SLEITI
Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

18 Soldier Street, 2nd Floor,
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Website: www.sleiti.gov.sl

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Minutes of SLEITI MSG Quarter Four (4) Meeting held on 17th December 2024

VENUE: Conference Room – Office of the Vice President, Tower Hill, Freetown

Attendance:

Government:	Civil Society:	Chamber:	Secretariat
Ramatu B. Massaquoi- EPA-SL - Chair	Dorcas Sitta Dauda - WoME- SL;	Hussine Yilla – Sierra Rutile	Mohamed B. Koroma - Secretary
Peter Mangol – ASSL;	Alphonsus B.M. Gbanie – HRDN-SL	Aminata Kamara - MML	Annie Lansana
Mohamed S. Bah – NMA/PMT;	Cecilia C. Mattia – NACE		Nadine Manley
Christiana Moiwo – PD-SL;	Joseph R. Kailie – NACE		Alie Brima Kamara
Edwin J.S. Yambasu – NMA/PMT;	Samuel J. Turay- WoNES;		Deborah Massaquoi
Sheku B. Samai- OVP;	Abu B. Brima – NMJD-SL		Marian Turay
Mabinty Sesay - MMMR;	Emmanuel Gbondo Esq. – NaRGEJ-SL;		Mahawa Bai Kamara
Abu Bakarr Conteh – MoF;	Solomon M. Sogbandi – HRDN-SL		Sahr D. Karku
Joseph M Ganda – OVP	Esther Kandeh – WoME-SL;		Joseph Moigua
Sarah Kosseh – MoLG&CA			
Edward A. Ngaoja – OVP			
Joseph M. Ganda - OVP			

Apology: Manty Tarawalli – OVP, Kumba S. Feika – Koidu Limited, Tommy Kaiza Koker – Sierra Diamonds Ltd.

Agenda

1. Prayer & Opening
2. Reading of minutes of the meeting of 3/10/ 2024
3. Matters arising from minutes of 3/10/ 2024
4. Review and approval of SLEITI 2022-2023 Draft Final Report
5. SLEITI MSG MoU (2024-2027)
6. Update on the draft SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill)
7. Update on EITI Validation of Sierra Leone
8. Development of 2025 SLEITI Work plan
9. Report on MSG Capacity Building Workshop

10. SLEITI Office Relocation
10. Other Business
11. Adjournment

1. Prayers & Opening

Madam Ramatu Massaquoi was designated by the Minister of State to chair the meeting in her absence. Upon calling the meeting to order, she warmly welcomed all members of the MSG, expressing her genuine gratitude for their presence. She noted the significance of this gathering as it marked the fourth quarter meeting, the last one scheduled for 2024. To set a reflective tone for the meeting, she invited everyone to partake in a silent individual prayer to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of the year.

Before delving into the agenda items, Mr. Solomon Sogbandi raised a request to review the agenda to confirm that all necessary topics were included and properly arranged. His suggestion highlighted the importance of ensuring the meeting was organized and focused on key issues. During this review, it was noted that an additional item concerning the SLEITI office relocation needed to be included as a main agenda item instead of listing it under Other Business.

After thoroughly reviewing and discussing the updated agenda items, Esther Kandeh of WoME-SL proposed the motion to adopt the agenda. Her motion was seconded by Aminata Kamara of Marampa Mines.

2. Reading of Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd October 2024

Madam Ramatu requested that the minutes from the last MSG meeting be displayed and reviewed page by page. Although the minutes had been shared with members before the meeting, it was also projected on the screen for ease of reference. During the review, members noticed that Abu Bakarr Conteh was incorrectly listed. This was corrected in the updated version of the minutes.

After reading of the minutes, and there being no other corrections, Madam Chair requested a move to the next agenda item which was matters arising from quarter three MSG meeting, before adopting the quarter three minutes. Madam Chair encouraged members to pay particular attention to action point four which was for *"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"*. In response, Madam Cecilia stated that the matter will be addressed either during the quarter four meeting or the CSOs would meet afterwards and provide feedback to SLEITI.

Regarding action point six which was for "*Minister Manty Tarawalli to have further engagement with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to discuss the ministry's incorporation into the EITI process"*, the National Coordinator mentioned that he had discussions with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources on the possibility of including the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources into the scope of SLEITI. He said the Minister advised him to draft another letter referencing the previous one that was sent to her Ministry as she had not seen the first letter.

Following this update, members noted that even though the NC's update was good, it is not what the action point stated as it relates to Minister Manty. In response, he said Minister Manty will give update

of her engagement with the Minister of Fisheries. Following brief exchanges of views, the minutes of quarter three meeting was adopted. Mr. Alphonso Gbanie of HRDN-SL moved the motion and was seconded by Emmanuel Gbondo of NaRGEJ-SL.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of 3rd October 2024

Sahr Dauda Karku, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of SLEITI, read through the matters arising from October 3rd, 2024 meeting. He highlighted the following action points and their updates:

1. **Action Point:** *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.*

Update: This was completed and added as the fourth action point in the SLEITI MSG quarter two minutes.

2. **Action Point:** *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.*

Update: The minutes of the meeting was shared by the NC with all members of the CSO constituency.

3. **Action Point:** *The SLEITI Secretariat to inform GIZ of the revised date for the capacity building workshop*

Update: GIZ was informed accordingly and the capacity building workshop was successfully held on 20th and 21st November 2024 at the Family Kingdom Resort.

4. **Action Point**: *The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were to meet and finalize the reviewed SLEITI Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within a week, and agree on a name that will sign the MoU on behalf of their constituency.*

Update: This action was not completed at the time of the meeting. However, the CSOs agreed to meet immediately after the MSG Quarter four meeting and provide a name to the SLEITI secretariat.

5. **Action Point:** *The Chamber of Mines was to also review the MoU and get a representative that will sign on their behalf.*

Update: This action was still outstanding at the time of the meeting as the Chamber was still in the process of setting up. However, Aminata Kamara updated members that a representative from Sierra Rutile will sign on behalf of the Chamber.

6. **Action Point:** *The Minister of State was requested to engage the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, on bringing the ministry into the scope of SLEITI.*

Update: The National Coordinator engaged with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, who requested that the National Coordinator draft another letter referencing the previous correspondence. Further update from the Minister of State is required on her engagement with the Minister of Fisheries.

7. **Action Point**: *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.*

Update: This was updated in the minutes of quarter two meeting.

4. Review and approval of 2022-2023 Draft Final Report

Mr. Mohamed Baimba Koroma, the National Coordinator (NC) of SLEITI, expressed his sincere appreciation to all key stakeholders and MSG members who devoted significant time and efforts, often working overtime, to ensure the successful completion of the draft final 2022-2023 SLEITI Report. He noted that there were moments during the process when the Independent Administrator (IA) expressed uncertainty of meeting the deadline for publication, primarily due to delays in collecting the required data from MDAs and mining companies. He said the secretariat is actively engaged in reviewing the draft documents to compile valuable feedbacks and comments to the IA. Mr. Koroma urged all members of the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) to thoroughly review the report and submit any relevant comments to the Secretariat which will be compiled and submitted to the IA against the deadline of 24th December 2024.

Madam Cecilia highlighted the need for a careful review of the literature presented on the first page of the report. She emphasized that the MSG should work on correcting or rephrasing that particular section to enhance clarity and accuracy. Furthermore, it was proposed that the Technical Committee take on the responsibility of reviewing the entire report to ensure it meets quality standards before finalization. Mr. Abu Brima suggested members allocate time to examine the draft report thoroughly within the stipulated timeframe, merge all comments into a cohesive set of recommendations and submit to the IA.

Due to the time-sensitive nature of the task, there was initial interest in conducting an online meeting. However, after extensive deliberation regarding the urgency of reviewing the draft report, members ultimately agreed to convene in person to review the draft report. The NC pointed out that if an in-person meeting is to proceed, the ideal date would be Friday, 20th December 2024. After, brief deliberation, members agreed that the Technical Committee meet at 10am on Monday, 23rd December 2024. Madam Cecilia urged the Secretariat to ensure the final report is uploaded on the SLEITI website before the EITI stipulated deadline of 31st December 20224. Additionally, the NC also informed members that the draft report was also shared with the EITI International Secretariat, and their feedbacks and comments will be collated with those of the MSG and submit to the IA.

As members went through the draft report, they pointed out several instances of non-compliance by mining companies as some failed to adhere to the reporting requirements. This raised a crucial question regarding the appropriate actions that should be taken concerning the companies that did not fulfil their reporting obligations. In response to this concern, the NC stated that, apart from the option of naming and shaming those companies in the final published report, it is essential to push for legislative changes that would levy penalties on defaulters. He said a legislation would empower SLEITI to take robust actions against non-complying mining companies, and would also serve as a deterrent to companies. The NC noted that non-complaint of reporting entities can affect the quality of the report.

Members suggested to include a footnote in the report with details of companies that failed to comply with the reporting process. The NC replied that non-compliant entities are listed in the main body of the report to ensure it clearly stands out. The MSG agreed that the issue of non-compliant companies must be treated with utmost seriousness to underscore accountability and accuracy in the reporting process. Mr. Abu Brima remarked that while the MSG lacks the legal authority to impose penalties directly on these companies, they should still advocate for greater accountability by not only seeking support from the National Mineral Agency (NMA) and the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources (MMMR) regarding non-compliant companies, but to also recommend that such companies be subjected to suspension of their mining licences or even shutting down their operations. The chair of the meeting echoed Mr. Brima's sentiments, emphasizing the need for a firm stance on this issue.

Mr. Bah of PMT proposed that the MSG reach out to the Director of Mines of NMA to report the non-complaint companies as he believes appropriate action will be taken. The NC replied that the Director of Mines was already informed and it was as a result of his intervention that the numbers of non-complaint companies reduced by over 60%. In response, Madam Cecilia affirmed that one of the reasons for the MSG composition with representatives from the relevant sectors, is to escalate such issues to others within their constituencies and swift actions be taken to address any difficulties in data collection or other implementation challenges.

Following the exchanges, the chair proposed that a letter be drafted to the Minister of Mines, with copies sent to key stakeholders, indicating the MSG's concerns of the non-compliance of certain mining companies. Consequently, the chair proposed that Emmanuel Gbondo - Esq collaborates with the secretariat to draft letters to both the Director General of NMA and the Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources. Furthermore, Mr. Bah of PMT was given the responsibility to further discuss the issues with the Director of Mines, ensuring that these conversations continue as they navigate the compliance challenges. Madam Cecilia also suggested that MSG representatives from the NMA and MMMR should actively inform their senior management about those companies that have not complied with the reporting requirements.

5. SLEITI MSG MoU (2024-2027)

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) guides the activities of the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) and lays out the scope, mandate, structure, responsibilities etc. of the MSG. The previous MoU lapsed on 24th March 2024, and the draft MoU which has gone through several review processes and inputs by the MSG is now due to be signed by representatives from the three constituencies. The NC stated that the MoU has been an agenda item since quarter one MSG meeting, and that it was crucial that it is now signed after going through several consultations, reviews and inputs by members. The NC emphasized the importance of signing the MoU promptly, stating that the delay had already been extensive, and that without the MoU being signed, the MSG risks functioning for an entire year and a half without a guiding framework.

The NC also informed members that he received a letter from the National Resource Governance and Environmental Justice Society of Sierra Leone (NaRGEJ-SL) expressing concerns regarding a specific clause in the MoU that referred to the designation of a permanent seat for the National Advocacy

Coalition on Extractives (NACE). He said the issue needs to be resolved by members in order to be able to proceed with the signing of the MoU. Mr. Gbanie of HRDN-SL asserted that if the MSG desires to conduct due diligence and reach a consensus on the inclusion of a permanent seat, then NACE should be granted that status considering that it is the founding member of SLEITI and the role it has played in SLEITI implementation. He also highlighted that if however, members preferred to eliminate the concept of a permanent seat status in the MoU, then he will be fine with the decision and it would be an acceptable resolution.

Madam Aminata Kamara of Marampa Mines Limited stated that in the previous MoU, NACE was the sole CSO group which was represented by Green Scenery, NMJD and NACE Secretariat. She said the expansion of the CSOs in the MSG has made the current situation distinctly different. However, she called on the CSOs to agree on a common position of either having a permanent seat for a particular CSO or leaving it out as was the case with the previous MoU.

Madam Cecilia strongly advocated for NACE or any succeeding organisation to maintain its status as a permanent member on the MSG, emphasizing that NACE was instrumental in the founding and establishment of the EITI in Sierra Leone. She stated that it is for the importance of preserving institutional memory especially as other CSOs joined only after the scope of the initiative was broadened. She said it is necessary to maintain NACE as a permanent CSO in the MoU.

Mr. Abu Brima rejected the idea of a permanent seat for any single civil society organization. He stressed that there are numerous factors to consider in making the SLEITI Bill and MoU strong and more relevant. Therefore, he questioned why the focus was solely on the permanent seat especially so when it was stated that the permanent seat can be taken up by a succeeding organisation. He remarked that the EITI has evolved in recent times with the inclusion of more innovations and progressive requirements to strengthen transparency in the sector of which CSOs play a crucial role in its implementation. In his view, the concept of a permanent seat does not align with the foundational principles of CSOs. He further stated that even if either NMJD or NaRGEJ were nominated for permanent status, he would have still declined their inclusion as it is not progressive to have such clause, asserting that all CSOs are significant and should be considered equal.

Acknowledging the letter from NaRGEJ, Madam Cecilia confirmed that she has also reached out to her colleagues within the NACE network for their opinions on the permanent seat and the letter from NaRGEJ. She said NACE will also send a letter to the MSG through the secretariat in response to the letter sent by NaRGEJ.

Even though the CSOs had earlier decided to meet immediately after the meeting to agree on who will sign the MoU on their behalf, following the fervent discussion surrounding the MoU, they unanimously agreed that the MoU should be left in its current state where no single CSO can have a permanent seat, and be signed by Madam Cecilia Mattia on behalf of the CSO constituency. This motion was proposed by Mr. Alphonso Gbanie of HRDN-SL and seconded by Madam Esther Kandeh. Following this development, Madam Aminata Kamara of MML noted that the companies listed under the Chamber of Mines need to be updated, while Mr. Bah also raised concerns over the exclusion of exporters, noting

that only mining companies are represented in the MoU. Mr. Bah's point was noted and clarified that in the current MoU, provision was only made for the Chamber of Mines, but the Bill has scope for a wider inclusion. Madam Aminata Kamara was also tasked to liaise with the secretariat to get the updated names of the Chamber members so that the MoU can be updated and taken to be signed by representatives of the three constituencies -Minister Manty for government, Hussine Yilla for Chamber of Mines and Cecilia Mattia for CSOs.

Mr. Gbanie also raised the non-participation of the Society for Development Initiative (SDI) in SLEITI activities, also stating that he doubted whether the CSO is still operational. Therefore, he called on his CSO counterparts to review their participation and consider replacing them with another CSO. In response, Madam Cecilia assured member that they would investigate the current status of SDI and will act accordingly.

Whist the secretariat was in the process of updating the MoU to take to the different constituency representatives to sign, Madam Cecilia Mattia informed members through the SLEITI MSG official WhatsApp forum on 23rd December 2024 that NACE has suspended their participation on the MSG until their concerns and issues were addressed, noting that a letter will be sent to the effect. As a result, this stalled the signing of the MoU.

6. Update on the draft SLEITI Bill (Extractive Resources Transparency Bill)

This agenda item was not discussed in the meeting due to the fact that provisions in the MoU were still not approved by all members and it was initially agreed that both documents must speak to each other.

7. Update on EITI Validation of Sierra Leone

The NC informed members that the EITI International Secretariat has written official letters to both the MSG Chair and SLEITI Champion notifying both that validation of Sierra Leone has been postponed to 1st January 2027. He said this was to give Sierra Leone more time to implement the EITI 2023 Standard. He also informed members that the EITI is conducting consultations on the new validation model and will be contacting stakeholders to get their views on how they want the new module to look like. Madam Cecilia stated that she has already been contacted by the EITI for her input which she said will be communicated accordingly.

8. Development of 2025 Work plan

Madam Annie Lansana, the Finance and Administrative manager of SLEITI, provided updates regarding the current status of the 2024 work plan and development of the 2025 work plan. She highlighted that many activities in the 2024 work plan were not implemented due to financial constraints. She said the relevant activities will be carried forward to the 2025 work plan and updated with new activities.

Additionally, she informed members that GIZ (the German Corporation for International Cooperation) will be providing financial support to SLEITI for the dissemination of the 2022-2023 SLEITI report. She said that dissemination of EITI reports to mining communities is a requirement of the EITI Standard. Therefore, the timely dissemination of the EITI report is vital to ensure the information is relevant to citizens. Madam Annie informed members that the proposed commencement date for dissemination is Monday 7th of April 2025 starting from Port Loko District.

Cecilia Mattia made a suggestion regarding the need to adjust the work plan-specifically to include an activity that focus on Energy Transition. She said the MSG should liaise with the office of the Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security (PI-CREF) to know their plans for 2025 so that the work plan can be aligned to it.

Finally, the National Coordinator emphasized the importance of collaboration among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). He urged these organizations to carefully examine the activities outlined in the work plan and actively seek funding opportunities for implementations. This proactive approach will be vital in addressing the financial challenges faced in advancing the objectives of the SLEITI initiative.

9. Report on MSG Capacity Building Workshop

The NC expressed his thanks and appreciation to members for their support and participation at the workshop. He also thanked the EITI International Secretariat and the GIZ for their technical and financial support. The NC stated that the workshop report has been shared with all MSG members to provide them with a thorough overview of the workshop's discussions, outcomes, and recommendations. He encouraged members to read the report so that they get a better understanding of the presentations and recommendations from the workshop.

10. SLEITI Relocation

The NC informed the MSG that the SLEITI secretariat will be relocating to No. 18 Soldier Street, Freetown. He stated that members are aware of the inappropriate nature of the Charles Street office due to it being in a school and church compound, the persistent and disruptive level of noise in the office surrounding which often interferes with not only virtual meetings, but also important in-person discussions, making it increasingly difficult for participants to maintain focus. He noted that these constraints necessitated the urgent search for an alternative office space. He commended the Minister of State for her active role in securing the new office space and the Office of the Vice President for smoothly facilitating the process. Members expressed their appreciation to the Minister and the Office of the Vice President for finding SLEITI a good office space. They also noted that the Charles Street office was indeed not an ideal office environment.

11. Other Business and Adjournment

In the absence of any other business, the chair asked for the motion to be moved to adjourn the meeting. This was done by Alphonsus B.M. Gbanie - HRDN-SL and seconded by Hussinatu Yilla - Sierra Rutile.

.....
Signature of Chair

..... 26/3/2025
Signature of Secretary

Action points

No.	Action points	Update
1.	*The MoS to engage her colleague Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources on the EITI expansion of scope and evidence of any letter written to the effect.*	*Ongoing – NC to have further engagement with the MoS on this action point.*
2.	*Technical Committee to meet and finalise the draft 2022-2023 SLEITI Report on the 23rd December 2024*	*This task was completed and the revised document was sent to the IA for inclusion into the final 2022-2023 SLEITI report.*
3.	*To do a formal letter signed by the MSG chair to put a hold on the processing documents of Gold Lion Mining Company for non-compliance of the IA reporting templates.*	*Due to the Christmas break and early closure of offices, there wasn't enough time to send the letters.*
4.	*The SLEITI work plan is to be reviewed in early January 2025 by the MSG and SLEITI Secretariat.*	*The stakeholders' consultative workshop on development of the 2025 work plan was held on Thursday, 6th March 2025.*
5.	*To share the EITI International Secretariat BO and Energy Transition slides on the MSG capacity-building workshop with the MSG*	*Due to poor health of a staff member at the EITI International Secretariat, SLEITI still awaits the PowerPoint presentation slides.*
6.	*The SLEITI National Coordinator to liaise with Aminata Kamara of Marampa Mines to get an updated list of mining companies in the Chamber of Mines*	*This is complete. Aminata Kamara provided a comprehensive list of companies that are currently part of the Chamber of Mines.*