

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (EITI)

STATEMENT ON ANGOLA: An Angolan Civil Society Perspective

London (June, 17 2003) – The launch of the EITI, led by the British Government is a landmark approach in encouraging the Governments and Companies to maximize transparency. If the Angolan Government adopted the EITI it would greatly enhance public oversight over the State funds.

It is public knowledge that the profits from oil, diamonds and other natural resources only benefit the ruling elite and the foreign business ventures, especially oil multinationals that remit profits from Angola.

Angola is a country blighted by misery, maladministration and authoritarianism. Its oil and diamond wealth has so far provided more despair than benefit to the average citizen.

The call for the oil companies and the Angolan Government to disclose their financial transactions could be a major boost to hold the Government officials accountable to the Angolan citizens. The Angolan people have the right to access information pertaining to the revenues made from the natural resources, which ultimately belong to them.

This is only a first step. A fully-fledged democracy is the ultimate guarantee that revenues will be used responsibly, by a fully accountable and transparent government system, with the checks and balances.

The United Kingdom ought to fully and publicly support civil society in Angola and empower its independent voices to encourage a culture of pluralism. It ought to support these groups to act as watchdogs, including on realization of the premises subscribed by the Angolan Government and the companies here at the launch of the EITI.

As one of the independent voices in Angola, I welcome the EITI initiative. The challenge now is to enact its spirit. I ask the companies operating in Angola to publish what they pay and to my government and the State Oil Company Sonangol to publish what they receive.

Thank You.

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