

To
Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Terje Riis-Johansen,
Minister of Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim
Minister of Finance, Kristin Halvorsen
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre

Cc:
State secretary Liv Monica Bargem Stubholt
Head of EITI international secretariate, Jonas Moberg
Director of Oil for development program, Petter Nore

Oslo, 17th September 2008

Dear Ministers,

As strong advocates of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), we are writing to express our deep concern over Norway's lack of visible progress towards becoming an EITI candidate country following the government's announcement of its intentions to implement on September 27, 2007.

Norway has been a key supporter of the EITI from its inception, notably as a major donor to the EITI Multi-Donor Trust Fund, as a member of the International Advisory Group (IAG), as a host for the EITI Secretariat and now as the first developed country to have announced its intention to implement the EITI. Nearly a year after this ground-breaking announcement, however, the Norwegian government has yet to take the initial steps towards becoming a formally recognized EITI candidate country.

When the Minister of the Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, announced Norway's intention to implement the EITI, he acknowledged that such a step would enhance Norway's 'credibility in the international fight against corruption in the raw materials industry.'¹ We warmly welcomed this statement at the time and commended Norway on its commitment to make the EITI a truly global standard, for developed and developing countries alike. However, Norway's continued leadership and credibility in this area now depends upon its action.

In order to become an EITI candidate, a country must complete the four sign up indicators: 1) Issue an unequivocal public statement of its intention to implement EITI; 2) Commit to working with civil society and companies on EITI implementation; 3) Appoint a senior individual to lead EITI implementation, and; 4) Have a fully costed work plan which has been published and made widely available.

Since its public announcement to implement the EITI, Norway has had sufficient time to complete the remaining steps, but has failed to do so. Such inertia brings Norway's commitment to implementation into question and sends a mixed message to other developed countries and the emerging economies that took note of Norway's decision to implement the EITI. These countries are closely watching Norway, and their decision to follow in Norway's footsteps will no doubt be influenced by how the process unfolds in Norway.

John Williams, Member of Parliament in Canada² has stated that "*EITI in Norway would demonstrate to the whole world what the developed world wants to live by through high standards of transparency and accountability.*"

¹ *EITI announcement in Norway, NORAD, Sept. 27, 2007*

² *Office of John Williams, M. P. and Chairman of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)*

The lack of implementation progress in Norway also sends the wrong message to those countries that are already involved in the EITI process, or those that are considering joining.

The EITI secretary general in Yemen, Mohammed Moshin Al –Najar, has noted that *“the country who is regarded as a global leader hosting the EITI initiative is reluctant and hesitant. To implement EITI [in Norway] means much to every country considering and thinking of the implementation of EITI.”*

Gaëlle Kibranian, program manager of the Arab Region Parliamentarians against Corruption (ARPAC) has said that *“the experience of implementation of the EITI in Norway would definitely ease the process for Members of Parliament, as it would be an example to follow.”*³

With Norway’s already high level of revenue disclosure in the extractive industries, the implementation of EITI should necessitate few changes and would strengthen the country’s position as an exemplar of transparency. The longer this process is delayed, however, the more likely it is that opponents of transparency will point to Norway as an illustration of the insurmountable difficulties of compliance.

We call upon Norway to match its rhetoric with action in implementing the EITI. The government should immediately appoint a senior individual to lead EITI implementation and ensure the fulfillment of the sign-up steps in order to become an EITI candidate that is formally recognized by the EITI Board. By moving swiftly in this direction toward the full implementation of the EITI, Norway will not only improve transparency at home, it will simultaneously bolster its position as a leader in the global movement for transparency and good governance in the extractive industries.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,



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Oslo, Norway



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Publish What You Pay International
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³ ARPAC mobilizes and organizes members in Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, Algeria, Morocco, Bahrain, and Lebanon. They build alliances with the media, civil society movements and academics and calling on Arab governments to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).