

Mining Watch Afghanistan: Weak management and leadership of the extractive industry in Afghanistan causes corruption in the sector

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Mining Watch Afghanistan, a civil society network, expressed concerns regarding government incompetence to bring integrity to the mining sector of Afghanistan during a press conference on Thursday, November the 16th, 2016. Although, Afghanistan joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in 2010, but the country has not received the compliance status of this initiative due to weak implementation of transparency standards in the sector and Afghanistan still remains a candidate only.

After two years, the National Unity Government (NUG) has neither supported nor paid full attention to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Afghanistan has published four reconciliation reports, each of these reports shows challenging problems in the mining sector. The last report of this initiative (the fourth report), which reconciled the payments of 11 extractive companies with receipt of government receipts for the solar years 1391 and 1392, shows differences of 2.6 and 22.1 million Afghanis respectively. By far, the government has not taken any actions towards this..

The EITI is an international initiative and has been implemented in 51 countries. The initiative targets corruption and brings reform to the extractive sector in the country. The initiative which requires joint work by the government, mining sector private companies and civil society organizations (CSOs), and needs strong support from the government but it has remained without any responsible leadership (which is the Minister of Finance) from the start of the National Unity Government (NUG). The Minister of Finance does not pay attention to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Lack of a leader in the leadership of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in Afghanistan, has decreased attention of other institutions and questioned its implementation process in Afghanistan. In addition to this, the lack of interest from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Mines & Petroleum in the last two years, and the recent scrawny management in the Ministry of Mines has largely decreased from attention to the Transparency Initiative.

However, the fourth comparison report of this initiative includes specific recommendations to the government in regards with contract reforms, revenue collection, document registration, audit of government and company accounts by an independent agency, and reforms in legislature, but unfortunately, there are no steps taken in this regard especially in regards with the ministry of Mines.

Lack of cooperation of this ministry with Civil Society Organizations, illegal extraction of mines, lack of clarity in the law of mines and especially in regards with anti-corruption, are other problems which affect the anti-corruption efforts in the mines sector.

Recommendations:

1. The head of Multi Sides Group (MSG) must be appointed as soon as possible, and a qualified and talented person must take this responsibility.
2. The recommendation of fourth comparative report must be followed seriously.
3. The Minister of Mines and Petroleum must be appointed as soon as possible so that the ministry will get out of the present leadership crisis
4. A single and transparent account must be opened to all natural resources revenues.

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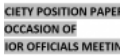
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