



Statement of Civil Societies on Latpataung Copper Mining Conflict

Date : 24 December 2014

The civil societies from Myanmar strongly condemn current events arising in the Latpataung conflict and express concern that this hinders implementation of the EITI mechanism in Myanmar.

1. By engaging in a meaningful way with both government and private sector representatives, Myanmar civil society has been working hard on improving the Transparency, Accountability and Good Resource Governance of Myanmar. Then, Myanmar civil society supports the aim for Myanmar to become a member of EITI.
2. Being an EITI member is not to show off in front of the international communities. The core value of EITI is to achieve people centered Good Resource Governance. This includes protecting communities from the resource curse by implementing transparency and accountability in resource management consistent global standards. However the present situation is moving in the opposite direction and the conflict in Latpadaung this week are indications of this.
3. The present situation in Myanmar is one in which communities are experiencing the loss of: ancestral lands, livelihoods, social and economic welfare. Violent and forceful police responses to communities affected by land confiscations includes unjustly imprisoning community members and using violent force causing injury, bloodshed and death. The police response in Latpadaung this week highlights human rights abuses due to mismanagement of natural resources by the respective authorities and foreign investors from extractive industry.
4. According to EITI standard 1.3, the Government of Myanmar promised not to disturb the freedom of speech for every citizen regarding issues related to management of natural resource extraction. Therefore, communities are being prevented by force from freely expressing their views on extractive industry activities. However, the current situation of activities by the responsible authority to Latpataung community vividly represented a breach of the promise by the State.
5. According to the EITI standard, the State already made an initial promise to conduct scoping study for the mining sector to be part of Myanmar EITI report in 2015. Therefore it will be necessary for State to report about taxes paid by the Wanpaung Company for mining including the social, economic and environmental impacts on communities affected by their extractive activities – as well as outlining the details of how the company is addressing the impacts of this mining. If the news about conflict happening between the company and communities who refused to get subsidized allowances for losing their land is correct, it can affect the quality, credibility of the report. With respect for EITI standards, the company should not undertake any forceful confiscation or use of lands. Even if the state reports the conflict situation in the report, the quality of report may not meet the international standard and as a result the country may not be a fully qualified member of the EITI mechanism.

6. It is unacceptable that a community member was killed because of an excessive and unnecessarily violent use of force by the police. And as a potential EITI member, blaming the communities by the government in the national newspapers before investigating properly on the current case is also breaching of EITI's code of conduct.
7. Our civil societies strongly condemn the behavior and the unnecessary use of excessive amount of force by the respective police officers and authorities from Wanpuang Company to solve the current Latpataung case.
8. The civil society signatories to this statement are also very worried that the Government's current approach to addressing complaint of communities neglects possibilities of negotiation between the parties – the communities and Wanpaung company – and that this could lead to more conflict.
 - The civil societies strongly recommend that the government and the company solve this case peacefully as the existing way of handling the case could be interpreted as intentionally creating long-term conflict.
 - And we keenly seek a quick and proper investigation on the current cases, we ask for peaceful negotiation between the parties according to the principle of democracy as similar cases like recent death of Daw Khin Win from Moe Kyoe Pyin Ale Village and injury of local farmers can happen any time.

Our civil societies will submit this Latpataung case to the international EITI board. We recommend that when the EITI board considers Myanmar's application to EITI they take into account the due diligence, accountability and transparency of the Government of Myanmar in handling this case.

Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA)

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