BONN, 21 NOVEMBER 2008. Dr Peter Eigen, Chair of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), addressed today the Digging for Peace – Private companies and emerging economies in zones of conflict - conference convened by Bonn International Center For Conversion (BICC).

Dr Eigen said:

“We are deeply disturbed by the killing that is presently going on in the Eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sadly it appears that the quest for control and exploitation of natural resources is yet again contributing to conflict. As the international community works to prevent further suffering in the DRC, we must work to ensure that extractive industries do not exacerbate instability and conflict, and instead contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is playing an important role at the country level to improve governance. We see that better governance in the natural resources sector can turn what some call a resource curse into real benefits for the people.

One of the greatest challenges in post-conflict countries is rebuilding the trust that enables societies to function. In the process of rebuilding trust, multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential. Governments need to govern in collaboration with representatives from civil society and private companies.

I am delighted that this Conference is bringing together experts with experience from three major multi-stakeholder governance initiatives:

- The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme;
- The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in the Extractive Sector; and
- The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

These collaborations have come about partly to ensure that private companies are a force for good in natural-resource rich zones prone to conflict. I am encouraged by the results that they are starting to yield. As the Africa Progress Panel* stated in its report earlier this year: “Both the Africa Peer Review Mechanism and the EITI have been successful, even groundbreaking, in their efforts to improve governance – and both have resulted in improvements on the ground.

I call on companies to rally behind the EITI. I call on development organisations to provide support. I call on civil society to continue raise awareness, promote transparency and engage with governments. Above all, I call on host countries to provide leadership and to accelerate their efforts implementing initiatives such as the EITI.”

*The Africa Progress Panel comment on the challenges African Governments, the G8 and other international partners face in meeting commitments made towards Africa’s Development. Its members include Kofi Annan, Bob Geldof and Peter Eigen.

Notes to Editors

1. Media enquiries, further questions, can be addressed to Jonas Moberg, +47 958 17 762 jmoberg@eitransparency.org, or Anders Tunold Kråkenes, +47 4666 2888 akrakenes@eitransparency.org.

2. The EITI is a coalition of governments, companies, civil society groups, investors and international organisations. All these constituencies are represented on the Board, which is chaired by Peter Eigen. The EITI Secretariat is hosted by the Norwegian Government in Oslo and was formally opened on 26 September 2007.

3. 3.5 billion people live in countries rich in oil, gas and minerals. With good governance the exploitation of these resources can generate large revenues to foster growth and reduce poverty. However when governance is weak, it may result in poverty, corruption, and conflict. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) aims to strengthen governance by improving transparency and accountability in the extractives sector. The EITI sets a global standard for companies to publish what they pay and for governments to disclose what they receive.

4. The 23 countries that are underway in implementing the EITI are: Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Niger,
Nigeria, Peru, Republic of the Congo, São Tomé e Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Yemen.

5. Dr Peter Eigen is the Chair of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the international initiative for improving transparency in oil, gas and mining industries. He was also the founder of Berlin-based Transparency International, a non-governmental organization dedicated to increasing government accountability and curbing corruption.

6. Recently the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the subject of 'Strengthening Transparency in Industries'. The resolution gives strong backing to the EITI by noting EITI implementing countries' efforts to strengthen transparency.

7. This press release and other EITI publications are available on the EITI website at www.eitransparency.org. If you would like EITI Newsletters and other important EITI updates to be sent to you automatically by email, you can subscribe to this service on the website.

8. Non-media enquiries can be addressed to the EITI International Secretariat on +47 22242105 or by e-mail to secretariat@eitransparency.org.