

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

**BY**

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**NORTHERN REGIONAL MINISTER**

**AT**

**THE GHANA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES  
TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (GHEITI)  
DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP**

**GLOBAL DREAMS HOTEL, TAMALE – N/R**

**4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2018**

**MR. CHAIRMAN,**

**NANIMA,**

**HON. CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF ASSEMBLIES PRESENT,**

**CHIEF DIRECTORS OF REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCILS,**

**HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF MMDAs,**

**MEMBERS OF THE GHANA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES**

**TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE,**

**CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES,**

**FRIENDS FROM THE MEDIA,**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

Good Morning and a warm welcome to Tamale, the Northern Regional Capital of Ghana. The dissemination workshop being held today is the fourth one which has been organized by the Ghana EITI in the Northern Region for key stakeholders from Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. I must say that Ghana EITI has been one of the key governance and transparency initiatives so far that has been constantly engaging stakeholders in Northern Ghana to offer them the opportunity to participate in such dissemination workshops. These workshops will not only provide participants with information on the country's extractive sector but will also be used as a tool to build their capacities in the area of natural resources governance in the country.

**Mr. Chairman,** the reports the Ghana EITI is about to share with us is a clear assurance that Ghana was setting itself on the path to make every ounce of gold and every drop of oil count for every life in Ghana.

Indeed, we are guided by the principle that the wider benefits of natural resource extraction cannot be achieved without good governance of the sector. Without transparency, there cannot be accountable government and efforts to ensure that returns from natural resources are well spent are likely not to succeed, thereby deepening poverty, instability and social conflicts.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** the contribution of the extractive sector to the economy in terms of foreign exchange earnings, employment and indeed Gross Domestic Product (GDP) cannot be overemphasised.

The Northern Region and for that matter the Northern Ghana are reportedly endowed with several mineral deposits and other natural resources like, iron ore, oil found along the stretch of the Volta basin. I understand a number of companies have acquired prospecting licences in northern Ghana and currently there is onshore oil exploration activities ongoing in the region, testifying to the region's mineral potential. Other minerals such as diamond, manganese and bauxite have also been found in this geological environment, and more than half of the northern region is underlain by Voltaian sedimentary rocks which host industrial minerals like limestone, dolomite and sodium chloride (salt). According to the University of Ghana's geology department, northern Ghana is underlain by Cratonic rocks (of Birimian and Tarkwaian suites) known for their gold-bearing potential. It is therefore, stakeholders' engagements such as the one the today to bring the public up to speed on issues regarding the country's extractive sector and to prepare our minds to be able to manage expectations well since this finite resource will not change our lives overnight.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** I wish to mention that the Artisanal and Small Scale Mining sector plays an important role in the socio-economic development of this country. This is why government has put in measures and prepared a comprehensive programme under the Multilateral Mining Integrated Project (MMIP) to give attention to the sector concerns as well as focus on regulation that will be included into a broader rural development strategy to contribute towards Ghana's poverty reduction efforts as enshrined in the action plan of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV). Therefore, I wish to urge all stakeholders to support that initiative since small-scale **mining** sector interest would best be served through the creation of this Multilateral Mining Integration Project (MMIP).

**Mr. Chairman,** issues pertaining to oil exploration and production as well as mining and management of the returns accruing from the extractive industry are matters of great interest to the people of the three regions in the northern Ghana. It is therefore, a welcome development and warm-heartening that the region is selected as the first destination for the dissemination workshop of the 2015/2016 Ghana EITI reports for the mining, oil and gas sectors as well as the Ghana Commodity Trading Pilot report among others. This will undoubtedly provide yet another opportunity and space for the people of the Northern Ghana to participate in the discussions and be part of decisions surrounding issues of the EITI reports.

Our economies, irrespective of the mineral resources we are endowed with are often the poorest and most unstable in the world. Many reasons account for this state of affairs. Prominent amongst them is inability to sustain the principles of good governance at various levels. The EITI for me, is expected to address this challenge by promoting and improving transparency and accountability in countries like ours.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** Ghana also is gradually becoming a major oil and gas producing country as more fields are being discovered, and as such the demand for greater information and accountability on the use of the revenues accruing from the sector will increase. There is therefore a strong justification for revenue transparency in the extractive sector to be more prominent than ever before. The good news is that the EITI has evolved over time and has therefore expanded the scope beyond revenue transparency to cover the entire extractive sector value chain including, beneficial ownership disclosure, contract disclosure, project by project reporting, to mention but a few. The challenges we face as a nation are enormous, but some of the robust governance frameworks, the EITI and other governance initiatives in the country are good a place to start, focusing on our extractive sector revenues could help a long way in transforming our country.

The Natural resource sector of any country sometimes is characterised with a myriad of problems such as the 'Dutch disease', mismanagement of oil, gas and mineral revenues and these can have enormous costs for citizens in those resource rich countries like ours especially if citizens do not take a keen interest in the sectors' development. It is for this reason that Government spends scarce resources to periodically share information with all the relevant stakeholders at workshops such as this one today.

Information shared will not result in the desired developmental impact if citizens do not hold office holders accountable. It is worthy to note that natural resource revenues are special funds, and they are particularly troublesome to manage and as such, we must treat them with a lot of attention, particularly when the general citizenry are clearly demanding accountability.

**Mr. Chairman,** as I have already mentioned above, initiatives like the Ghana EITI which seeks to provide opportunity for public disclosure of revenues by extractive Companies and Government would go a long way to complement existing structures of good governance and transparency in the country.

Government therefore considers the role of the Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative as very critical towards ensuring open and transparent management of resources from the extractive sector and would seek to strengthen collaboration with other extractive sector agencies to enhance its operation.

Let me conclude by saying that the natural resources are exhaustible as they have a finite life span, our local communities must therefore be empowered to use the returns from mining activities to build the economic capacity that can mitigate the loss of livelihood and other benefits. All these require adequate capacity for planning in our various District Assemblies and MDAs.

I wish to use this opportunity to commend members of the Ghana EITI for organizing this workshop and hope that participants would cooperate with the organizers and the resource persons to ensure an insightful workshop for the two days.

Finally, I will like to tell participants particularly those from Accra that Tamale is a safe place and so you should make some time to explore the town if you are free.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a fruitful deliberation.

**Thank you.**