



PRESS RELEASE
2 September 2005

Norway to be a driving force for global oil and mining transparency

The Norwegian Government has today launched a major new initiative that will see them take the lead in global efforts to improve transparency and accountability over the management of revenues from oil, gas and mining industries.

At a press conference in Oslo, the Minister International Development, Hilde F. Johnson, and the Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Thorhild Widvey, announced that Norway will increase funding and technical expertise for developing countries to assist with natural resource revenue management. Around US\$8 million in funds will be provided each year. The Ministers also committed to be a driving force behind the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international multi-stakeholder process aiming to ensure full accountability in the payment, receipt and use of resource revenues.[1] Norway will itself also implement the EITI principles and criteria.[2]

“Revenue transparency and accountability should be the global operating paradigm for the oil, gas and mining industry. Norway is showing how to put this into practice both at home and abroad and we salute their leadership”, stated Gavin Hayman of Global Witness, a founding member of the international Publish What You Pay NGO coalition.[3]

Jan Borgen of Transparency International Norway stated: “Norway’s commitment sends all the right signals – that transparency should be addressed in one’s own backyard first. It is critical now that other countries be they major oil producers or be they donors follow suit with similar commitments to put the Initiative into practice.”

Today’s announcement follows the step taken in April this year by Statoil, the part state-owned oil major, to disclose its payments to governments in every country of operation. [4] Publish What You Pay is now calling on other major oil, gas and mining companies to follow Statoil’s lead.

Norway will now consult with NGOs, companies and others to move forward with its implementation of the EITI. A website will also be set up to provide information on earnings from oil extraction on the Norwegian continental shelf. Publish What You Pay and its Norwegian partners will be following progress in Norway with great interest. We look forward to Norway setting a challenging standard for other countries to follow.

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PUBLISH WHAT YOU PAY

Notes

[1] The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is currently being implemented in resource-rich developing countries including Azerbaijan, Ghana, Nigeria, Peru, and Trinidad & Tobago. Launched by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2002 in response to the Publish What You Pay campaign, EITI aims to bring stakeholders together at country levels to develop a framework for the disclosure of company payments and government revenues from the oil, gas and mining sector. See www.eitransparency.org for further information.

[2] The Norwegian Government Press Release (2 September 2005) “*Oil for Development: New Initiative for the Government*” is available at <http://odin.dep.no/ud/english/news/news/032171-070561/dok-bn.html>

[3] Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is supported by a coalition of over 280 NGOs from over 50 countries worldwide. PWYP coalition believes that revenue transparency is an essential condition for alleviating poverty, promoting just development, improving corporate social responsibility, and reducing corruption in many resource-rich developing countries. PWYP calls for stock market and international accounting rules to require oil, gas and mining companies to disclose their net payments to governments. See www.publishwhatyoupay.org

[4] Statoil’s 2004 *Sustainable Development Report* with the information on its country-by-country disclosures is available at www.statoil.com. Also see “*Norwegian oil major takes big stride forward on transparency by publishing payments to governments*,” Publish What You Pay press release, 14 April 2005.