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WELCOME REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF NEITI, DR. ORJI OGBONNAYA ORJI AT THE CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIVE FORUM FOR THE NOMINATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NEITI BOARD HELD ON THE 15TH AUGUST, 2023 AT THE NEITI HOUSE, ABUJA.

PROTOCOLS

1. My Dear Esteemed Stakeholders.

2. I bring you greetings from the Management and Staff of NEITI. I am delighted to welcome you all to this Civil Society Consultative Forum to brief you on the progress of EITI implementation in Nigeria.
3. I wish to start by thanking you for your continued and staunch support to the EITI process and implementation in Nigeria. Your voices and commitment to the process has contributed immensely to the modest achievements we have recorded these past years.
4. More importantly, this meeting is to formally announce to you the dissolution of the NEITI Board which has enormous implications and consequences to the implementation of EITI in Nigeria.
5. On June 19,2023, shortly after we returned from the EITI global Conference which took place in Dakar, Senegal we got the news that all Boards of Ministries, Departments and Agencies have been dissolved. We approached the Secretary to the Federation (SGF) seeking for exemption and sustenance of our Board in the light of our international affiliation and the mandate of the NEITI. We also briefed the EITI International Secretariat on the new development.

6. With the dissolution of the National Stakeholders Working Group and while waiting for the directives from government, we thought it wise to formerly brief you of the development and initiate certain steps to sustain Nigeria's membership of the global EITI. It is important that the Civil Society commence the process of selecting their representative on the Board to avoid misrepresentation and criticism after the Board has been announced.
7. To guide this process and to ensure that the Civil Society has the freedom to choose who represent them, the Civil Society has in the past put in place a policy document titled "Policy Guideline on Appointment/Nomination of Civil Society Representative on the NEITI Board (National Stakeholders Working Group -NSWG)" which is on our website and the hard copies shared in this meeting.
8. NEITI will remain neutral in the selection process. We will provide you with the present database of Civil Society, Professional Bodies and Media engaging in the NEITI process in Nigeria. We will also initiate the process of updating this database with a frame which the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Management will be sharing.
9. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I urge you to consult widely and ensure that the right individual is nominated to represent you on the Board as the Civil Society is a very critical stakeholders' group in EITI implementation in Nigeria.
10. The Civil Society protocol and guidelines for the nomination of a Civil Society representative to the NEITI Board has provided specific steps to be followed by NEITI and the Civil Society in Nigeria in nominating or electing a representative in line with the EITI Standard and NEITI Policy Guideline on

Appointment/Nomination of Civil Society Representative on the NEITI Board (National Stakeholders Working Group -NSWG).

11. I wish to advise that while initiating this process, you all must adhere strictly to the existing policy guidelines on the nomination to avoid breach of procedure. If you feel strongly that the process needs to be reviewed, it is up to you to consider the time frame and possible outcomes of the process to the cohesion and stability of the various coalitions engaging in the extractive sector in Nigeria.
12. Meanwhile the NEITI Secretariat is presently working assiduously to ensure that Nigeria's obligations to the EITI is fully met. To this end, tomorrow 16th August 2023 we are convening a multi-stakeholders meeting to approve the 2021 oil, gas and mining reports. Some of you if not all will be participating in that review process.
13. We have also commenced the process for the conduct of the 2022 industry reports. We hope to conclude the exercise by the end of the first quarter of 2024.
14. You are aware that the revised EITI 2023 Standard was approved at the global Conference in Dakar, Senegal. We would have capacity building for you on the new Standards a few weeks from now. In addition, the NEITI 2022 Industry reports will be conducted and benchmarked using the EITI 2023 Standard and the Petroleum Industry Act.
15. Finally, I wish to formally welcome you to the NEITI House. This is our first official meeting with only the Civil Society since we moved into this beautiful edifice. At the NEITI House, we have taken into consideration your peculiar needs and disposition in the NEITI value chain. We created a special space

just for Civil Society called the Civil Society Media Hub. We plan to equip the Office with all that you would need to engage in research, plan your advocacies and meetings with partners and other stakeholders.

16. Furthermore, Our Conference room and facilities are available for use for your meetings. All we ask is adequate notification to avoid meeting clashes and preparations, but of course you will bring your refreshments.

17. I enjoin you to continue to support NEITI so that together we can make our natural resource wealth work for our people and generations yet unborn.

18. Once again, I thank you for coming and I wish you all fruitful deliberations.