



global witness

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## **Landmark oil and mining transparency initiative faces credibility test as key deadline passes**

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a pioneering initiative to bring more openness to the world's oil and mining industries, faces a major credibility test after 20 out of 22 countries failed to meet a key deadline today.

Today (March 9) is the deadline for countries to complete Validation, a third-party assessment which checks that they are implementing the EITI in accordance with its rules. Kazakhstan, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo are among the countries which must ask the EITI Board for more time to finish Validation.

"The EITI Board must assess countries' requests for more time in a rigorous and transparent way that fits the EITI rules," said Diarmid O'Sullivan of the campaigning group Global Witness, which is a member of the EITI Board.

"Some countries have made impressive progress but others have clearly been dragging their feet for several years. Any hint of special treatment towards the latter would undermine the credibility of the whole initiative," said O'Sullivan.

The EITI was launched in 2002 to bring more transparency to the flow of payments to governments from oil, gas and mining companies. In many countries, lack of transparency has enabled deep corruption, entrenched poverty and instability.

Global Witness is a co-founder of Publish What You Pay, a global coalition of civil society groups which give the EITI much of its legitimacy. EITI supporters include governments like the United States, European countries and Japan, major oil and mining companies and international bodies like the World Bank and African Union.

So far, only two countries have completed Validation. Azerbaijan and Liberia were both awarded the status of EITI Compliance, the highest status of the initiative, in 2009. This means that citizens are able to access detailed and regular reports about revenue payments to their governments by oil, gas or mining companies.

Of the other 20 countries facing the deadline, Guinea has voluntarily suspended itself from the EITI. The other 19 countries can get more time to complete Validation, provided they can show that the delays were caused by "exceptional and unforeseeable circumstances" beyond the country's control.

"Some of these countries have been involved with the EITI for several years, with very limited results. So the Board must make sure that delays were really unforeseeable and not just caused by lack of political will," said O'Sullivan.

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**Global Witness investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses.**

