

**SPEECH BY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY NEITI, HON MUSA SARKIN ADAR
AT THE MOU SIGNING CEREMONY BETWEEN NEITI AND NATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HELD ON THE 30TH JANUARY 2026 AT
THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HEADQUARTERS.**

1. Distinguished Executive Secretary, Commissioners, NHRC Management and staff, the Civil society representative on the NEITI Board, other members of the civil society present, the media and invited guests
2. I want to thank you most profoundly for the warm welcome. It is a particular honour for me to be here today at the National Human Rights Commission headquarters. This is my first official visit to the NHRC since I assumed office and I am grateful for the opportunity to witness and formalize this important partnership.
3. We are here to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative-NEITI and the National Human Rights Commission on the protection of civic space. This ceremony is not a formality. It is a deliberate step to strengthen an already productive relationship and to align our institutions around shared values of transparency, accountability, human rights protection and democratic governance.
4. NEITI and NHRC have long worked at intersecting points. NEITI's mandate to promote transparency and accountability in the

extractive sector complements NHRC's mandate to safeguard human rights and civic freedoms. Over the years our collaboration has produced practical benefits. Today's MoU simply formalises and structures that cooperation so it can deliver even greater, measurable impact.

5. Protecting civic space is central to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Civil society is central to EITI implementation. it is a formal, indispensable part of the tripartite system (We call it the Magic triangle) alongside government and industry. That tripartite arrangement is the backbone of EITI's credibility, balance and the ability to operate freely, independently and without fear.
6. Civil society organisations carry out advocacy, policy dialogues, analyse data, engage communities, disseminate findings, and hold actors to account at national and subnational levels. They translate complex extractive-sector information into public knowledge and ensure host communities' interests are represented. NEITI's effectiveness is therefore directly linked to the strength and freedom of civil society.
7. By anchoring civic space protection in a formal partnership with the NHRC, NEITI is reinforcing its commitment to EITI principles and to an enabling environment for civil society participation. The MoU establishes mechanisms for early engagement, joint

response, and institutional support when civic space concerns arise in the extractive sector context.

8. This partnership therefore, will improve information sharing, enable coordinated advocacy and strengthen joint responses to issues at the intersection of extractive governance and human rights. For civil society, it adds institutional support, legitimacy, and protection. For host communities, it strengthens the channels through which their voices are heard and rights are defended and for the media, it enhances access to credible information, reinforce accountability narratives grounded in both transparency and human rights.
9. Our signing of this MoU is a milestone and represents progress for NEITI, NHRC, civil society and the extractive sector across Nigeria. It signals our shared determination to protect civic space while deepening transparency and accountability in resource governance.
10. We must now translate this agreement into concrete programmes- joint capacity-building, shared platforms for monitoring and reporting, rapid-response protocols for civic space violations and public outreaches that empower communities and civil society. Success will be measured by tangible outcomes which include safer civic space, clearer information flows and stronger protections for citizens affected by extractive activities.

11. On behalf of NEITI, I commend the leadership of the NHRC, our civil society partners, and all stakeholders who have contributed to this partnership. NEITI is committed to working closely with the NHRC to implement this MoU and to ensure it delivers meaningful benefits for all Nigerians.
12. Thank you for your partnership and for the trust you place in our institution. I look forward to the work ahead and to the positive change this collaboration will bring.

Hon. Musa Sarkin Adar

Executive Secretary, NEITI/National Coordinator, Nigeria EITI