

Publish What You Pay Africa

Publish What You Pay Africa Statement to Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and current Chair of the Southern Africa Development Community

11 September 2009

Dear President Kabila,

We are representatives of Southern African civil society organisations that are members of the Publish What You Pay (PWYP)* global coalition, which campaigns for the transparent and accountable management of oil, gas and mining revenues.

We welcome the recent Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Heads of State Summit in Kinshasa, and we congratulate the Democratic Republic of Congo on being granted chairmanship of the SADC for a year.

The SADC region has abundant mineral resources which can assist in accelerating the economic and social development and growth of the region.

However, we are concerned that this vast mineral wealth and rising revenues linked to the growing worldwide demand for Southern Africa's mineral resources is not translating into socio-economic benefits for the majority of citizens in the region who continue to live in abject poverty.

Despite efforts towards greater transparency and accountability in the management of extractive resources in the region, mineral- and oil-rich countries such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo remain affected by the 'natural resource curse' as a result of widespread corruption and poor governance. In the case of Zambia and Mozambique, foreign investors have gained from mineral extraction while the benefits to local communities remain less clear.

By strengthening a regional dialogue that promotes prudent and accountable management of the natural resource sector, Member States can meet their national development objectives as well as alleviate poverty and improve the standard and quality of life throughout the region.

The SADC Protocol on Mining aims to harmonise national and regional policies and strategies related to the development and exploitation of mineral resources. If properly implemented, the Protocol could be a powerful instrument to promote prudent and accountable management of mineral resources for economic development and poverty reduction.

We also welcome the continued expansion in the SADC region of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a global mechanism which promotes revenue transparency in the extractive sector and champions dialogue between governments, companies and civil society. All resource-rich countries in the region should implement EITI. In addition, the principles of transparency – central to tackling corruption and increasing accountability – should be extended to the revenues generated by other sectors, including forestry and fisheries.

Local and international civil society groups have spearheaded efforts to promote increased transparency and accountability in the extractive industries. For instance, the PWYP coalition has drawn worldwide attention to the need for increased transparency and accountability in the management of extractive industries.

However, the exclusion of civil society from policy debates on transparency and governance in the natural resource sector, as well as growing harassment and intimidation of transparency advocates, remains a major concern.

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In light of this, PWYP Africa representatives call on the SADC Heads of States to:

- strengthen regional dialogue and cooperation to increase transparency and accountability in the natural resource sector, and enforce the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Mining into national legislation;
- protect natural resources from any form of spoliation from either local or foreign elites, and prevent the misappropriation of resource revenues for individual interests;
- encourage all resource-rich SADC countries to implement EITI and support current Candidate countries to achieve EITI compliant status within set deadlines;
- urge companies to adopt sound corporate governance and disclosure policies to safeguard future windfalls against financial volatility;
- refrain from putting in place restrictive civil society legislation, such as the 2009 NGO law enacted in Zambia, that will constrain the operating environment for civil society;
- end all forms of harassment against civil society activists, and safeguard their protection and security; and
- encourage the effective participation of civil society in SADC structures and policy processes pertaining to revenue transparency and good governance, including the EITI and the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

Signatories:

PWYP Africa
PWYP Democratic Republic of Congo
PWYP Mozambique
PWYP Zambia
Open Society Foundation Angola
KMF/CNOE Education des Citoyens, Madagascar
Transparency International - Initiative Madagascar
Union Nationale Malgache des Droits Humains, Madagascar
Citizens For Justice, Malawi
Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa (ForDIA), Tanzania
Southern Africa Resource Watch, South Africa

Note:

* Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is a global civil society coalition with over 300 member groups who work together for greater transparency in the oil, gas and mining industries. In Africa, PWYP is active in the following countries: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia.

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