



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



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East African Legislators Adopt Recommendations for Improving Accountability and Transparency in Region's Extractive Industries

WASHINGTON – To reverse the role natural resource wealth has traditionally played in fueling conflict and corruption in many African countries, a plan to foster cooperation among East African legislatures on the management and oversight of the region's oil and mineral resources has been drafted by representatives of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA).

The draft resolution includes calls for the review of extractive industry laws and contracts in the region, improved transparency of contracts and the strengthening of parliamentary capacity to oversee the sector. It also calls for all members of the East African Community (EAC) to consider joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international standard for improving transparency and accountability of revenues from oil, gas and mining.

The action came at the conclusion of a meeting on “*Promoting Transparency and Accountability of Revenue from the Extractive Industries*” held in Arusha, Tanzania, in February. The two-day workshop was sponsored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Revenue Watch Institute (RWI), in partnership with the EALA and the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB). It brought together EALA members from Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya; members of the parliaments of those countries, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo; private industry representatives; international legal experts; a representative from the EITI Secretariat; and civil society leaders.

The EALA Speaker, Honorable Abdirahin Abdi, said, “These sectors are vital to the development of each country and the region as a whole. Parliaments must have the oversight capacity to ensure that they benefit all parts of the population. EALA will play a key role in helping to identify and share best practice across the region.”

Sessions were informed by the findings of NDI's report, *Transparency and Accountability in Africa's Extractive Industries: The Role of the Legislature*. Based on research in nine African countries, the report summarizes the challenges African legislators face in overseeing oil and mining industries, highlights best practices to overcome the "resource curse," and offers recommendations for greater engagement and coordination by legislators, civic groups and the international community in monitoring the collection and use of revenues from the extractive industries.

EALA Member Dan Ogalo encouraged meeting participants to get more involved in extractive industry issues. "There are sufficient frameworks in our legislatures to ensure effective oversight – the problem is the lack of political will to do so," he said. "We have constitutions and rules of procedure that vest us with the power and authority to carry out legislative and oversight functions. The question is how far we are ready to go."

In adopting the resolution, EALA members underscored the importance of fostering cooperation in the efficient joint management and sustainable use of natural resources by the member states of the East African Community, comprising Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

NDI, RWI and its partners will assist the EALA in carrying out the resolution's recommendations, to include support for the creation of a regional forum of extractive industry stakeholders, training on industry engagement and oversight, and technical advice from experts and legislators from other resource-rich countries whose experiences can help shape the development of regional principles and standards for the East African region.

Copies of NDI's report as well as the EALA resolution and conference agenda are available on www.ndi.org, and via partner websites:

http://www.accessdemocracy.org/library/2191_extractive_080807.pdf

http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/safrica/eala/final_workshop_agenda.pdf

http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/safrica/eala/workshop_resolution.pdf

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is the independent legislative arm of the East African Community. In addition to providing a democratic forum for debate, EALA also has a watchdog function. More information is available at www.eac.int/EALA.

Created in 2000, The Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB) mobilizes parliamentarians in the fight against global poverty, promotes transparency and accountability in international development, and offers a platform for policy dialogue between the World Bank and parliamentarians. PNoWB today includes nearly 1,000 MPs, representing development activists and policy makers from 110 countries. More information is available at www.pnowb.org and <http://www.worldbank.org/parliamentarians>.

The Revenue Watch Institute (RWI) promotes the responsible management of oil, gas and mineral resources for the public good. With effective revenue management, increased citizen engagement and real government accountability, natural resource wealth will

drive a nation's growth and development. RWI provides the expertise, funding and technical assistance to help countries realize these benefits. More information is available at www.revenuewatch.org.

NDI is a non-profit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government. More information is available at www.ndi.org.

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