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LIVING THE ESG PRINCIPLES IN GHANA'S MINING INDUSTRY

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The mining sector is increasingly exposed to Environment Social and Governance (ESG) risks, including concerns around emissions, water use, deforestation and community relations. At the same time, ESG reporting obligations, institutional and other investor interest in what resource companies such as mining are doing, are rapidly multiplying across the globe.

Alongside these developments, actual and perceived non-compliance with ESG regulations and best practices have engendered activist shareholder protests and class action litigation against parent companies of some global mining groups.

It is interesting to note that governments are more actively protecting local communities, environments, and heritage sites through legislation. Customers are voting with their wallets for suppliers and products that support ESG principles. And a new generation of labour is expressing a clear desire to work for companies that are responsive to ESG issues. Galvanized by the same forces, the clean energy transition is now leading a resource transition and increasing demand for minerals that directly support electrification and the decarbonization of energy.

Opening a two-day seminar for Public Relations, Environment, Mining Engineers, Sustainability and allied professionals within the mining industry, CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Mines, Mr. Sulemanu Koney espoused the issues around ESG principles and noted that the seminar was part of the Chamber's initiatives to improve members' ability to collaborate, foster goodwill, and forge stronger relationships with stakeholders.

Mr. Koney stated that, “ESG agendas are not the only forces dictating the industry’s future. New technologies are enabling the energy and mineral transition, and “future back” issues have more sway in growth ambitions. Both are working in concert with new and emerging sustainability expectations to open a once-in-a-generation window to create distinctive value in responsible mining”.

He stressed the relevance of environmental protection and sustainability as they are of keen interest to the Chamber, hence the introduction of the Best Green Mine as well as the Most Innovative mining company categories in the prestigious Ghana Mining Industry Awards.

The CEO added that “it is our belief that as the industry expands, there is the need to adopt strategies and programmes that seek to protect and sustain our environment while meeting the needs of our stakeholders”.

The two-day intensive training program, during which there were classroom sessions, had facilitators from both industry and academia taking sessions in PR, Sustainability and ESG issues, industry challenges, innovations and trends. Prof. Eric Kwame Addae led the discussion in the design and development of communication strategies and crisis management. He is a well-seasoned lecturer with the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Drake University in the United States with vast experience in Ghana



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as a Communications professional. Mr. Eli Daniel-Wilson who is the Director of Sales and Strategy at Pulse Ghana led the session on digital innovations.

The conference attracted attendees from various mining companies, mine support service companies, and regulatory authorities in Ghana under the theme "leveraging Public Relations to Promote Environmental Sustainability."

Setting the tone for the seminar, a Partner for Risk, Governance and Compliance at KPMG, Mr. Kwame Sarpong Barnieh explained why ESG was a critical factor in the mining industry.

Mr Barnieh noted that ESG was a part of all activities and as such organizations' ESG strategies must be authentic, embedded in business strategies and owned by its Board of Directors. Additionally, ESG metrics of companies were used to compare different organizations by way of a rating and these metrics were closely scrutinized by shareholders to determine an organizations level of performance.

Dr. Eric Twum, in his conclusion, noted that organizations are expected to champion ESG principles as a way of demonstrating their commitments to ensuring sustainable development at all levels without compromising on the integrity of the environment.

Mining companies, especially, are being scrutinized regularly for environmental compliance, hence it is critical for them to live by the ESG principles and reshape the narrative regarding the negative impressions about mining companies.

The Ghana Chamber of Mines is at the forefront of the Responsible Mining Agenda and will encourage its members to be ESG compliant in order to obtain the necessary social license from host communities and stakeholders.

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Notes to the Editor

The Ghana Chamber of Mines is the main minerals industry association in Ghana. The Chamber represents the collective interests of companies involved in mineral exploration, production and processing in Ghana. Its member companies produce over 60 per cent of Ghana's mineral output. The Chamber has represented the industry's interests since 1928.

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