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**Executive Vice President
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Thank you, Minister. On behalf of Total I wish to thank the Secretary of State for International Development for his invitation, and I congratulate him for the outstanding organisation of this second summit of EITI.

The British Government deserves a lot of credit for its efforts in favour of the better governance in so many areas. The recently released report of the Commission for Africa, established by the Prime Minister, the flurry of initiatives taken to address the issues of the poorest countries show that political willingness can achieve a great deal. As for our EITI conference today, I am really impressed with such a high degree of commitment on the part of all those present.

In a few minutes, I wish to offer my view on where collectively we stand in our initiative, what we have done so far and how we envision the future. Looking backwards first, I remember how sceptical many of us were two years ago when the EITI was launched. Indeed, many of us, but most of all outsiders, critics were out. Even a year ago, who would have said that we would be able to show today so much progress in so many countries. Sometimes, we may feel that things are not going fast enough but we just need to look at what has been achieved to be encouraged, because the purpose is to change the mentality and behaviour. We always thought it would be slow and progressive. I has been progressive but surprisingly it has not been slow.

Let me also say how much we appreciate and value the inclusive nature of EITI. No major stakeholder is left out, though no-one is forced to join other than through a sort of peer pressure; dialogue rather than confrontation is the way to sort out the differences. Virtuous circles are being established for the benefit of all.

Where are we today? First of all, I want to thank Ben Miller and his DFID team. They have made possible a statement of outcomes which captures the essence of what was agreed to and achieved in the past two years. Let me highlight a couple of points that seem to me particularly important. First, we have affirmed the collective nature of the initiative. This is the only way in which it can work. Secondly, the necessity to allow each country to develop its own pattern, although I agree that the rules cannot be left entirely with the implementing countries. Therefore, I am glad to see the progress on the definition of what is the EITI and what it means concretely to adhere to it. Had we not defined those precise

guidelines, we would run a serious risk of credibility. Of course, this is a text of compromise and, as such, it does not reflect entirely our initial position. However, the fundamentals are clear and it means that there is still room for improvement.

Turning to the future, I would urge you not to lose sight of the ultimate goal of EITI. Where did all this start from in the first place? It started from the fact that people living in resource-rich countries do not benefit enough from said resources, and this is the objective to make sure that the energy resources benefit the people, that we put an end to the so-called oil curse. Let us all be very careful, that is the true target. It is not transparency. Transparency is a tool, it is not the target. Audits, scrutiny, fine-tuning are means and not ends unto themselves. The priority is not to track the sense. The priority is to make sure that the dollars are used for the well-being of the people. That is the future we see for EITI and Total is serious about it.

In this respect, I wish to emphasise the commitment of the Republic of Congo. Three weeks ago, as Abbé Georges indicated, a gathering took place in the republic in Pointe-Noire of the civil society, the international institutions, the government of the republic and the oil companies. You may say that this constituted the real launching of EITI in Congo. All stakeholders were present, thorough debate and explanations were given during the two-day meeting. Total, the major oil producer in Congo, was one of the initiators of the meeting. We are now fully committed to assist the government in order to keep the momentum. More generally, we shall do our best to continue to contribute to the progress of EITI and, to that end, we would appreciate holding a direct role in the guiding body of EITI. Thank you.

