

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NIGERIA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE - NEITI, DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE REPORTING FRAMEWORKS FOR GENDER AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE NIGERIA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE, BUDGET & NATIONAL PLANNING, DR. ZAINAB AHMED ON TUESDAY 16TH MAY 2023, AT THE NEITI HOUSE, WUYE DISTRICT ABUJA.

Protocols!

I am very delighted to welcome back home to the NEITI family, our amiable Mother of NEITI.

2. Hon. Minister, this is the family that you left in 2015 to assume a higher national responsibility. We are very proud of the job that you did while with us, and your continued brand Ambassador of NEITI even in your elevated position as one of the most influential, revered, visible and pronounced member of the President Muhamadu Buhari's cabinet.
3. You are now the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning whom we are proud to call the most powerful woman in government. We thank you for remaining the good Ambassador.
4. Your coming here is a statement of the noble role you have continued to play since you left NEITI as the lead EITI/NEITI champion in government not only as a former member of the Board here in Nigeria but also as a member of the International Board. You've done us proud.
5. On the valued contribution that your position and elevation in government has done for NEITI, it is a long story to tell, but your visit here today, is to see things for yourself that the opportunity we

have through reputation, position and policy interventions are much more phenomenal.

6. While you were at NEITI, we knew that nothing passes through your table without a process. The structure and ethical conduct you left behind in NEITI is something that we will continue to cherish and build on.
7. I recall my first meeting with you on assumption of office and my reminder that the status of our challenges when you left one of which was accommodation was even more dire and complex than the way you left it. I also recall the advice you gave on the limit to which you can intervene if we don't do our homework very well. The rest is history.
8. Let me use this opportunity to state categorically that the support we got in getting this building could not be possible if we did not have somebody like you at the strategic position.
9. As the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, you understood the importance of having a good office. As a former Executive Secretary of NEITI now Minister, you once wore this shoe and understood where exactly it pinched. Thus, our requests to your office were usually looked at within the confines of their merit.
10. I am happy that your advice that nothing comes to your table without proper research, needs assessment and conduct were strictly adhered to by us.
11. Hon. Minister, welcome to NEITI House, one of the legacies you will leave behind in this Administration.
12. In this building ma, we have a total of 53 befitting offices for members of staff, a conference room that can house between 70 to 100 persons if properly managed, a Board room, a Library, a data

center, offices for management and staff and a makeshift canteen within the premises.

13. Again, we are also proud to announce that among the 57 member countries of the EITI, Nigeria is the first country to acquire its own permanent building we have already been worldly acknowledged for this and we believe that we will make good and judicious use of the facility.
14. Under the new environment where we work, we want to use the remaining period of our tenure as the Board to focus more comprehensively on the content and the details of our work that will impact directly, the lives of Nigerians. And that is making sure that the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Nigeria delivers impactful results and energizes more reforms in the oil, gas, and mining sectors.
15. One of the requirements since you left the EITI is the fast emerging issues. These are Beneficial Ownership, Contract Transparency, Gender Mainstreaming, Open Data Policy and Environmental Reporting. We are currently chairing the Network on Contract Transparency, we have developed a Beneficial Ownership Portal, and we have launched the NEITI Audit Management System- NAMS.
16. The two reports that you are about to launch today are direct responses to our readiness to move into the issues of Gender and the Environment in view of the strong connection and linkage to the EITI desired impact in the lives of our citizens.
17. Host communities in the country today currently face complex challenges of environmental degradation. In these host communities, the girl child, women and children suffer the most

environmental degradation in terms of deprivation of their livelihood, access to farming and petty trading.

18. In most of these communities, most of the rural dwellers are women and children. They suffer the worst health challenges arising from emission and environmental pollution. The two reports you will launch centers on these issues.
19. On the Gender framework, the report summarised the EITI's agenda on gender inclusion to the key operational concepts of representation, participation, influence and impact giving consideration to gender inclusion. The report also aligns with the EITI processes and ensures that disclosures are conducted in a manner that accommodates the interests, views, concerns and needs of women and other groups in Nigeria's extractive sector.
20. NEITI will be interested on the issues of abuse to women and children's right in the Extractive Host Communities. We will build strong alliances with government agencies such as NAPTIP, Ministry of Women Affairs, National Council for Women Society, National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), and women professional platforms like the Association of Professional Women Engineers (APWEN) to enhance women participation in mining and protect the rights of our women and children especially in the extractive host communities. .
21. On the environment, NEITI bench marked the EITI 2019 Standard on environmental reporting requirements against the environmental governance in the Nigerian extractive industries. Other areas covered by the framework include disclosures of environmental issues, and measures to mitigate and minimise negative impact.

22. Hon. Minister ma, these emerging areas are issues we know you were passionate about while at NEITI. We wish to request that though you are leaving office, to kindly remain the Brand Ambassador and champion especially as it concerns gender and environmental issues in Nigeria's extractive sector.
23. As we roll out the reporting programmes and activities for reporting gender and environment, permit us to draw from your wealth of experience as a member of the EITI and NEITI Board.
24. The NEITI Act is currently being reviewed to seek ways and means of augmenting government support. The tragedy that we face is that we incentivized revenue generation but while our reports may lead to revenue generation to sister agencies who also take some percentages, NEITI walks home empty handed. The review of the NEITI Act is focused on innovations that will enable NEITI operate with less government funding and dependency and function more effectively as the watchdog of the extractive sector.
25. Ma, at this juncture, we want to thank you for coming and like to request that you please continue to support NEITI as an organization and ensure that as you leave government you will continue to be an ally of NEITI anywhere that you may find yourself. For us we would continue to look up to you as the Mother of Modern NEITI.
26. Thank you for all that you did for NEITI and Nigeria. We wish you well in your future endeavour.
27. Thank you and God Bless you.