

Meeting of the enlarged OSC-ITIE commission at Merina Hotel.

On Tuesday 06 June 2023, at 14:00, a working session was held at Merina Hotel involving Civil Society Organisations and the media engaged in monitoring the implementation of the EITI in Cameroon. This working session is part of the dynamic already set in motion by the CSO members of the EITI platform in the context of preparing Cameroon's validation to the EITI in October 2023.



Photo of the group at work.

The session began with a welcome from the Moderator (CRADEC), who recalled the context of this session. It followed the ceremony at which the report on the transparency of beneficial owners in Cameroon had been submitted to the Government. In accordance with the resolution taken at the last meeting on 23 May, the members of the enlarged commission of EITI-CSOs were invited to be updated on the conclusions of the work of the last session of the EITI Committee and the prospect of validation.

As a reminder for some, and for the information of others, a meeting had already been held at the EITI permanent secretariat in Bastos on 23 May 2023, at which one of the resolutions taken at the end of the meeting was to hold a new meeting of the enlarged college, at which members sitting on the committee should communicate with members not sitting on the committee, in order to consolidate the links between the two parties and thus reduce the discrepancies observed so that together they can converge towards the same objective, which is to prepare Cameroon's validation as well as possible.

During this meeting, the aim was to report back to the CSOs that do not sit on the committee on the resolutions and recommendations that were adopted during the double session of the committee held on 01 & 02 June 2023. We then questioned, debated and assessed the level of transparency within the civil society college, but also within Cameroon, with regard to the issue of validation, based on the current situation in Cameroon.

Agenda:

1. Presentation of the resolutions adopted at the double session of the Committee on 1 and 2 June 2023;
2. The current state of transparency in the petroleum sector in Cameroon;
3. Drawing up a roadmap;
4. Conclusions, outlook and miscellaneous.

Once the agenda had been set out as such, a round-table discussion was held so that all the participants could state their identity and the organisation they represented; he then gave the floor to each of the participants in order to gather their opinions, expectations and fears with regard to the holding of the meeting and the proposed agenda. At the same time, he thanked Dr LIVINIUS for his presence and also Mr MBARA TIPANE Cyrille, Executive Coordinator of the GAD, for his proactivity and involvement in EITI-related issues.

Dr. LIVINIUS took the floor and began by apologising to the participants as he was busy preparing for his departure for the EITI International Conference scheduled for 08 to 12 June 2023 in Dakar.



Recommendations made by Dr. LIVINIUS before his departure.

He made 03 main points: recommendations to be included in the roadmap, in particular the publication of the activities carried out by each CSO in relation to the EITI; he also raised the issue of transparency and, lastly, questions about sub-national transfers, which are not taken into account in the recently published implementing decree for the Petroleum Code.

1. Presentation of the resolutions adopted at the double session of the EITI Committee

This section is presented by the Technical Secretary of PWYP, member of the Cameroon EITI Committee, Mr. Bernard DONGMO.

On 01 & 02 June, a double session of the committee was held, attended by all the players and members of the Multi-Stakeholder Group. During this session, it was a question of preparing the conciliation report for the year 2021, but also of taking a look at the validation of October. 03 major points were tackled, they are the framing report, the presentation of the 2023 work plan with a view to its adoption.

➤ **The framing report:**

The following points were raised and dealt with by the committee:

- The definition of the scope of conciliation, i.e. the sectors to be covered by conciliation;
- The materiality threshold, which has been assessed and set at 100 million FCFA;
- The entities to be included in the reconciliation report;
- The list of flows, i.e. all revenues generated by mining and/or petroleum operations;
- The assurance and certification process for the data collected;
- The declaration forms that will be proposed to the selected companies so that they meet a certain number of formats;
- The timetable for the work;
- The risks involved in terms of the quality of the document produced or the lack of certain data;
- The range of structures involved in the reconciliation, including 68,09 companies in the hydrocarbons sector, 01 in the transport sector and 02 in the quarrying sector;
- 68 flows have been retained and will be included in the report, 03 financial authorities including the DGI, DGD and DGDC and 06 public companies;
- Guarantees and loans granted by the State to this sector;
- The concept of beneficial ownership;
- Issues relating to sub-national transfers.

All these elements were examined by the committee during the first day and it is the recommendations of all these concerns that will form the guiding thread in the preparation of the 2021 report.

➤ **The 2023 work plan:**

During the second day, the committee:

- Validated and approved the Mini Emergency Plan for validation;
- trained candidates on the tools for collecting information from the entities selected;
- recalled the sanctions to which Cameroon will have to respond upon validation.

This is a very brief overview of the work carried out during this double session.

Mr SYLVANUS of the SNJP then took the floor. He began by presenting the context of Cameroon's validation. Cameroon, which was declared compliant in 2007, is now under pressure because of its two previous failures to implement the corrective measures assigned to it. With a view to validating the forthcoming one, the Permanent Secretariat of the Cameroon EITI has submitted a mini emergency plan to the members of the committee in order to meet all the requirements, including the one relating to commitment. This is a major requirement on which the Validators' notes will be based.

He mentions the fact that the sessions convened are minimal, mainly due to the fact that only two authorities can refer a matter to a general session of the committee, namely the permanent secretariat and the EITI champion Minister of Finance, thus reducing the room for manoeuvre in the process. In order to reduce this gap, he proposed setting up a technical secretariat for the committee.

He then recalled the suspension that Cameroon would face if it failed to meet all the requirements set for it, the regularisation of the contractual situation of the staff of the permanent secretariat, which is a key element in the validation process, and so on..

Following this presentation by the members of civil society on the committee, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification. The main issues raised were:

- The question of Cameroon's materiality threshold, set at 100 million;
- The discrepancy between the three-year action plan 2023-2025 and the work plan 2023;
- The question of funding within the committee;
- Social relations with Chad in relation to the Savannah affair;
- The responsibility of structures already involved in quarrying and mining;
- The gender issue.

The response phase was led and supervised by the CSO members of the committee. Clarifications and comments were made afterwards, to the satisfaction of all participants.



Some points made by Mr MBALLA MBALLA Jean.

At the end of the session, the dates of 20 & 21 June 2023 were set by the EITI Committee, in order to adjust and validate the budget for the three-year work plan. The permanent secretariat was entrusted with this task.

2. The current state of transparency in Cameroon's petroleum sector

During the session, the GLENCORE and SAVANNAH case was raised and, for the first time, SNH was given the opportunity to comment on these cases.

The debate on the GLENCORE scandal was an initiative of the late Minister in charge of Mines, Mr Gabriel DODO NDOKE, who had planned to initiate a special session of the EITI committee in order to debate this very thorny issue. He had also specified that the SINOSTEEL affair had been suspended from any debate because the State was still in the negotiation phase with the Chinese company.

At the last session, the SNH representative expressed her organisation's discomfort with the EITI International Secretariat's expectations of it. She pointed out that they had already provided all the data and information sent to them. However, the independent administrator recommended that SNH provide the international secretariat with additional and complementary data. Faced with this situation, SNH is asking the committee for advice on how to remedy this problem and thus help the organisation to clean up its image both nationally and internationally.

In response to this outstretched hand, civil society is **recommending that SNH act as a civil party in the Glencore case**, as the DRC has done, in order to gain access to the current case file and break the "anonymity clause" imposed on SNH in its administrative investigation.

A number of resolutions were adopted at the end of the meeting, in particular:

- **The distribution to the various participants of the documents examined during the committee's double session: the Mini Emergency Plan and the 2023 Work Plan;**
- **Carrying out activities and actions linked to the public debate on the crucial issues raised: the Glencore affair, the Savannah affair and others;**
- **Documentation of advocacy documents submitted by Multi-Stakeholder Group member CSOs to MINFI.**

The meeting ended at 5.40pm with all the participants expressing their satisfaction with the proceedings, while encouraging the efforts of all concerned to give greater substance to the various recommendations and resolutions adopted, and to hold a further session of the enlarged college after the committee meeting on 20 and 21 June 2023.

The rapporteur

NANFAA BRENDA (CRADEC/INTERN)

Annexes :

Attendance sheet:



FICHE DE PRESENCE

Rencontre du Collège Elargi des OSC-ITIE

Date : mardi 6 juin 2023, Mérima hôtel

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