From the 1st to the 3rd of June 2022, the international mining industry players as well as members of the Ghana Chamber of Mines, with some government officials from Ghana will converge at the Accra International Conference Centre to discuss varied issues and review its activities.

Having such meetings presents yet another opportunity to network, brainstorm and discuss issues of mutual interest and how to advance the development of the mining industry as well as industry associations.

This year’s Annual General Assembly coincides with the West African Mining & Power Exhibition and Conference (WAMPEX/WAMPOC).

It is our expectation that this great gathering will continue to strengthen our resolve to promote socially and environmentally responsible mining activities while positioning Ghana as the mining support service hub in West Africa.

Additionally, we urge all members to continue working hand-in-hand with their host communities to build mutually beneficial relationships.

As the main mining industry association in Ghana, the Ghana Chamber of Mines will continue to play an advocacy role for members and continue to proactively engage all state actors such as the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Minerals Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency among others to ensure that all parties benefit from the mining activities, says Mr. Sulemanu Koney, CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Mines.

We call on members to make time to attend all activities at this year’s WAMPEX/WAMPOC as well as the AGM.
This year, the Chamber’s Expanded Council met in Kumasi to deliberate on key affecting the industry. The Council discussed varied issues with presentations from different members on different issues.

Some of the presenters were Hon. George Mireku Duker, a Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural who presented a keynote address on behalf of the Sector Minister. The CEO of the Chamber, Mr. Sulemanu Koney also shared a presentation on emerging developments in Ghana’s mining industry.

Other speakers were Mr. John Amoanyi, Acting Chief Inspector of Mines on the Appiatse Accident; Mr. Martin Ayisi, Chief Executive Officer of Minerals Commission and Mr. Ben Aryee on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources (Mines).

Also, Mr. Ben Boakye, Executive Director of the African Centre for Energy Policy shared a presentation on how to position Ghana as the hub for mines support service companies in West Africa. Mr. Kojo Amissah, Lead Consultant, CITAM presented on HR issues and trends in the Ghanaian mining industry including labour relations and sustainable mining. The Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. Henry Kokofu on his part focused on emerging issues on the environmental protection regulations of the mining sector – AKOBEN and the state of tailings storage facilities.

President Nana Akufo-Addo has signed into law, the Electronic Transfer Levy Bill (also known as E-levy), two days after it was passed by Parliament under controversial circumstances. This paved the way for the implementation of the levy.

Parliament passed the bill into law in March 2022, in the absence of the Minority Members of Parliament (MPs), who walked out before the Bill was considered at the second reading stage.

The E-levy, which was amendment to 1.5 percent, will be on electronic transactions, including mobile-money payments. The charge will apply to electronic transactions that are more than GHS100 per day. Critics of the bill have warned that this new levy would negatively impact the Fintech space. The government has, however, argued that the levy would widen the tax net and that could raise an extra GHS6.9 billion in 2022. There are also concerns that government may securitize proceeds from the E-levy to raise extra revenue.
The Minister for Finance, Ken Ofori-Atta announced that Cabinet, at its first quarterly retreat for 2022, deliberated extensively on several issues and approved a number of measures to address the challenges the country was facing.

He made these known when he addressed the media to throw more light on government interventions to address the economic difficulties which were manifested in rising interest rates and revenue mobilization challenges.

According to the Minister, two forces shaping global events were the novel coronavirus pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine adding that Ghana’s decision to focus first on protecting lives and then livelihoods paid off. Mr. Ofori-Atta disclosed that, Ghana like most countries in the World, had a tall list of coronavirus induced bills to pay from 2020 to 2021.

He shared plans and policies to boost investor confidence and job prospects for 2022 and beyond. “As you recall, we lost GHS13.1 billion of revenue and had to increase our expenditure by GHS14.2 billion with combined fiscal impact of GHS26 billion (6.8% of GDP)”, he noted.

On some of the challenges facing the Government, he cited the unyielding stance of the Minority in Parliament against the E-levy that could gravely affect investor confidence in Ghana’s capacity to implement its programmes and settle debts, triggering a downgrading by credit rating agencies, and leaving the cedi vulnerable as Ghana could not access the International Capital Market.

To address the adverse impact of the domestic and international challenges the country was facing, the Minister enumerated measures to address the challenges which included some spending cuts. Government, he said had announced and immediately, began implementing a 20% expenditure cut as part of fiscal stabilization and debt sustainability measures after Parliament failed to approve key revenue streams at the appropriate time. This, he added had been done through the quarterly expenditure ceiling allotments to MDAs.

Also, the Bank of Ghana announced a number of complementary, monetary measures to address the rising cost of goods and services on the market and the worrying performance of the cedi against major currencies such as the Pound Sterling, Euro and Dollar.

GRA ONLINE TAX FILING

The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) has announced that filling of Tax Returns must be done via GRA Taxpayers Portal. The official notice by the GRA indicated that the following categories of taxpayers are to file returns online via the GRA Taxpayers portal only, effective Friday, 1st April, 2022.

The affected categories of Taxpayers are: Taxpayers registered with the Large Taxpayer Officer (LTO); Taxpayers whose annual turnover is above GHS5million and Excise Taxpayers.

The notice indicated that GRA offices will not accept manual returns from the above-mentioned groups of taxpayers. The Taxpayers portal can be accessed on www.taxpayersportal.com. The portal app can also be downloaded as Ghana Taxpayers’ App on Google Play store and App Store.
The reconstruction works at Appiatse, the community destroyed by an explosion on January 20, was scheduled to commence by end of April this year. A Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Benito Owusu-Bio, speaking at a press briefing said a request for proposals would be issued on March 28 for interested contractors to bid for designing and construction of buildings. He noted that a new spatial plan had been designed by the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA) for the Appiatse community in consultation with the citizens of the town and their leaders.

Mr. Owusu-Bio indicated that the plan makes room for additional social spaces including transportation terminals, clinics, school, markets and expansion of roads.

Detailing the plan, Charles Blackson Hemans, a member of the Appiatse Reconstruction Committee and the Ghana Institute of Architects, said 124 houses of various sizes would be constructed. “We will be constructing 41 one-bedroom houses; 35 two-bedroom houses; 25 three-bedroom houses; 15 four bedroom houses; eight five-bedroom houses one six bedroom house and one seven bedroom house.

The project seeks to replace exactly what each individual lost to the explosion. “We’ve already engaged the community and they have their inputs in designing the plan,” he stated.

In all, he noted that 416 buildings would be constructed and refurbished adding that cost of construction could be calculated following the designing of the housing structures.

## AKYEM BIODIVERSITY OFFSET PROGRAMME

Newmont Ghana has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forestry Commission (FC) for a biodiversity offset programme at the Atewa Extension Forest Reserve. This program aims to mitigate impacts to Key Biodiversity Values (KBVs) created by the mine’s operations in the Ajenjua Bepo Forest Reserve, and the FC has allocated 2,640 hectares in the reserve. A steering committee involving the FC, EPA, Minerals Commission and IUCN oversees the biodiversity offset work activities. In 2021, Newmont advanced pre-feasibility studies on biodiversity offset calculations, vegetation mapping and the biological and socio-economic baseline studies. A validation workshop was held in June. Optional evaluations were completed with a single option identified to move forward with management and rehabilitation and progress the project toward feasibility during 2022.

## EPA TRAINS PARLIAMENTARY PRESS CORPS

The Liaison Group on Mining in Forest reserves at the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has organized a workshop for the Parliamentary Press Corps to sensitize them on environmental issues relating to mining in forest reserves. Various institutions that had a role to play in the Guidelines on Mining in forest reserves made presentation on the laws relating to the area.

The Chamber was represented by Sheila Minka-Premo of Apex Law Consult who made a presentation on the overview of the Chamber.
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has indicated that it is undergoing reforms to enhance its monitoring system with new technologies. This will be done without compromising on the integrity of the Agency’s monitoring and regulatory process.

Executive Director of the EPA, Dr. Henry Kokofu disclosed this when the Agency met with the Ghana Chamber of Mines and producing member companies to discuss the reintroduction of the AKOBEN audit processes.

Dr. Kokofu further stated that the new technology would reduce paperwork and enable information to be shared in real time.

He added that new operational district offices would be opened within the catchment areas of mining companies to help serve them better and enhance their operations.

The Executive Director further commended the Chamber and producing companies for their role in the formalization of the L.I 1622 adding that it was about time they reviewed the reclamation bond regime, which has been in existence for over 20 years.

He was optimistic that the overall performance of the mining companies on the AKOBEN result would lead to companies paying more attention to environmental issues within their catchment areas. He disclosed that the 2021 Mine audit would begin in the last week of May and entreated all companies to cooperate with the EPA field team.

A Deputy Director of Mining at the EPA, Mr. Harrison Afful presented that 2020 AKOBEN results including data from 2009, when the AKOBEN was launched. The EPA offered all members the opportunity to discuss ways to mitigate issues that were affecting the various mining concessions.

The Chair of the Environmental and Social Affairs Committee, Ms. Charlotte Fafa Senyo entreated the EPA to pay regular visits to mining concessions as it will curb noncompliance issues and foster a mutually beneficial relationship.
The Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel A. Jinapor has commended the Ghana Chamber of Mines for its role in promoting sustainable and responsible mining as well as collaborating with the ministry to promote mining investment in Ghana.

Mr. Jinapor gave the commendation when he made a presentation at the recently held African Mining Investment Event, Mining Indaba, held in Cape Town in South Africa, from 9th to 12th May 2022.

During the Mining Indaba, the Chamber, led by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Sulemanu Koney interacted with various participants to position Ghana as the continent’s best destination with regards to mining support service.

Mr. Koney also engaged with the President of the Burkina Faso Chamber Mines, Mr. Adama Soro when he visited the Ghana Pavilion.
The Ghana Chamber of Mines has held a meeting with the Advisory Board of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources as part of efforts to enhance working relationship and address some of the pressing needs of members.

The Board, which was led by its Chair, Ehunabobrim Nana Prah Agyensaim VI thanked the Chamber for supporting the Green Ghana Programme and making time to meet with them.

During the meeting, the Chamber shared with the Board the role of the Chamber in the industry, details of the mining industry, contribution of the mining industry to the state as well as challenges facing mining companies and proposed solutions.

Key among the issues were the security of the mining companies as well as policy decisions being taken without adequate consultation and clear roadmap of implementation.

The Board promised to work with the Chamber and the Sector Minister to address the issues.
In line with its commitment to promote quality education in its host communities, AngloGold Ashanti Iduapriem Mine, commissioned a two-unit two-bedroom and four-unit one-bedroom semi-detached teachers’ quarters for the Abompuniso Basic School to alleviate the plight of teachers, who had to walk for long hours to school daily as a result of lack of accommodation.

The project, which was funded by the AngloGold Ashanti Iduapriem Community Trust Fund at the cost of GHS 669,111, is expected to not only improve the regularity and punctuality of teachers but also enhance teaching and learning in the area in line with the Mine’s Basic Education Improvement Programme.