**Communique Issued at a One-Day CSO-Media Engagement on Effective Natural Resource Governance in Nigeria Held at Barca Liga Hotel, Apo , Abuja , March 31,  2021**

**PREAMBLE**

A one-day CSO-Media engagement on Effective Natural Resource Governance was organised by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) with the support of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to advance conversation on its Strengthening Civic Engagement and Advocacy for Effective Natural Resource Governance project, being implemented in Ebonyi, Ekiti and Taraba states. The meeting keynote *CSO-Media Engagement on Effective Natural Governance in Nigeria: What the CSO’s and the Media should do going forward* was delivered by the duo of Ms. Faith Nwadishi and Mr. Lanre Arogundade. The meeting was attended by over 70 participants (physical and virtual), including representative of Civil Society, Government agencies and the Media. The general observations at the meeting are contained below.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

1. The inadequate attention given to the solid mineral sector in Nigeria by government, is the reason it's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product is only a paltry 0.1%.
2. The underdevelopment of the Nigerian economy has a clear linkage to the monumental corruption in the extractive sector.
3. CSO’s and media engagement in the sector is shallow because of their non familiarity with the  [2011](tel:+442011) Minerals and Mining regulatory guidelines and inadequate knowledge of the provisions of the Mineral and Mining Act 2007.
4. As a result of the technical nature of the extractive sector which makes it difficult to comprehend, only a handful of CSO’s are conversant and engaging in the sector.
5. There is apparent lack of value chain analysis to inform area of engagement within the Natural Resource governance sector in Nigeria by CSO’s and this ultimately has robbed off on their efficiency of engagement.
6. Notwithstanding the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act which empowered CSO’s, media and other actors to gain access to required information from government MDAs, NNPC is still unwilling to disclose requested information about its operations.
7. The media is not conversant with the precepts of Natural Resource Governance sector in Nigeria hence the reportage of critical issues like spending, taxation, and the untoward activities of multinational companies manifesting in corruption, is abysmally low and this puts question on the media’s ability to demand accountability from actors in the sector.
8. The poor remuneration of media practitioners in Nigeria makes it difficult for them to effectively play their identified roles in the governance of natural resources in the country.

**WHAT SHOULD BE DONE**

**By the Government**

1. Government should give priority to solid mineral development in Nigeria to take forward its diversification efforts, as the sector has potential to become a major revenue earner if well developed.
2. To promote effective development of Nigeria, government should take more pragmatic steps to address the observed monumental corruption in the extractive sector as indicated in the yearly NEITI’s report.
3. Policies/laws that limit or prohibit the participation of women in any form within the extractive sector should be reviewed to promote gender inclusion and women participation in the sector.
4. Government should ensure openness and flow of information within the extractive sector, to pave way for proper and effective engagement by stakeholders in the sector.

**By CSO’s and Media**

1. CSO’s and Media should prioritise the understanding of the governance framework of the extractive sector and get familiar with the  [2011](tel:+442011) Minerals and Mining regulatory guidelines as well as the Nigeria Mineral and Mining Act 2007 to enable them have full grasp of the technical issues therein, while also using same to build their capacity to engage and get more CSO’s and Media personnel into the space.
2. CSO’s should understand value chain analysis of the natural resource sector to help them identify a particular area of interest to engage and address in the sector.
3. To achieve productive outcomes in their engagement, both CSO’s and the Media should get familiar and understand government processes and language and deploy them when engaging MDAs.
4. CSO’s and media must remain resolute and determined to follow through when using the FoI Act to request information from government MDAs related to the extractive sector.
5. For the media to understand issues within the Natural Resource Governance space, they should be encouraged and supported with capacity building to be able to effectively engage and report the sector.
6. To minimize the tendency of the use of press releases and statements from state actors, CSO’s should endeavour to provide reliable and factual content to the media to enrich their reportage of issues in the sector.
7. CSO’s and the media should explore all ways and means to cultivate a cordial/mutual relationship to enable them to play their roles to contribute to the develop of the natural resource governance space in Nigeria.

**CONCLUSION**

Participants at the meeting admitted that not enough credit is given to CSO’s and media in view of the hostile environment in which they operate. While committing to contributing their respective quotas to the development of the natural resource governance sector, they pledged to work together and use the above recommendations to engage relevant stakeholders towards strengthening civic engagement and advocacy for effective resource governance in Nigeria.

**SIGNED**

**Monday Osasah** - Executive Director, Centre LSD

**Faith Nwadishi** - Executive Director, CTA/KIF

**Lanre Arogundade** - Director, International Press Centre

**Juliet Alohan** - Extractive 360

**Dr. Kelechi Okezie** - NEITI