

## **SPEECH BY DR. ORJI OGBONNAYA ORJI**

### **OUTGOING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY/CEO, NEITI AT THE HANDOVER CEREMONY TO HIS SUCCESSOR, HON. MUSA SARKIN ADAR NEITI HOUSE, ABUJA – 27 NOVEMBER 2025**

Distinguished Chair of the NSWG and Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, CON; my successor and the Executive Secretary of NEITI, Hon. Musa Sarkin Adar; Members of the National Stakeholders' Working Group; Directors and Senior Management of NEITI; Industry Leaders; Civil Society Partners; Development Partners; colleagues in the media; ladies and gentlemen:

Today marks a defining and emotional moment in my professional journey. Standing here to hand over the leadership of an institution I have served for nearly two decades—and led for five transformative years—is both humbling and deeply fulfilling. I am profoundly grateful to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the NSWG (past and present), and all our stakeholders for entrusting me with this sacred national responsibility.

I extend my sincere respect and gratitude to President Muhammadu Buhari, who offered me the privilege to lead NEITI, and to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who sustained and supported my tenure with confidence and goodwill. Their trust remains one of the greatest honours of my public service career.

I also appreciate the two Executive Secretaries under whom I previously served—Mrs. Zainab Ahmed and Mr. Waziri Adio—for the experiences, mentorship, and lessons that helped prepare me for the responsibilities I eventually assumed.

#### **WHERE WE BEGAN**

When I assumed office on 19 February 2021, NEITI faced a convergence of operational, governance, and institutional challenges—threatened eviction from rented offices, a vacant NSWG, strained stakeholder relations, inadequate tools and infrastructure, low staff morale, and a rapidly evolving extractive governance landscape demanding climate reporting, systematic disclosure, beneficial ownership transparency, and data-driven accountability.

On February 20, 2021—the day after I assumed office—I addressed NEITI management and staff and pledged to secure a permanent office for NEITI; reconstitute the NEITI Board; expand the scope and depth of industry reports; recruit young, skilled professionals; review staff salaries upward; modernise vehicles, ICT tools, and infrastructure; and pursue review of the NEITI Act to align with the PIA and the EITI Standard.

Today, I leave office with deep gratitude and a strong sense of duty fulfilled. Working together with the support of the NSWG and a dedicated workforce, we delivered all these priorities—exceeding many—except the full amendment of the NEITI Act, for which extensive groundwork has already been completed.

## WHAT WE ACHIEVED TOGETHER

One of the earliest achievements of my administration was restoring governance and institutional stability through the successful reconstitution of the 5th NSWG in July 2021 and the 6th NSWG in May 2024. These Boards restored statutory oversight, protected Nigeria's global EITI standing, and guided major reforms. I remain the only Executive Secretary to midwife two Board inaugurations within one tenure across two different administrations.

We strengthened NEITI's administrative structure by expanding directorates from five to eight, improving efficiency, deepening technical capacity, and aligning the Secretariat with evolving global standards.

Operational capability improved significantly with the acquisition of new vehicles, ICT tools, digital reporting infrastructure, and communication systems—enhancing mobility, productivity, and national presence.

Our public disclosures delivered concrete fiscal impact. Through evidence-based reporting, over \$3 billion was recovered for the Federal Government, and more than \$6 billion in outstanding revenues and liabilities was identified. These achievements strengthened domestic resource mobilisation and fiscal transparency.

We rebuilt trust across government agencies, extractive companies, civil society, and the media. Today, NEITI's multi-stakeholder ecosystem is stronger, more engaged, and more representative.

We maintained full global compliance with the consistent publication of Oil & Gas, Solid Minerals, and FASD Reports, advancing key reforms including PIA implementation, beneficial ownership transparency, contract disclosure, licensing accountability, environmental reporting, and subnational governance.

Despite the complexities surrounding the 2023 Validation cycle, Nigeria achieved 92/100 in Outcomes and Impact and 90/100 in Transparency, reaffirming NEITI's standing as a leading global reform institution.

A historic milestone of my tenure was the acquisition of NEITI House, the institution's first permanent headquarters, valued at over ₦4 billion and saving the Federal Government more than ₦150 million annually.

Staff welfare received unprecedented attention with the implementation of an upward salary review of over 100% in January this year—boosting morale, retention, and productivity.

The NEITI Data Centre—whose infrastructure has been completed—stands as one of the most transformative legacies of this administration and will enable real-time digital disclosures in revenue flows, beneficial ownership, contract transparency, host community funding, and emissions accountability.

## AREAS OF FOCUS FOR MY SUCCESSOR

As NEITI enters a new chapter under Hon. Musa Sarkin Adar, I respectfully highlight the following priorities:

- Completion and deployment of the NEITI Data Centre
- Deepening PIA implementation and collaboration with NUPRC, NMDPRA, NNPC Ltd, CSOs, and development partners
- Strengthening oversight of the solid minerals sector
- Sustaining NSWG stability
- Early preparation for the 2026 Validation
- Enhancing remediation and enforcement with EFCC, ICPC, NFIU, and TETFund
- Sustained communication, visibility, and national outreach

#### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Amend the NEITI Act (2007) to align with the PIA and EITI 2023 Standard
- Secure predictable and adequate funding for NEITI's sustainability
- Deepen real-time, systematic disclosure through the Data Centre
- Expand reporting to cover human development, climate governance, gender, and subnational accountability
- Prioritise staff welfare, digital literacy, and continuous skill development
- Sustain NEITI's continental leadership in governance reforms

#### MY PARTING WORDS.

My Parting Words to all Staff & Management: Be loyal to your bosses always. As I leave you all, let me share the lessons of over 40 years in the Federal Public Service.

1. "Leadership ends, but character remains."

Please let us learn to remain loyal and respectful to your bosses while in service, while transitioning, and even after office. Dwell more on the positives while you worked together and less on the negatives.

2. Your boss is part of your CV—and sometimes part of your children's lives—for life.

Do not forget that formal and informal inquiries about you or children for opportunities, sensitive, higher, or important responsibilities may land on your former boss's table. And when decisions about you will be made, you will not be there.

3. Use your position in service to build support, friendship, networks, forgiveness, care, and empathy in people's lives—not hatred, revenge, crises, or acrimony.

Note that revenge demonstrates weakness, not strength. Forgiveness is maturity, a virtue, strength not weakness, gives you peace of mind.

4. Finally, as a Christian and an Anglican, we are constantly reminded at the end of every Sunday service—and I quote:

“Go into the world, render to no man evil for evil. In all circumstances, overcome evil with good.”

This profound teaching reflects the scriptures:

- The Bible (Romans 12:17–21): “Do not repay anyone evil for evil... overcome evil with good.”
- The Qur'an (Surah 41:34–35 & Surah 23:96): “Repel evil with that which is better.”

5. Support NEITI, love NEITI, own it.

While in service, please take these parting words from an elder and from your Boss who has seen it all. And it will be well with you.

Your Excellency the SGF; Executive Secretary; distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

For me, this is not a farewell. It is the completion of one phase of service and the beginning of another—to God, to humanity, to community, and to country. It has been a profound honour to serve and to lead NEITI.

As I proceed on my terminal leave, I remain available to support NEITI and my successor, my brother and friend, Hon. Musa Sarkin Adar, whenever called upon.

May God bless NEITI.

May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.