

## **REGIONAL SHAREFAIR ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES: BUILDING ON GOOD PRACTICES**

**DATES:** 13 – 15 October 2015

**VENUE:** United Nations, Headquarters, Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya

### **BRIEFING FOR PUBLISH WHAT YOU PAY**

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The Conference was aimed at promoting the inclusion of women in the extractives industry, to include extraction of oil, gas and minerals; open discussion on various ways in which women can tap into the opportunities created by the sector; and generally identify business opportunities for women in and around the EI Sector.

The targeted beneficiaries of this event were:

- Women working in the EI at various levels, from technical persons to those working at Board level
- Women working along the whole EI value chain from procurement to beneficiation
- Women working in medium-scale, small-scale and artisanal mining
- Women affected by the impacts of the EI; and
- Supporting partners which included Publish What You Pay

From the participants, it can be noticed that whilst the women working in the EI are not a homogenous group, they range from those operating as large business entities to those that are operating at a micro level where mining is just a livelihood activity which enables them to meet their very basic needs like food and shelter. However, the women impacted by mining seem to form one group as the impacts of mining, most of them negative, affect the women in almost the same way in the region.

#### **Women in Mining**

From the presentations and discussions of women operating medium-scale mines appeared to be middle-class women with more access to resources and information. From the discussions and presentations, the medium-scale miners were relatively more educated and their operations were legally registered with the appropriate authorities, and they had met most of the legal obligations like carrying out their Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). They admitted that mining is a very capital intensive business and may take long for investors to start realizing returns on their investments. The women operating medium-scale mining operations appeared have more technical expertise, and more socially and economically empowered than the other groups. One of the women who presented from this group also seemed to have more access to political power. She had more access to resources of power and control. She was a former civil servant in Zimbabwe who left her job to start mining and the fact that she mentioned that she went to seek advice from the Zimbabwe Investment Authority (ZIA) implies that she is relatively more informed and did not enter the sector blindly.



*Melania, PWYP-Zimbabwe Chapter and Winnie from Uganda*

Some of the artisanal miners faced a lot of challenges with regards to formalization of their mining operations. Some of the artisanal miners are formalized and they appear to be better off than their informal counterparts but what was apparent is that most of the artisanal miners are not formalized. Some of the women went into artisanal mining as a way of diversifying their livelihoods after losing their land to large-scale mining operations.

However, for all women who are involved in mining, whether at a medium-scale or small-scale have challenges in terms of the fees and licenses that have to be paid before commencing operations. Some of the artisanal miners had challenges in understanding the need for EIA. However, the underlying challenge that could be deduced from the challenges faced by the women has to do with transparency in the sector. In order to promote transparency in the sector, there is need for all women to have more access to information. Geological information, information on how the women can be formalized in terms of licensing and fees payable, information on the investment opportunities that exist in the sector, and basic information on what an EIA is and the reasons why this should be carried out.

### **Women and Mining**

The women who are affected by mining are mostly rural communities living in communal lands without security of tenure and often excluded in decision making processes. Though investors in the EI stated that they had done a lot of work for the communities in which they are operating, including building schools and creating employment, the women affected by their operations did not feel that there were any benefits coming from their operations. Therefore, the gap in information may be as a result of lack of access to information and lack of transparency. That the women in the community are not aware of the composition of the Board of the investors, the contracts that they signed with their governments, the home countries of the investors and the life of the mines and how the women would be impacted implies that the women may not have been included even in the EIA processes.

The women in mining admitted that their operations negatively affect the local communities' well-being, including health implies that there is room for engagement and collaborations amongst the women because acknowledgement of the negative impact may be an opportunity to start discussion on how the local women can work together in order to come up with solutions on how they can all benefit from the sector. It is interesting to note that most of the investors that made presentations were offering opportunities like cleaning services and catering services as some of the opportunities that the sector was creating for women. Very little was mentioned about women supplying mining equipment, supplying consumables used in the industry or offering technical expertise within the sector. These assumptions about the role that women can play within the sector may not be empowering to the women as this appears to be an extension of women's domestic gender roles extended to the EI.

Education increases women's chances of being in the company boards, including in the mining sector, and therefore, if women are going to participate meaningfully, there is need to empower and equip the girls and young women with the relevant skills and expertise. There is also need to address the gender issues in the sector in order to protect women's lives and well-being. The issue of addressing women's

special needs in the sector was raised, that is, the needs that arise due to the fact of a woman's biological make-up which include women's reproductive health needs, and exposure to HIV/AIDS.



## Conclusion

As stated above, one of the underlying causes of the challenges faced by women in the sector is the lack of transparency and access to information in areas of:

- Contract Transparency
- Geological information
- Impacts of EI on the local women
- Potential of the EI to contribute to the countries' development needs
- Revenue transparency – both for large-scale to artisanal mining.
- Scope of the projects

Whilst most of the investors in the sector would regard this information as strategic information that would compromise their competitiveness, this information is crucial for:

- Women who also want to invest in the sector at any level
- Women affected by mining as this affects their lives and well-being
- Governments for determination of tax regimes in the sector
- Civil society needs the information for evidence based advocacy.

Most members of the community feel that information regarding God-given natural resources should be exempted from secrecy clauses because their extraction should benefit the communities living in the mineral resource rich areas and the country as a whole.

There is however need to promote transparency in the sector through Publish What You Pay by way of allowing the women in mining and women affected by mining to join the coalition so that they can be able to demand transparency and accountability from government and investors in order to avoid women entering this sector blindly and losing out in the end, and for the women affected by mining to adequately participate in decision making processes.