberations, although the group had little or no time to deliberate in detail:

- That the Mining IDABA held in South Africa was informative and well attended by several sector players including the EITI International Secretariat. It was stated that the IDABA discussed issues related to Climate Change and Energy Transition. These should be prioritized as a group considering the strategic positioning in the global discuss including the 2026 EITI Validation of Sierra Leone.
- The NC informed members that the current SLEITI MSG MoU (2021-2023) expires by end of March 2024. He asked whether a new MoU will be developed or the current MoU be modified with a new three years' timeline. Members unanimously agreed on the later and requested the Secretariat to action accordingly.

- In the absence of Aminata Kamara, who is the focal person for the Chamber of Mines, it was observed that there was no other member to contact on issues to do with Chamber. Following deliberations, it was resolved that the Finance Officer of Koidu Limited be contacted for guidance.
- The NC reported that the Secretariat had commenced submitting monthly report to the MoS/MSG Chair to update her with the monthly activities of the SLEITI secretariat. He said the MSG will also be provided with same, following receipt of such report by the MoS/MSG Chair.
- The Audit Service representative extended invitation to the MSG ahead of its planned workshop with AFROSAI.
- Hon. Emmerson Lamina informed the group that the leadership of Parliament has asked him to serve as the focal person on the MSG – a position which used to be occupied by Hon. Sidi Tunis. When asked about his alternate, he said Parliament will find a suitable person and communicate it to members.

10. Adjournment

There being no other issue to discuss, the motion for adjournment of the meeting was moved by Christiana Moiwo, Seconded by Salieu Bah.

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Signature of Chair

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Signature of Secretary

Action point

No.	Action point	Update
1	*Minister Manty Tarawalli to submit a concept note and flow-chart on Beneficial Ownership (BO) disclosure to the Vice President.*	*Due to the imminent peer learning and exchange mission of Sierra Leone to Liberia on BO, Minister proposed that we wait for the recommendations of the mission in order to engage accordingly.*
2	*Minister Manty Tarawalli to engage large scale and ASM companies on effective participation on the EITI process.*	*Pending – This is still in view and will be implemented soon.*
3	*SLEITI to engage Mr. Fasalli, NMA and MMMR on clarity of ASM representation on the MSG.*	*Ongoing – This was brought to the attention of the Minister of Mine at a meeting with SLEITI. The Secretariat will follow-up on the Minister and report accordingly.*
4	*A one-day stakeholder consultative meeting be held to finalize the draft work plan followed by the MSG endorsement and publication.*	*Completed – The workshop was held on Friday, 15th March 2024 at the CCSL conference hall. It was well attended by stakeholders from MDAs, civil society, mining companies and the media.*
5	*Ministry of Fisheries to be invited to one of the MSG meetings in order to provide insight into the sector.*	*Ongoing – A meeting is yet to be set up as SLEITI secretariat is finalizing modalities on which MSG meeting they should be invited to attend.*
6	*To set up a meeting with the NMA, BSL and other stakeholders involved in the collection and publication of production and export data to agree on a format for publication.*	*Ongoing – A meeting was held with the Minister of Mines where this was discussed. The Minister stated that similar issue has been brought to his attention. He said since NMA/Ministry of Mines are the primary source/s, he is working on ways that the data will be published by NMA.*
7	*The secretariat to extract areas related to the relevant MDAs and share with those MDAs including engaging them to discuss and agree action plans in addressing the relevant corrective actions*	*Ongoing - Engagements have already started. A meeting was held with the Minister of Mine. as mentioned above.* *Efforts to meet with Heads of NMA and EPA proved unfruitful due to other official matters by the respective institutions.*