



MALAWI DELEGATION IN ABUJA ON STUDY TOUR APPLAUDS NIGERIA EITI EXPERIENCE.

A high ranking delegation from Malawi has visited Nigeria on a study of the Country's implementation of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

While in Nigeria, the Malawian delegation undertook a one week study of Nigeria's implementation by NEITI, of the principles of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

The study tour examined how NEITI interventions through its reports and advocacy are supporting the on-going reforms in the country's oil, gas and mining sectors and how Malawi can benefit from this experience.

The delegation was received on arrival by the Executive Secretary, Mr. Waziri Adio at the NEITI Secretariat Abuja.

Malawi, with a population of about eighteen million people is in Southern Africa. The country is rich in solid mineral resources such as uranium, coal and gemstones.

Malawi joined the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative on 22nd October, 2015 and is working towards getting a compliant status , while Nigeria has been a founding member of the organization since 2003.

While the implementation of EITI in Malawi is currently at its infancy as the country is yet to publish any EITI Reports, Nigeria is a ranking member and attained complaint status in 2012, won the best implementing country at the 6th global conference of the organization held in Sydney, Australia in 2013, and has published several independent audit reports in oil and gas industry since 2004. Nigeria has also published similar reports in solid minerals, fiscal allocation and resource disbursements.

Besides, Nigeria's implementation of EITI is supported with a specific law, the NEITI Act of 2007. Among the 54- member – country world body, Nigeria through the work of NEITI is largely seen as a model worthy of emulation.

While in Nigeria, the Malawian EITI team led by the Chairman of the country's multi-stakeholders group Mr. Kulemeka Crispen Clemence sought exposure to NEITI processes, its mandates, challenges, and success stories in its operations as an agency. Other areas of interest to the team were NEITI relations with its multi-stakeholders group like the civil society, the media, the extractive industry companies, government and other covered entities.

In this direction, the team met with Dr. Kayode Fayemi, Minister of Mines and Steel Development and the Chair of National Stakeholders Working Group (NEITI Board).

The team also paid a courtesy visit to Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, a member of EITI international Board and Nigeria's Minister of State for Budget and National planning as well as other notable champions of EITI implementation in Nigeria.

During the visit, the Malawian team visited key government agencies such as: Mining Cadastral Office, Revenue Mobilization & Fiscal Allocation Commission (RMFAC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) as well as selected mining and

quarry sites in Nasarawa State and a courtesy visit to the Governor of the State, Tanko Almakura.

A special interactive session with strategic partners such as civil society organizations, the media, miners association of Nigeria as well as other key development partners also took place.

Since 2012, Nigeria has hosted two other African Countries of Ethiopia and Liberia and staff of the EITI International Secretariat from Oslo, Norway on similar study visits and internships.

Meanwhile, Minister of Mines and Steel Development Dr. Kayode Fayemi has advised African countries to influence global initiatives like the EITI and make the EITI initiative attractive for their citizens.

“One value we can add is to make the EITI relevant to our people and the government”, Dr. Fayemi stated, while receiving the Malawian delegation. “We joined the initiative voluntarily. We need to have our own clarity of thoughts as to what we will like to see. Annual audits are fine by themselves, but we need to make the issue of transparency tangible for those who are ultimately the victims of lack of transparency especially in the extractive industries. How does what we do in NEITI for instance sit with the African mining vision that African Union Ministers have agreed for the extractive sector in Africa.”

He advised African countries implementing the EITI to use the initiative to help their respective governments by proposing alternatives and options that support reforms in their extractive industries.

According to Dr. Fayemi, “Africa needs to deepen the engagements, institutionalise and internalise the EITI”.

The Malawian delegation visited the Minister in his capacity as the Chairman of NEITI National Stakeholders Working Group, which is NEITI’s board.

Executive Secretary of NEITI, Mr. Waziri Adio advised the team on the need for Malawi to put in place a legal and regulatory framework in order to sustain and safeguard the implementation of the EITI and ensure that Malawians derive maximum benefit from their God given wealth.

“Though Nigeria is a pioneer member of the EITI, there are things we want to do differently and so we see your visit also as a learning process for us. The advocacy strategies that we have adopted make our engagement with stakeholders unique and have seen even those who do not want to partner with us, reach out to us of their own volition. The Legislature have also benefited from our reports. You need to work with all stakeholders taking into account their various sensitivities”

At the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMFAC), the delegation was received by the Acting Chairman of the Commission, Alhaji Shettima Abba Gana. Alhaji Abba Gana commended the delegation for identifying Nigeria’s implementation of the global Initiative as worthy of emulation. He noted the positive role that NEITI is playing in the on-going reform agenda of the government and advised the Malawian delegation to carefully take note of the unique strategies and policies that the agency has adopted towards achieving its objectives.

The Delegation also visited the Minister of State for Budget and National planning Mrs. Zainab Ahmed who was the immediate past executive secretary of NEITI and a member of the Board of the global EITI representing Africa, the Mining Cadastral Office and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) where they held series of meetings with the officials.

Leader of the Malawian Delegation to Nigeria and Chairman of the MSG, Mr. Crispin Kulemeka said Nigeria is rated highly at the global EITI adding that the lessons they are taking away will help strengthen Malawi’s EITI implementation and preparation towards releasing its first report which is due in April, 2017. “We are fascinated at how NEITI has been able to focus people’s attention on issues and engage them on all sides of the spectrum. You made EITI relevant to the people, politicians, civil society etc. We need

to create a network of civil society between NEITI and MWEITI to enable us strengthen our processes” Mr. Kulemeka added.

The National Coordinator of MWEITI Mr George Harawa commended NEITI’s relationship with all the stakeholders they interacted with. According to Mr. Harawa, “NEITI is not a stand – alone. There is evidence of team work and command of knowledge”.