Report on Engagement with the Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Thursday April 17, 2025

On April 17, 2025, I made a presentation to the Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Transparency in the Extractive Sectpr and the Role of EITI.

The session, which lasted about one and a half hours, was a hybrid of virtual and in person. However, most attendees were on the virtual platform. The physical space for the event was provided by Clarke’s Productions, located in Tucville, Georgetown. This company is a member of the Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Earle introduced himself to the membership of the chamber and went into the history of EITI.

He explained why EITI was important to the extractive industries of countries like Guyana, which were richly endowed with natural resources.

He explained the relationship between transparency and accountability, noting that the former precedes the latter. The presentation delved into concepts such as corruption, the Resource Curse, the Dutch Disease, the ole of Gender and many other topics germane to the subject of extractive sector transparency.

A list of the talking points of the presentation:

* The extractive sector
* Transparency and accountability
* The origins of EITI
* A brief history of EITI in Guyana
* The Dutch Disease
* The Resource Curse
* EITI reporting
* The Multi-Stakeholder Group
* The National Secretariat
* The Ministry of Natural Resources’ relationship with Guyana EITI
* validation

Questions:

1. What are the specific benefits of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative for local communities?

Answer: The benefits of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative include ensuring that local communities receive a fair share of the revenues generated from natural resources.

1. What is the purpose of the Natural Resource Fund?

Answer: The Natural Resource Fund was set up to ensure that money from oil and other resources is managed for future generations.

1. How can the Women's Chamber effectively advocate for gender equality in the extractive sector?

Answer: The Chamber can do this by ensuring it keeps record and statistics of women within the workforce in particular the extractive sectors and share data with the relevant government authorities.

1. How often does the multi-stakeholder group meet?

Answer: The multi-stakeholder group meets statutorily once per month but can meet more frequently if urgent matters arise.

At the end of the session, President of the Chamber expressed gratitude for the information

Thank yu note

On behalf of my colleagues at the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Guyana EATA secretariat, I express our sincere gratitude for allowing us the opportunity to share about EITI.

The session gave us an opportunity to further our communications and outreach work plan by this session, which is meant to end gender, debate, and discussion around is use of transparency within the extractive sector.

The questions and feedback received following the presentation were evidence of an engaging session which delivered knowledge which can be used to stimulate discussion among the chamber’s members.

We do look forward to engaging in future opportunities with the chamber and its leadership and membership with a few to continuing the conversation around the extractive sector, especially with gender in mind.

We thank you for your assistance in facilitating this session and despite a few challenges, we believe it was a successful event.

The session focused on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and its engagement with the Women's Chamber of Commerce in Guyana, emphasizing the importance of transparency and inclusion in the extractive industries. Caroline, the secretary of the Women's Chamber, introduced Johan Earl from the EITI, who highlighted the initiative's role in promoting accountability and transparency. The GY EITI Secretariat underscored that natural resources belong to the citizens and stressed the need for transparent management of revenues to prevent environmental damage and economic disparity.

Technical difficulties were encountered during the presentation, including issues with audio and slide transitions, which were addressed with assistance from participants. Despite these challenges, the GY EITI Secretariat discussed critical concepts such as the resource curse and Dutch disease, using Venezuela as an example of mismanagement leading to economic decline. They emphasized the necessity of diversifying the economy to avoid neglecting other sectors and mentioned the Natural Resource Fund aimed at responsibly managing oil revenues for future generations.

The GY EITI Secretariat provided an overview of the multi-stakeholder group established in 2017, which includes government, industry, and civil society representatives. They highlighted the importance of gender equality within this framework, noting the Women's Chamber of Commerce's role in advocating for women's interests. Gender considerations are integrated into all EITI requirements, and the Secretariat is actively working to ensure women's voices are represented in decision-making processes.

Collaborative efforts with various chambers, including outreach to schools to establish EITI clubs, were discussed to promote public engagement and transparency. Johan Earl outlined the upcoming validation process for the EITI, aiming for a higher score than the previous validation. The GY EITI Secretariat encouraged participants to utilize EITI reports to advocate for gender issues and community needs, emphasizing the importance of generating debate on transparency and governance within the extractive sector.

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**Chapters & Topics**

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Descriptions

2:23

EITI Information Session with Women's Chamber of Commerce Industry Guyana

Caroline introduced the session, thanking participants for joining and highlighting the hybrid format of the meeting. Johan Earl from the EITI provided insights into the initiative, emphasizing the significance of transparency and accountability in the extractive sector. He encouraged attendees to engage actively by asking questions throughout the presentation.

* Importance of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) for local communities.

19:41

EITI and Community Benefits from Natural Resource Extraction

The GY EITI Secretariat discussed the ownership of natural resources by citizens and the need for transparent management of the revenues generated from their extraction. They pointed out that without proper management, communities could face long-term negative impacts, such as environmental degradation, while only a few individuals benefit financially. The Secretariat stressed the importance of ensuring that a portion of the revenue is reinvested back into local communities.

27:16

Technical Difficulties and Presentation Setup

The GY EITI Secretariat faced challenges with their presentation setup, including slow computer performance and low audio volume. Karlyn was requested to help with advancing the slides, and participants confirmed visibility of the presentation. Reshma Tikchand also confirmed that she could hear the speaker clearly, indicating some level of communication was maintained despite the technical issues.

29:53

Understanding Resource Curse and Dutch Disease in Guyana

The GY EITI Secretariat explained the resource curse and Dutch disease, noting that countries like Venezuela exemplify the consequences of mismanagement of natural resources. Shamela John defined the resource curse as the misallocation of resources leading to poverty, while the Secretariat elaborated on how Dutch disease can cause neglect of other economic sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, due to an overemphasis on oil and gas.

* Role of the Natural Resource Fund in managing revenues from natural resources.

38:08

EITI Overview and Implementation in Guyana

The GY EITI Secretariat explained the EITI's purpose and governance structure, emphasizing the importance of consensus among the three sectors involved: government, industry, and civil society. Guyana was temporarily suspended from EITI for failing to submit its 2020 report on time but has since lifted the suspension after submitting the required reports. The Secretariat aims to enhance the efficiency of future reports, targeting a timeline that allows for more timely data availability.

46:23

EITI Engagement with Women's Chamber of Commerce Industry Guyana

The GY EITI Secretariat outlined the establishment of the multi-stakeholder group in 2017, which is responsible for decision-making and policy within EITI. The Secretariat emphasized the significance of gender representation in this group and mentioned outreach efforts to the Women's Chamber of Commerce and the Women Miners Organization to promote gender equality in EITI implementation.

52:39

EITI Engagement with Women's Chamber of Commerce Industry Guyana

The GY EITI Secretariat outlined their strategy to work with local chambers and agencies to enhance public engagement in transparency initiatives. They highlighted recent outreach efforts to secondary schools aimed at creating EITI clubs to educate students on key concepts related to the extractive sector. The Secretariat also stressed the necessity of having a structured work plan and budget for effective project implementation.

* Gender equality and representation in the extractive sector.

1:00:21

EITI Validation Process and Improvement Strategies

Johan Earl explained the validation process for the EITI, comparing it to an exam that assesses the progress made over a three-year period. He highlighted that the last validation resulted in a low score of 52, and stressed the importance of achieving a significantly higher score in the upcoming validation. Earl expressed confidence that recent efforts would lead to improvements, aiming for a score in the 80s.

* The validation process and its implications for EITI compliance.

1:06:04

EITI Governance and Membership Structure

The GY EITI Secretariat outlined the decision-making process of the multi-stakeholder group, which meets monthly and can convene for urgent matters. They highlighted that while members have voting powers, consensus is preferred, and abstentions are allowed. Membership is restricted to representatives from specific organizations rather than individuals.

1:12:09

EITI Engagement with Women's Chamber of Commerce Industry Guyana

The GY EITI Secretariat highlighted the need for active participation from the Women's Chamber of Commerce in promoting gender equity within the EITI framework. They stressed the importance of gathering credible information to influence policy recommendations in EITI reports. The Secretariat also clarified that while they cannot advocate for specific groups, they can facilitate discussions and provide a platform for raising concerns.

1:26:51

EITI Engagement with Women's Chamber of Commerce Industry Guyana

The GY EITI Secretariat emphasized the need for the Women's Chamber of Commerce Industry Guyana to actively engage in discussions about gender-related challenges faced by women in business. They urged members to review EITI reports, particularly focusing on recommendations regarding gender, and to bring any issues to the forefront, such as difficulties in obtaining small business loans. The Secretariat highlighted the potential for influencing policy changes through these discussions.

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**Action Items**

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3:52

Johan Earl will share the presentation slides with the attendees for future reference. Ask Copilot

49:46

Johan Earl will encourage the Women's Chamber to reach out to the Ministry of Natural Resources if interested in becoming members of the multi-stakeholder group. Ask Copilot

1:02:21

Johan Earl will ensure that the upcoming validation process in October is prepared for and that improvements are made based on previous feedback. Ask Copilot

**Key Questions**

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25:44

What are the specific benefits of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative for local communities? Ask Copilot

Proposed answer: The benefits of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative include ensuring that local communities receive a fair share of the revenues generated from natural resources.

35:26

What is the purpose of the Natural Resource Fund? Ask Copilot

Proposed answer: The Natural Resource Fund was set up to ensure that money from oil and other resources is managed for future generations.

59:18

How can the Women's Chamber effectively advocate for gender equality in the extractive sector? Ask Copilot

1:06:29

How often does the multi-stakeholder group meet? Ask Copilot

Proposed answer: The multi-stakeholder group meets statutorily once per month, but can meet more frequently if urgent matters arise.

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**Your Notes**

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