

Reform for Ghana's artisanal mining sector

Ghana's artisanal mining and small-scale mining sector can be improved to become an inclusive, responsible, rights-based engine for growth. So believes a group of national business and community leaders.



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While accounting for an estimated 34% of Ghana's gold production in 2014 and the livelihoods of approximately 1 million people (and a total 3 million dependents), the country's artisanal mining and small-scale mining sector is best known for its major environmental and social challenges.

Major shift needed

"What we need is a major shift. A shift from a sector driven by poverty and a lack of options, to operations that are run like efficient businesses with adequate access to finance. We need to shift from an insecure and dangerous sector to one that enjoys secure rights and provides safe and decent jobs to mineworkers and the local community," says Dr Toni Aubynn, CEO of the Minerals Commission.

"We believe that this is possible. But we will need to shift policy and attitudes, as well as a great deal of collaboration and goodwill."

Reform process underway

This participatory sector reform process started last January in Tarkwa, where a group of leaders decided to guide a process of transformation in Ghana's artisanal mining and small-scale mining sector, following an "action dialogue" that brought together 60 representatives from across Ghana.

Ghana was the first country chosen for a dialogue on the subject because of the growing economic importance of the sector, and the commitment of Ghana's artisanal mining and small-scale mining leaders and institutions to improving it.

Miners must play a leading role

"Miners must play a leading part in this sector reform. We have to commit ourselves to responsible mining practices so we can have the respect of Ghanaian society. Many small-scale miners are already working hard to operate responsibly and

we want many more to do the same,” says Amina Tahiru, small-scale miner and coordinator of women in mining at the Ghana National Association of Small-Scale Miners (GNASSM).

Tool for poverty reduction

“Civil society organisations like ASMAN ultimately aim at supporting the development of an environmentally sustainable, socially acceptable small-scale mining sector that can be a tool for poverty reduction in resource rich rural communities,” says Nii Adjetey Kofi-Mensah who heads the Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Africa Network (ASMAN).

“We must not forget the difficult circumstances that women and children face in Ghana’s artisanal mining and small-scale mining sector. There are many vulnerable communities that need to be empowered,” adds Tahiru.

Source: miningreview.com

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