

OPENING REMARKS BY DR. ORJI OGBONNAYA ORJI, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NEITI, AT THE 1ST EDITION OF THE WEBINAR SERIES ON “NAVIGATING THE JUST ENERGY TRANSITION: EXTRACTIVES, EQUITY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT” HELD ON 19TH JUNE, 2025.

Protocol.

1. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.
2. It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you to the first edition of this timely and strategic webinar series on "Navigating the Just Energy Transition: Extractives, Equity and the Environment." This initiative is a collaborative effort between the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) and Extractive 360.
3. We have convened today to explore one of the most pressing development challenges of our time; how Nigeria, a resource-rich but fossil-dependent country, can align its resource extraction activities with its climate commitments while ensuring social equity and environmental sustainability.
4. This first webinar sets the tone for what we envision as a long-term conversation and policy engagement series. Our theme brings into focus a triple challenge: balancing extractive-led economic growth, delivering environmental justice, and ensuring an inclusive, people-centered energy transition.
5. The extractive industries have been the backbone of Nigeria's economy for decades, contributing significantly to government revenues and foreign exchange earnings. However, we must acknowledge that this dependence has also brought challenges—environmental degradation, health hazards in

host communities, revenue volatility, and questions about equitable distribution of benefits.

6. The health impacts on our host communities have been particularly concerning, with residents facing exposure to air pollution from gas flaring, water contamination from oil spills, and respiratory ailments from particulate matter emissions. These health burdens disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations, including children, pregnant women, and the elderly, creating long-term public health challenges that extend far beyond immediate environmental concerns.
7. As we navigate the energy transition, we must learn from these experiences to build a more inclusive and sustainable framework. The transition to cleaner energy sources presents a unique opportunity to address these health disparities by reducing harmful emissions, improving air and water quality, and creating healthier living environments for our communities. This is not merely an environmental imperative but a public health necessity that can help alleviate decades of health-related suffering in our resource-rich regions.
8. As the world moves steadily towards net-zero targets and low-carbon economies, countries like Nigeria must find innovative pathways to restructure their economies, not only to reduce emissions, but also to secure livelihoods, attract sustainable investments, and improve the wellbeing of our citizens.
9. The energy transition is no longer a theoretical ideal it is a global reality. However, for it to be truly just, it must account for the unique developmental needs, socio-economic contexts, and structural vulnerabilities of resource-

dependent countries. It must protect our communities, particularly those directly affected by extractive activities, and guarantee that no one is left behind in the transition.

10. Through NEITI's work in promoting transparency and accountability, we have seen how access to information empowers communities, enables better policy decisions, and attracts responsible investment. These same principles must guide our approach to the energy transition. We must ensure that decisions about our energy future are made transparently, with full consideration of environmental impacts, social equity, and economic sustainability.

11. At NEITI, our mandate as part of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is to promote openness, accountability, and inclusive governance in the extractive sector. However, beyond reporting and data disclosure, we see ourselves as enablers of reform using credible information to support sound policy and encourage responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

12. To advance this mission, on May 9, 2025, the NEITI National Stakeholders Working Group approved a transformative Energy Transition and Climate Accountability Framework. This comprehensive policy framework positions NEITI at the forefront of emissions monitoring, equitable transition planning, and climate governance in Nigeria's extractive sector.

13. The Framework establishes clear and ambitious responsibilities for NEITI, including:

- Mandatory tracking and disclosure of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate-related risks across the extractive sector;

- Independent oversight of divestments by International Oil Companies (IOCs) to ensure that community rights, environmental safeguards, and legacy liabilities are addressed;
- Comprehensive monitoring of the implementation of Host Community Development Trusts (HCDTs) under the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), to ensure communities benefit meaningfully from resource extraction;
- Harmonization of NEITI's audit and reporting cycles with Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the country's Energy Transition Plan; and
- Bi-annual public reviews of Nigeria's emissions and climate performance, to promote transparency and citizen engagement.

14. This webinar series is part of that commitment to foster dialogue, amplify voices, and build consensus around forward-looking policies that reflect Nigeria's national interest while supporting our international climate obligations.

15. Today, we will examine the governance strategies, regulatory frameworks, and innovative solutions that can help Nigeria achieve this delicate balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. We will also explore practical ideas to mainstream equity into our transition agenda so that the move from fossil fuels to renewables does not become another source of inequality.

16. Today's discussions will explore critical questions: How do we balance our immediate energy needs with long-term sustainability goals? What role can

transparency and accountability mechanisms play in building trust and ensuring equitable outcomes?

17. I encourage all participants to engage actively in these discussions, to share your experiences, insights, and concerns. The path to a just energy transition is not predetermined it is one we must chart together through collaborative dialogue and shared commitment to our common future.

18. We are honoured to have a distinguished panel of experts and stakeholders with us today, whose experience and insight will undoubtedly enrich our discussion. Your participation reflects a shared recognition that the choices we make now will determine not only the pace of our energy transition but also its fairness and sustainability.

19. On behalf of NEITI, CJID and Extractive 360, I thank you all for joining us and for contributing your voices to this crucial national conversation. Let us work together to ensure that Nigeria's energy transition is not only inevitable but inclusive, equitable, and resilient.

20. Thank you.