**A COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A POLICY DIALOGUE ORGANIZED BY CENTRE LSD ON THE PROJECT “STRENGTHENING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY FOR EFFECTIVE NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA” HELD AT OSBORN LA-PALM RESORT HOTEL AND SUITES ABAKALIKI ON THURSDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2016.**

**PREAMBLE**

The African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD) organized a Policy dialogue on the project “strengthening civic engagement and advocacy for effective natural resource governance in Nigeria” with support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). The dialogue was put together to examine the content of public policies and institutions that formulate and implement them with a view to examining the implementation and impact of the policies. More importantly, the policy dialogue will not only be diagnostic of the policy problems but will suggest alternative approaches to dealing with the problems to achieve effective natural resource governance.

In attendance were the Hon. Commissioner Ministry of Solid Minerals, the chairman House Committee on Solid Minerals, Rep Hon Commissioner for Environment and other top government officials. Also in attendance were members of civil society organizations, traditional rulers, members of mining communities, students and the media.

**OBSERVATIONS**

Some key observations at the policy dialogue include the following;

· The solid mineral sector is not very well developed and has not contributed much to the larger economy. The sector as at today accounts for 0.3% of national employment, 0.02% of exports, and about N400B of Nigeria’s GDP

· The non-implementation of the Nigeria Mineral and Mining Act 2007, weak mechanism for gathering, disseminating and archiving critical geological data required by investors and policy maker has continued to encumber the growth and development of the solid mineral sector.

· Insufficient infrastructure and policy uncertainty have continued to erode investors’ confidence in the sector and is worsened by unclear rules and issues of separation of powers between the State and the Federal Government.

· Ebonyi State is blessed with many solid minerals scattered all over the different communities, but these minerals are not properly harnessed.

· Community Development Agreements (CDAs) and/or Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) are entered into by few members of these communities with commercial miners without the involvement of other community members, a situation that has always caused conflicts and acrimony in communities

· Environmental degradation is common around mining communities. Abandoned and open pits generally litter mining sites in Ebonyi state. According to the ministry of solid minerals about 98 of such pits which pose great dangers to communities exist.

· Women including pregnant ones and children are involved in mining activities which is against the mining Act 2007. This poses great danger to their health. Similarly, most people working at mining sites do not wear protective gadgets for their safety.

· There is absolutely lack of monitoring of mining sites by relevant government agencies, thus increasing the menace of abandoned mining pits in Ebonyi State.

· Civil society groups are not carried along on issues of mining. Where they show interest, they are seen as intruders.

**RESOLUTION**

The following resolutions were reached during the dialogue;

·        Participants commended the Federal Government for the recent launch of the road map by the ministry of Solid Minerals and its current reform effort to develop the solid mineral sector.

·        The Federal Government should endeavour to implement the Mining and Minerals Act 2007 and its reform in the solid mineral sector fully as proper implementation can create employment, increase revenue and ensure prosperity for all Nigerians.

·        The drafting and signing of Community Development Agreements (CDAs) and/or Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) should involve all stakeholders. It should be an open thing with all groups in the community well represented to forestall strife and hatred.

·        Monitoring of mining sites should be done regularly by relevant government agencies to ensure proper commissioning and decommissioning process, with already mined pits properly covered.

·        The Ministry of Environment, NESREA, the Cadastral office and similar bodies should step up efforts at reducing environmental degradation in mining communities by ensuring prompt enforcement of laws within their purview.

·        Civil society groups and media practitioners should either at the Federal and subnational level be involved and included in all statutorily committees relating to solid minerals including Environmental Management committee.

**CONCLUSION**

Participant at the policy dialogue resolved to adopt the resolutions reached, engage all stakeholders to ensure that mining is done in a way that is beneficial to government, communities, mining companies and the general citizenry.

**Signed**

**1.**     **Mr. Akuma Jacob – Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, Ebonyi State.**

**2.**     **HRH Anthony N. Njoku – Okposhi Community Traditional ruler**

**3.**     **HRH Martin Oyebe – Ameka Ezza South LGA**

**4.**     **Rev. Cletus Ajah – Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)**

**5.**     **Dr. Okezie Kelechukwu – Neighbourhood Environment Watch**

**6.**     **Okorie Stanley – NESREA**

**7.**     **Ajah Saydatu – FOMWAN**

**8.**     **Stella Okuri-eze - DEDAN**

**9.**     **Monday Osasah – Centre LSD**