

Civil Society of Latin America and the Caribbean call for increased mechanisms and openness for making environmental and social information in extractive activities transparent

Civil society representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean participating in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), held meetings from 28 to 30 November 2017 in Santo Domingo - Dominican Republic in the framework of the "EITI Regional Workshop in Latin America and the Caribbean". In this context, we express our concern for the increase in the number of environmental and indigenous defenders in our countries who are being persecuted and killed. Similarly, we also express our concern about the global trend of weakening environmental and social regulations for the benefit of large extractive and infrastructure projects.

In this regard, we consider it fundamental that our governments as well as the international financial institutions that finance policy changes in our countries, guarantee respect for human rights within country policies in an effective manner. Moreover, regulatory amendments in mining and hydrocarbon sectors take place respecting the processes of transparency, access to information and citizen participation. The right to access information is a human right. Consequently, if this right is not adequately guaranteed, it will negatively impact other rights such as citizen participation, right to health and right to a healthy environment.

Citizens require clear, timely and understandable environmental information to be able to compel government authorities to guarantee citizen rights and ensure that governments fulfill their commitments. For this reason, it is of great importance for Latin American and Caribbean countries to improve their transparency mechanisms of socio-environmental information and to guarantee the human right of access to information.

Therefore, civil society, in the framework of the EITI initiative, point out the following:

1. Our countries should prioritize the dissemination of socioenvironmental information related to extractive projects. In particular, it is necessary to make public social and environmental expenditures made by companies and the government, environmental impact studies, authorizations and requests for use of water resources, environmental enforcement, fines and penalties and regulatory contributions by companies amongst other things. We believe that disclosing information on these issues will generate greater trust among all actors and will reduce social conflicts.
2. We believe that it is crucial to strengthen the disclosure mechanisms of data in EITI reports in a more inclusive manner. Information should be published taking an intercultural approach ensuring that the information reaches the public, in particular populations that are located in direct and indirect area of influence of extractive megaprojects, given that these populations enjoy less benefits and are poorer.
3. We also request international financial institutions - IFIS and other donors that provide support to the EITI initiative to prioritize support aiming to strengthen civil society within EITI. The support is framed within the need to strengthen the impacted local populations and to strengthen governmental mechanisms to ensure that generated information is useful for decision making given that there is an information asymmetry among the participants of the national commissions. EITI should promote creating a greater impact of using for the population.
4. We also request that our countries implement and monitor roadmaps on beneficial ownership in an effective manner that were drafted in the framework of the new 2016 EITI standard as

approved during the VII Global EITI Conference. Knowing the complete beneficiary chain will strengthen the governance of our countries and contribute towards eliminating corruption.

Finally, although EITI is a tool for improving transparency in the extractive industries, we urge our governments not to limit themselves to minimum requirements, but to aspire to maximum transparency in the extractive industries. Therefore, we ask the EITI International Secretariat to promote the inclusion of the issue of environmental and social transparency on the agenda in the next workshops, given that this is a topic of relevance for civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as a request from local populations.

SIGNATORIES:

Acción Ciudadana. Capítulo de Transparencia Internacional (Guatemala)

Civil Society (Guayana)

Civil Society Trade Union (Suriname)

Colegio Dominicano de Economistas- CODECO (Dominican Republic)

Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales – DAR (Peru)

Espacio Nacional por la Transparencia de la Industria Extractiva – ENTRE (Dominican Republic)

Federación de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo de Honduras - FOPRIDEH (Honduras)

Grupo Propuesta Ciudadana – GPC (Peru)

Mesa de la Sociedad Civil para la Transparencia en las industrias Extractivas de Colombia (Colombia)

MOPAWI - Agencia para el Desarrollo de la Mosquitia (Honduras)

Observatorio Dominicano de Políticas Públicas de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic)

Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación – PODER (Mexico)

Transparencia por Colombia (Colombia)

Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago