

OPENING REMARKS

BY

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AT

**GHEITI ANNUAL RETREAT SOGAKOPE, VILLA
CISNEROS HOTEL**

JANUARY 6-9, 2012

Colleague Chief Directors and Ghana EITI National Steering Committee Members,

Good morning and happy new year to you all.

1. I have been informed that the objective of this meeting is to take stock of the EITI implementation in 2011 and plan for 2012. It is a nice way to start the New Year with an assessment of our work in 2011 and a discussion of strategies for 2012.
2. I wish to commend you all for your hard work, dedication and commitment to the process in 2011. Your hard work was manifested by the many successes this initiative attained in 2011. I wish at this juncture to recap a few of your impressive achievements.
3. In 2011, GHEITI Reports were very instrumental in providing useful policy recommendations that informed some key reforms in the 2011/2012 budgets. Notable among these policy recommendations were;
 - The review of mineral royalty payments from 3% to 5%
 - The On-going upward review of ground rent
 - The current upward review of corporate tax rate for mining companies from 25 percent to 35 percent
 - windfall profit tax of 10 percent to be collected from all mining companies
 - A uniform Capital allowance regime of 20 percent for five years for mining
4. Furthermore, your efforts resulted in the development of draft guidelines for the utilization of mineral royalties by District Assemblies, draft guidelines on corporate social responsibility, and a Draft Natural Resource Bill- 2011. It is my expectation that this year many of these draft documents will be finalized.
5. However, I say a big Ayeeko to you all for your respective roles in realizing the above successes and the many more I have not mentioned.

6. Having said this, let me also say that the work in the coming years will be more challenging especially with regard to the oil and gas sector. We need to build the required capacity to operate at equal footing with the oil and gas companies. We are already faced with the challenge of getting handle on the various expenditures being admitted as costs by the oil and gas companies which has an enormous implication for their payment of corporate tax. I am however hopeful that our future EITI reports can get to the bottom of all these costs which eventually have to be capitalized.

7. As we are all witnessing, the discovery of Oil/Gas has awakened a lot of excitements in Ghanaians. We as important players therefore owe it to the people by ensuring that Ghanaians get optimal value from the resource.

8. The roll-out of EITI to Oil/Gas could not have happened at a better time. We must work assiduously to ensure that as soon as audited reports from the industry are available our reconciled reports will follow. The timely availability of this kind of credible information to the populace will put their expectation in perspective.

9. In countries at our level of development, it is not adequate to put information on-line. I will therefore entreat the team to ensure that the information on receipts and payments from the sector are disseminated on time and as widely as practical. I will entreat GHEITI to continue to maintain its neutrality, objectivity and fairness in reporting the issues.

10. Before I conclude, let me also say that this meeting should also provide the Committee members the opportunity to reconsider the scope of the Ghana EITI. Last year there has been calls from all the stakeholders, companies, civil society and indeed my very good self for the widening of the scope of the EITI in other for it remain responsive to the needs of Ghanaians. I would like to see some work done in that direction.

11. I wish to re-state that my doors will be opened to your activities, and members are always welcome to discuss their concerns with me. I once again wish you a happy new year and a very productive session.

12. Thank you all for your kind attention.