

## REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE IMCIM SO FAR AND THE WAY FORWARD

For many years our country has been confronted with pollution of land, soil and water as well as destruction of forests and farm lands due to the activities of some small scale illegal miners. The gradual deterioration of the environment in the mining sector was due to lapses in the functions of the regulatory agencies, especially the Minerals Commission and the Forestry Commission. For example, the Inspectorate Division of the Minerals Commission that is supposed to ensure safety at mining sites had completely broken down. Corruption in the Commission is legendary. Application and Issuance of mining permits and license did not follow any workable pattern and sometimes it took miners up to ten years to obtain the necessary documents to mine legally. Most miners were unable to wait that long and they resorted to illegality.

In addition to the above challenges, the artisanal and small-scale mining sector was informal in nature and the regulatory agencies lacked both human and logistical resources required to regulate the industry.

At the turn of the last century, that is around 1900, Ghana had about 8.8 million hectares of primary forest. By 1950, the area had been reduced to 4.2 million hectares and further to about 1.5 million hectares by 1999. In 2010 the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 2010 estimated Ghana's deforestation rate at 135,395 hectares per year. In the best of times the rate of afforestation and re-forestation combined was about 20,000 hectares per year. With these figures, one can compute when there will be no primary forest in Ghana.

Illegal mining can be defined as any mining activity that has not been licensed by the appropriate state regulatory institutions and have negative effect on the environment.

In the context of the work of IMCIM, illegal mining included mining in river beds (dredging), mining on riverbanks, diversion of tailings and other effluents into water bodies, mining in forest reserves, non-reclamation of land, small scale mining engaged in by foreigners and inappropriate use of dangerous chemicals.

As we all know, the artisanal and small-scale mining sector is a significant contributor to local economies and rural livelihoods in many parts of the Country. **In Ghana, small scale mining is the preserve of Ghanaians.**

Unfortunately, artisanal and small-scale mining operations are characterised by illegality, social conflicts and safety, health and environmental impacts.

Management of artisanal and small-scale mining at the local level has become a very complex issue as foreigners with heavy equipment and in collaboration with Ghanaians, are involved in the trade, thereby causing immense environmental degradation especially pollution of water bodies.

Soon after the President was sworn into office in January 2017, he expressed his commitment to protect the land, forests and water bodies for the present and future generations. He made the profound statement that he was prepared to put his presidency on the line to stop the destruction of the environment.

Consequently, the President established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM) in March, 2017.

The IMCIM was tasked with the following mandate among others to:

- a. Strengthen the existing stakeholder agencies that are related to the artisanal and small-scale mining sector. *i.e.* Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Water Resources Commission (WRC) and Forestry Commission;
- b. ensure that these agencies enforce the existing laws that are related to the artisanal and small-scale mining sector;
- c. set-up adhoc district mining committees whose functions are to coordinate the various activities of the Ministries that constitute the IMCIM;
- d. vet and verify legally registered artisanal and small-scale mining companies and to regularise any discrepancies where possible;
- e. sanitise and regularise small-scale mining activities in the various mining districts to ensure that miners work within the legal framework;
- f. train Artisanal and Small-scale Miners (ASM) in sustainable mining and mineral processing practices;

- a. reclaim degraded land and restore impacted water bodies; and
- b. coordinate activities related to alternative livelihoods for the youth, especially illegal miners in the various mining communities.

It is extremely important to note that the IMCIM's activities centered on Small Scale and Artisanal Gold Mining. This task was performed to near perfection. At the time of the inauguration of the Committee the problem of mining in forest reserves and its attendant destruction of forests, cocoa farms, water bodies, farm lands as well as harassment of villagers in bordering communities by armed mining guards, including soldiers were not on the radar screen. As will be mentioned later in this write-up, the major challenges that we had in the mining communities occurred in 2018 when the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Lands itself decided to give out almost all the forest reserves in this country for mining activities.

This was reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (see Cabinet letter on page 4). Despite the fact that Cabinet directed the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources *"to suspend the issuance of all new licences/permits by the Forestry Commission".....* and also to *"suspend the licences already issued for operation in forty-seven (47) forests reserves"*, the directives were ignored and the destruction continued.

Worse still, soldiers had officially been withdrawn from mining sites but in many areas regular Ghana Army personnel were seen providing security at illegal mining sites. What saddened me most was when Mr. Gabby Asare Otchere Darko called to defend a company that was actively destroying the environment, especially the forests and River Offin in the Apaprama and Kobre Forests.



In case of reply the  
number and date of the  
letter should be given

Ref No: OPCA/2/045119

Forwarded to:



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
P.O. BOX 1627  
ACCRA  
TEL: 6622-201200/2

4<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**SUSPENSION OF PROSPECTING LICENSES FOR MINING COMPANIES  
IN FORTY-SEVEN (47) FOREST RESERVES**

Cabinet at its Forty-ninth meeting held on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 received an update from the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining, on the work of the Committee.

2. Cabinet took note of the lack of coordination amongst the relevant agencies in the mining and forestry sub-sectors resulting in some entities exploiting the situation to acquire prospecting licences without compliance with due process.

3. Consequently, Cabinet directed the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources to suspend the issuance of all new licences/permits by the Forestry and Minerals Commissions for minerals prospecting.

4. Cabinet further directed the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources to suspend the licences already issued for operation in **forty-seven (47) forest reserves as per the attached list**, and to submit a report on Environmental Impact Assessment by the Environmental Protection Agency for the said forest reserves. The report should be submitted at the Fifty-first Cabinet Meeting scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

5. I should be grateful if you could take requisite action on the decision by Cabinet.

MERCY DENSU-KARIKARI  
SECRETARY TO THE CABINET

THE HON. MINISTER FOR LANDS  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Cc: Chief of Staff  
Secretary to the President  
Secretary to the Vice President  
Hon. Minister for Environment,  
Science, Technology & Innovation ✓

To coordinate the affairs of the IMCIM, a Secretariat was commissioned on December 28, 2017.

The members of the Committee are made up of Ministers of the following Ministries:

1. Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) - Chairperson to the Committee
2. Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR)
3. Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD)
4. Chieftaincy & Religious Affairs
5. Regional Re-Organisation and Development
6. Monitoring and Evaluation
7. Water and Sanitation
8. Interior
9. Defense
10. Information

Mr. Charles Bissue, a Presidential Staffer was appointed Secretary to the Committee.

The Committee was supported by the Minister for National Security, the National Security Advisor and the Chief of Staff.

A moratorium was put in place on April 1, 2017 to suspend artisanal and small-scale mining operations throughout the Country for a period of six months and was further extended for nine months. To enforce the ban, Operation Vanguard made up of four hundred (400) men drawn from the military and police service, was launched on July 31, 2017 and deployed to mining areas mainly in the Eastern, Central, Ashanti and Western Regions.

#### **Vetting and training of mining companies**

The Minerals Commission presented about 5000 mining companies for vetting. The vetting exercise was led by the IMCIM and supported by chiefs, stakeholder agencies and institutions such as the Minerals Commission, Forestry Commission, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Water Resources Commission (WRC), Ghana National Small Scale Miners Association (GNSSMA) and the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa (UMaT).

The Vetting exercise was advertised in the national and private newspapers, radio and television stations as well as on social media for the purpose of transparency. The advert included details of the vetting requirements and any information that would facilitate the smooth running of the vetting exercise.

The list of documents that were inspected during the vetting exercise included but not limited to:

1. mining licences, environmental and operating permits;
2. Tax Identification Number ('TIN'); and
3. Company registration details.

If licence/permit expired prior to the ban, it was verified to ascertain whether renewal application has been made.

Out of the 5,000 companies written to 1,350 of them appeared for the vetting. Field Mapping and Verification of Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Concessions were carried out. The boundaries of all artisanal and small-scale mining concessions were set-out and mapped using GLOBAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM (GNSS) and drone technology to verify their existence and accuracy of location and further provide a baseline for all artisanal and small-scale mining concessions.

The 1,350 individuals and companies, who were successfully vetted and verified were subsequently registered as artisanal and small-scale mining companies and certified to resume their businesses.

Identification cards (ID cards) were issued to vetted artisanal and small-scale mining companies and entities. Information embedded in the digital ID cards included the Ghana Post Code and licence validity information etc.

Signpost were erected at the concessions of the successfully vetted artisanal and small-scale mining companies and entities to clearly indicate ownership, size of concession and Ghana Post GPS address.

Details of successfully vetted small-scale miners that were allowed to commence mining operations were published in the national and private newspapers, radio and television stations and on the IMCIM's official webpage. The regularisation of artisanal mining was therefore achieved.

Training of small-scale miners was an important aspect of the work of IMCIM. As at the end of August 2018, 4,000 small-scale miners had been trained in sustainable mining and minerals

processing practices at the University of Mines and Technology. All expenses were borne by the Government. The training of miners in sustainable mining was a resounding success.

The IMCIM embarked on extensive public education on the dangers and effects of illegal mining. Also, the IMCIM has devised extensive and intrusive monitoring mechanisms to make sure that after the ban was lifted miners would not go back to the bad old ways to destroy the environment.

These measures included regular visits to mining concessions by inspectors, use of satellite images and drones to monitor mining activities and integration of activities of regulatory agencies such as the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs), Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Water Resources Commission and Forestry Commission, through the use of computer software application, the ***GalamSTOP***.

### **Alternative Livelihood Projects**

Alternative livelihood projects started and placed under the supervision of the Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and Minerals Commission. The MLGRD through the Department of Community Development continues to implement Alternative Livelihood Programme in 15 selected Districts in 5 regions, adversely affected by illegal mining. The MLGRD initially carried out extensive research on the alternative livelihood needs of these districts and identified the potentials for each district that could be replicated in other districts in the country that are not even affected by illegal mining directly. There were stakeholder engagements in all 15 Districts from December 2017 to February 2018. The stakeholders included MMDCEs, District Coordinating Directors, members of the DCIMs, Traditional Authorities, Mining Companies, Mining Associations, Assembly members, community members, and people engaged in illegal mining, youth and women's groups.

The field visit/stakeholder engagements included:

- Dialogues with key stakeholders on galamsey and other possible livelihood activities;
- Identification and engagement with key persons engaged in illegal mining at different levels;



- Documentation of key socio-economic activities in the districts and communities;
- Identification potential institutions *i.e.* Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions for the training;
- Identification of potential areas of alternative livelihood activities that can be offered in each identified district;

Activities undertaken after Stakeholder consultations included:

1. District and community level assessment report completed and submitted (March, 2018);
2. 4,442 applications received from potential beneficiaries (July 4, 2018);
3. Heads of Community Development Vocational and Technical Institutions trained to prepare and receive trainees in the Institutions (July 25-28, 2018);
4. Vetting of the applications (July 3-6, 2018);
5. Field visits to shortlist potential trainees (July 8-13, 2018); and Start of training (July 30, 2018).

The Minerals Commission continued its oil palm plantation project in 5 communities (Nsuta-Mbease, Huni-Valley, Himan, Kokoase/Bogoso, Awudua) in the Prestea Huni-Valley District of the Western Region.

### **GalamStop**

GalamStop is NOT a task force. It is software, indeed a computer web APP. **GalamSTOP®** is a system comprising a web and mobile applications with embedded GPS software which helps facilitate the processes involved in the application and renewal of mining licenses, periodic field reporting and keeping up to date every changing information of registered mining companies and mining concessions.

The system is in five components:

- a. A web application with full Geographic Information System (GIS) Server capabilities
- b. An android application with integrated custom GPS software
- c. A reporting Dashboard
- d. A data management system
- e. An online application and payment system



This system came to eliminate all the time-consuming and manual operational processes and provides real-time updates on mining company information and license application/acquisition processes through the use of combined web-based technologies.

GalamSTOP® manages the full lifecycle of a mining right, from application through approval, licensing, renewals and finally expiration. It has a compliance module that tracks all payments made, payments outstanding, royalties, production reports, and contract terms to ensure compliance of license holders. All license and payment data can be viewed online by relevant stakeholders, and can also be exported into Microsoft word, Excel, SPSS and PDF for further analysis.

Management and other stakeholders also have specially designed executive analytical dashboard which analyses data and present the data in a visualized form to suit their interest and requirements.

GalamSTOP® connects to all operational districts of all agencies involved in the mining sector, to ensure that most activities are decentralized. This is made possible by a specially developed android application which runs on tablets and other handheld-devices remotely connected to it.

This feature also allows field monitoring by using the device's GPS and compass, navigating to license areas and fill in weekly and monthly reports.

GalamSTOP® integrates with existing platforms from other agencies therefore making data synchronization seamless. This integration also helps users of GalamSTOP® to see the status of permits applied for by companies and individuals from other agencies like EPA, Water Resources Commission and Forestry Commission.

GalamStop is a powerful tool to strengthen the Regulatory Agencies. **Unfortunately, the Forestry Commission refused to use it and the Minerals Commission approached it half-heartedly.** It still remains an important tool for anyone who wants to achieve lasting results in managing the small scale mining sector.



Although it was worrying, I was not surprised that the Forestry Commission did not migrate onto the GalamStop Platform. Mr. Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie (aka Sir John) was actively giving out timber concessions, even in forests reserves for logging. He also gave forestry entry permits to mining companies, both large and small scale, including those of foreign nationals for prospecting activities at a time when the President had put a ban on that activity. Through Charles Owusu, the Director of Operations at the Forestry Commission, Sir John had Chinese gangs doing mining on his behalf. The issue about rose wood exploitation is something that is beyond the scope of this report.

I remember that at a meeting in the conference room of the President, I told the President in the presence of Sir John that the greatest danger to the forests of Ghana was Sir John.

### **Successful fight**

It was clear to us from the beginning that the fight was not going to be easy. It would take years of hard work, education, dedication and attitudinal change to bring about the change we desire. This is not the first time Ghana is fighting the menace of illegal mining. However, for the first time the fight has been sustained and an alternative to the illegal Galamsey practice that is Community Mining had been worked out and is being implemented with great success.

Despite formidable challenges, as far as managing the small scale mining sector was concerned, the campaign by the Inter Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining has been successful. This assessment is based on the following:

1. All the small scale miners were vetted, trained and regularised and given the licences and permits to engage in their legitimate business;
2. The regulatory Agencies were strengthened;
3. Mining with impunity on water bodies and forest reserves declined;
4. More than 4000 miners received training in sustainable mining
5. The number of individuals dying in collapsed mining tunnels and pits in the few unauthorized locations left has reduced by more than 90%

Community mining programme has been well received by the population and young men and women who did not have the resources to acquire concessions and excavators and other mining inputs and therefore had to do Galamsey, have moved into community mining. Now more than 20,000 individuals are earning their incomes legitimately in the community mines in Akrofuom, Atwima Nwabiagya, Atwima Mponua, Adansi North, Amansie Central, Wassa Amenfi East and Wa East Districts.

Since the introduction of the Community Mining Programme there has not been any incidence of death due to collapse of tunnels and pits.

The alternative livelihood programme has been very successful

## **Challenges**

### **1. Most Members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee Abandoned the Committee.**

Apart from the Ministers for Sanitation and Local Government and Rural Development, all the others abandoned the Committee. To make matters worse the Chairman was personally attacked, vilified and framed for things he had not done. Such assaults came from many people, including some of the ministers who effectively left the committee.

### **2. Mining in Forests Reserves**

The decision taken in 2018 by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and its agencies to grant concessions in virtually all forest reserves to mining companies did a lot of harm. This was contrary to the directives from the President that all mining activities in forest reserves should be suspended. Almost invariably the concession owners were not indigenes and had no attachment to the local communities. They were given permits to work in the forests without any consultations with traditional rulers. I can say on authority that all forests reserves have been invaded by rich miners who have engaged Chinese in their operations.

The Chiefs and opinion leaders are most unhappy with the invasion of the forests and farm lands. I personally received a lot of complaints from the Chiefs. According to them they had kept the forests in pristine state for hundreds of years. They and their people had used the forest resources sustainably. Without any prior information to Chiefs and other traditional leaders miners enter their communities and quickly produce an official small-scale mining license from Accra, indicating the land was approved for gold extraction. The miners enter the forest and farm lands with their private security that makes sure that no one enters the mining areas. Within days cocoa farms, subsistence crops, forest, and other land-uses are cleared prior to extraction, transforming local people's food availability and income. Heavy machinery then dig and wash massive amounts of sediment, creating enormous pits.



Consequently, the poor indigenes are unable to harvest even “woma” from the forest to pound their fufu. People engaged in cane basket weaving are denied of the climbing twigs and ropes needed for their trade. Game hunters were equally unhappy. In some cases matter are made worse because of pollution of local sources of drinking water and the drowning of people, especially children in abandoned mine pits.

To make matters worse, almost all the Ghanaian concession owners sold part of their concessions to Chinese nationals who invaded the forests with heavy machinery and mined gold and in the process degraded the forest, farm lands and in some cases destroyed cocoa farms without any compensation to traditional land owners. The Paramount Chief of Manso Nkwanta complained bitterly about the degradation of their forests and farm lands.

In such mining communities the NPP may perform poorly not because miners were unhappy but because the indigenes, who are many times more than the miners, are against the authorities in Accra for denying them access to their forests.

### **3. Unwholesome behavior of some MP and Government appointees**

It is on record that the activities of some senior members of the NPP accounted for the anger at community levels. Hon. Joseph Albert Quarm, the former MP for Manso Nkwanta exemplifies such individuals. This is a Member of Parliament for the Manso Nkwanta Constituency in the Ashanti Region and at the same time member of the board of the Minerals Commission. He used his position as a member of the Minerals Commission to acquire several dozens of large scale concessions in his district, ostensibly for community mining purposes. He ended up selling these concessions to private individuals, including party member for two hundred thousand Cedis per concession. This infuriated the party in the constituency so during the 2020 primaries to select a candidate the electorate voted against Hon. Quarm, the sitting MP, who was more resourced than other candidates. Although there were allegations that he “camped” delegates and attempted to bribe them, he lost to a lesser known individual who did not have any financial muscle.

### **4. Mining by Party Officials and Government Appointees**

Throughout our struggle with illegalities in the small scale mining sector, what baffled me was the total disregard of the President’s commitment to protect the environment. I can state without any equivocation that many party officials from National to the unit committee level had their friends, PAs, agents, relatives, financiers or relatives engaged in illegal mining. Most of them engaged

Chinese working for them. I am not referring to party people who had their legitimate concession and were mining sustainably as they were instructed to do. There are appointees in the Jubilee House that are doing or supporting illegal mining or interfering with the fight against the menace. Examples are Laud Commey, Charles Nii Teiko, and Frank Asiedu Bekoe (Protozoa)

#### **5. Established miners who are members or sympathisers of the NDC**

It is well known in the small scale mining circles that NDC members and sympathisers were well established in small scale mining, especially in the Western Region. They acquired several concessions in mineral-rich areas during the long periods of NDC reign. They had the money and other resources to not only sponsor NDC candidates but also support independent candidates in the supposedly strongholds of the NPP. This is what happened in Ewea Dwirah and Tarkwa constituencies.

In the Wassa East District, a former NDC Deputy Minister who is also MP for the Wassa East constituency has been actively mining in the Subri forest for years.

When NPP party officials complained and the army component of Operation Vanguard was withdrawn almost two years to the 2020 elections, the NDC was given an advantage in terms of access to resources from mining. This is because there are far more NDC people engaged in illegal mining than NPP members in the region

#### **6. Activities of Operation Vanguard**

Operation Vanguard that consisted of men from the army and police service was charged with controlling illegal activities at the mining centres.

When the soldiers were withdrawn from Operation Vanguard on **16<sup>th</sup> March 2019** due to complaints by small scale miners, mainly from the NPP stock, the police detachment took over the entire operation Vanguard. That is when things deteriorated. There were consistent reports that the police developed the habit of going round the mining sites extorting monies from miners. As can be imagined there were policemen who were NDC sympathizers and such individuals taunted the miners, telling them "we were sent by the government you voted for". Such things did not go down well with NPP sympathisers and voters.

## **7. Community Mining**

Community mining was conceptualized by the Inter Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM). As indicated earlier, the IMCIM had vetted and given licences to close to two thousand small scale miners to operate legally and sustainably.

The community mining programme was rolled out and the President himself commissioned the first site in the Wassa Ammenfi District. The community mining project was well subscribed and it became very popular. However, the Ministry of Lands, especially after the appointment of Hon. Kwaku Asomah-Cheremeh, became hostile and antagonistic to the programme. Some elements in the Minerals Commission, including Mr. S.K. Boafo, the Chairman of the Minerals Commission Board supported the position of the Ministry of Lands. Apparently, they were angry that the IMCIM was at the forefront in matters concerning small scale mining, which they said were among the functions of the Minerals Commission. The effect of this antagonism was that several community mining sites that the IMCIM had planned and were ready to be commissioned were effectively sabotaged and blocked by the Minerals Commission and the Lands Minister; typical examples were some community mining sites in Asante Akim area. A day before the commissioning of the sites by the IMCIM, Mr. S.K. Boafo called the MCE of Asante Akim Central to block the event. He warned the MCE not to allow the IMCIM to do the commissioning, otherwise she might lose her job. The matter was brought to the attention of the Chief of Staff at the office of the President. The Chief of Staff advised that we work together but that advice was not heeded by the Lands Ministry and the Minerals Commission.

The IMCIM, from my estimation did a very good job. I admit that they were serious challenges that undermined the good work that was done. As Chairman of the Committee, I can state with all confidence that I took the work seriously and performed all my duties without any selfish motives or the prospect of gaining from the work of the committee.

## **8. Ban on Importation of Excavators for Small Scale Mining**

In the 3rd quarter of 2018 the Government directed that there should be a ban on the importation of excavators for small scale mining. The Ministry of transport was responsible for making sure that the ban was respected. Subsequent events indicated that the ban was not respected and presently new excavators are found at illegal mining sites.



#### **9. Ban on manufacture, transportation and use of dredging equipment (popularly known as Chang Fang)**

One of the major illegal activities that were banned is dredging of the river bed and banks. A typical dredging equipment set consists of a floating platform on which are mounted suction pumps driven by a *chang fang* engine. In Ghana these pieces of equipment have no other function apart from being used on water bodies to dredge. Directives were given to the police to impound these pieces of equipment but again nothing happened and dredging is still going on.

#### **10. So-called big men above**

##### **Charles Owusu, Director of Operation of Forestry Commission**

On Monday 11th January 2021, the task force entered a concession at a location called *Bepotenten* we had been monitoring for some time. Residents in the area complained about harassment by Chinese miners. The damage to the forest reserve was unimaginable. Big economic trees had been felled and dumped into muddy water bodies to rot. Huge pits were scattered over dozens of acres of land. Nearby cocoa farms had been destroyed. Seven excavators were seized. As usual so-called big men started calling. First was Mr. Charles Owusu, who claimed ownership of the concession and of the excavators. This individual happens to be the Operations Manager of the Forestry Commission and there he was mining in a forest reserve without any permit and destroying forests, farm lands, water bodies and indeed the entire biodiversity. Not long after Charles Owusu made his call Frank Asiedu Bekoe, popularly known as Protozoa of the Office of the Chief of Staff, also called the task force and asked for the release of the excavators. You can be sure that the Chief of Staff knew nothing about it.

##### **Donald Entsuah**

Many Ghanaians will remember the name C&J Aleska, a mining company co-owned by Donald Entsuah and a Canadian National called Simon Ayman that caused a lot of destruction in the town then known as Denkyira Obuasi, near Diaso. During the last NDC regime several mining companies signed MOUs with the Ghana Army that regulated the supply of security services to the mining companies. At one point the soldiers at the site of C&J Aleska were under the command

of Captain Mahama. This fine army man was killed whilst providing security for Donald Entsuaah and his C&J Aleska.

When NPP took over in 2017, all MOUs were cancelled and C&J Aleska hired armed macho men to provide security. Residents in the communities bordering the forest reserves complained that they could not enter the forests around to *"cut woma to pound their fufu with"*. They could not go through the forest to their farms. They were beaten by Chinese who had acquired concessions from C&J Aleska. There were credible reports that on many occasions Chinese miners slapped Ghanaians, including women and children, with the broad side of machetes.

The IMCIM organized its task force and conducted a complex operation to dislodge Donald Entsuaah and his C&J Aleska from Diaso forest. The jubilation in the communities around the concessions was ecstatic. Naturally, Donald Entsuaah and his friend were not happy with what the IMCIM did.

I, in particular, came under severe attack. A fierce attacker was Mr. Kweku Baako, a journalist who personally called me to inform me that the managers of C&J were his friends. Mr. Kweku Baako published unsavoury things about me at the time.

Having been dislodged from Diaso Mr. Donald Entsuaah formed another mining company called Imperial Heritage and managed to get concessions in the Kobro and Apaprama forests in Amansie Central District from the Forestry Commission.

Using satellite imagery we have followed the activities of Imperial Heritage over the years till date. The damage caused in the forest is many times greater than what happened in Diaso.

We were ready to dislodge Imperial Heritage from Kobro forest when Mr. Gabby Asare Otchere-Darko called to inform me that he was the lawyer for Heritage Imperial Limited, a company that was destroying the Kobro and Apaprama Forest Reserves and in the process had also polluted and diverted the course of the River Offin, as can be seen in the satellite images below. I informed the President about the behavior of Mr. Gabby Asare Otchere Darko and he promised to deal with it.



DECEMBER 2017



JUNE 2018



*Apaprama forest reserve is outlined and the River Offin is seen running through it. The Damage started soon after NPP came to power and the progression of the damage to the forest and river can be seen in all the images.*





DECEMBER 2018



JUNE 2019

A



DECEMBER 2019



JUNE 2020

On Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the task force visited the Kobro forest and witnessed the utter devastation of the once pristine environment. They were confronted by a dozen soldiers from 2.BN providing security for the illegal activity.

Meanwhile, the following two articles depict how Mr. Kweku Baako's New Crusading Guide Newspaper reported on the Mining Activities in the Kobro Forest; a lot of lies and misrepresentations.

### **Frimpong Boateng's 'Mafia Style' Lands Gov't In Big Trouble**

19-Dec-2018



Prof. Kwabena Frimpong Boateng, the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, has embarked on a self-seeking agenda to kill a legitimate large-scale mining company just to settle personal scores.

The Minister, also the Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Illegal Mining, on December 6, 2018 ordered for the concession of Heritage Imperial Company Ltd, located in the Kobro Forest (Apraprama), in the Ashanti Region to be raided and properties seized. This action



had the active support of the secretary of the IMCIM, Mr. Charles Bissue, a presidential staffer and some boys known to be associated with the Minister.

The raid; carried out by the IMCIM Taskforce and made away with 40 excavators, 7 Toyota Hilux pick-up vehicles, excavator spare parts and diesel worth over 20million US Dollars, was executed without the knowledge of Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources as well as Forestry Commission.

This was after the Minister, who deliberately labelled the legitimate large-scale mining company as a small-scale mining company operating illegally. He consciously ignored facts in the documents he was furnished with from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Forestry Commission among others which legitimises the operations of Heritage Imperial Company Ltd and grants the company the status of a legitimate large-scale mining company.

The Management of the mining company has, however, decided to seek redress in court after a number of fruitless effort to have the Minister or any of his members to deliberate on the status and operations of the company on any platform.

The company arrived at this decision when it discovered that several of the mining equipment seized by the inter-ministerial taskforce are being sold out (auctioned) secretly at very cheap cost to close business partners, friends and families without approval by the government or the court. The proceeds from the sales, according to the company, are shared among themselves, the Environment Minister and his cohorts.

Some of these equipment which have been already been sold out have been tracked and found in Tamale, the Northern Region of Ghana and other parts of the country.

This newspaper had been informed that some Ministers and top government officials who are familiar with the development have expressed deep worry and cautioned Prof Frimpong Boateng of possible judgement debt to be incurred by government which will embarrass the Akufo-Addo led government.

These Ministers and top government officials wonder why the Inter-Ministerial Committee will rather chase legitimate business entities while illegal companies are allowed to operate without any attacking.

The company also noted that it will publish names of certain powerful officials within government who are behind this cynical agenda to destroy their company.

The Directors of the mining firm have also hinted that they would expose some corrupt practices perpetuated by some government appointees in the mining sector in the blind side of the appointing authorities.

When Prof Frimpong Boateng was reached for a comment he could not answer his phone. Text messengers were sent to him to respond to the allegation but as at press time he still had not responded.

Source: The New Crusading Guide

## Frimpong Boateng Goes On Rampage

By [admin](#) [New Crusading Guide](#)

Posted on December 19, 2018



### **...Destroys Large Scale Mining Company Equipment Worth Millions Of Dollars, Government To Be Dragged To Court**

A Large-scale Mining Company, Heritage Mining Company Ltd, has had its equipment worth millions of dollars vandalized, destroyed and others seized under the explicit instructions of Prof. Kwabena Frimpong Boateng, the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation.

The Environment Minister created the impression that the company did not have a valid license to operate while the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources has licensed and cleared them to legally operate.

Heritage Imperial Company Ltd, the legitimate large-scale mining firm at Kobro Forest (Apraprama) in the Ashanti Region had its concession raided and properties seized on December 6, 2018 by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM) taskforce.

Prof Frimpong Boateng, also the Chairman of the IMCIM who ordered the raid, was, according to our investigation, furnished with documents from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and Forestry Commission among others, validating Heritage Imperial Company Ltd.'s operations and their status as a legitimate Large-scale Mining Company.

This was when Prof Frimpong deliberately labelled the company as a small-scale mining company and operating illegally. He, however, without the knowledge of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and Forestry Commission and proper procedure, deliberately ignored the facts and went ahead with the raid and seizure of the equipment in his quest to settle his personal scores with the company.

The raid which was actively supported by Mr. Charles Bissie – the secretary to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining and a presidential staffer made away with 40 excavators, 7 Toyota Hilux pick-up vehicles, excavator spare parts and diesel worth over 20million US Dollars.

The company, has however, decided to seek redress in court after fruitlessly inviting the Environment Minister or any of his team members on any platform for clarification on whether or not the company has the requisite permit to operate.

The Management of the company also added that it will publicise names of certain powerful officials within the Akuffo-Addo government who are behind this cynical agenda to destroy their company. They would also go further to expose some corrupt practices being perpetuated by some government appointees in the mining sector on the blind side of the appointing authorities. This paper is however, reliably informed that some Ministers and top government officials familiar with the situation have expressed deep worry about the development and even cautioned Prof Frimpong Boateng of possible judgment debt to be incurred by government via his actions.

They wondered why the IMCIM would rather attack a legitimate entity, turning blind eyes and deaf ears to the operations of the illegal companies as it is an embarrassment to the Akuffo-Addo led government.

The company assumed this position after discovering that several of the mining equipment seized by the inter-ministerial taskforce were being sold out (auctioned) secretly to close business partners, friends and families at very cheap cost without approval by the government or the court.

They afterwards share the proceeds from the sales among themselves. The company claimed that some of the equipment already sold were tracked and discovered in Tamale, in the Northern Region and other parts of the country.



### **Decision to prosecute Chinese in Ghana**

From 2017 to early 2019 all Chinese nationals, who were found to have engaged in illegal mining were arrested and immediately deported. This line of action led to the deportation of scores of Chinese. The policy was so effective that hundreds of Chinese nationals fled to other West African countries. All the Chinese in Wassa Akropong, a town in the Wassa East District of the Western Region were either deported or fled. In mid-2019, the President gave the directive that all foreigners, including Chinese, who were arrested should face the Ghanaian justice system. Unfortunately, the law enforcement agencies could not ensure the successful implementation of that directive. Chinese, who were apprehended doing illegal mining were taken to court, granted bail and went straight to their mining sites to continue their illegalities. With time the Chinese, who fled came back and Ghana is, again, hosting hundreds, if not thousands, of illegal Chinese miners.

### **Kojo Oppong Nkrumah**

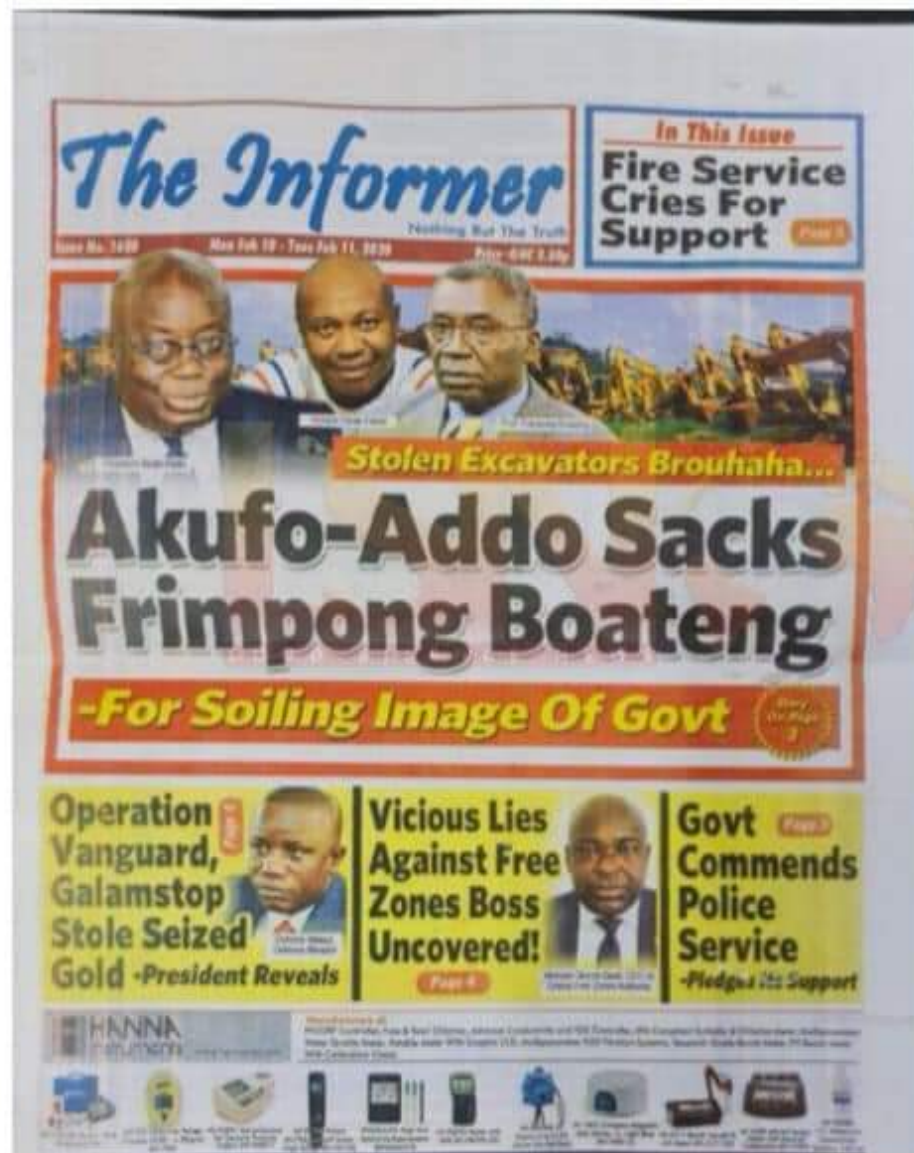
On Saturday the 8th of February 2020, Mr. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, the Minister for information assembled a group of journalists from both NDC and NPP affiliated media house at the Forest Hotel in Dodowa to discuss a strategy to bring me Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng down. Whilst they were there a journalist from among the group called a friend of mine, also a journalist, and informed him about the plot that was being hatched. He further informed my friend to watch out for headlines in some newspapers in the days following the meeting.

On Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the INFORMER Newspaper, whose Editor was at the meeting had the Banner Headline on its front page as reproduced below:

As if that was not enough on Thursday, 13th February 2020 at the 71st Cabinet Meeting, Mr. Oppong Nkrumah in his regular report to Cabinet talked about news that was trending in the week. The first thing he mentioned was Frimpong-Boateng and 500 missing excavators.

It must be noted that Mr. Oppong Nkrumah, as Minister for Information, was a member of the IMCIM and he never called me to find out what I knew about "missing excavators" but he found it worthwhile to magnify it in press and also present the falsehood before Cabinet for reasons best known to him and his co-conspirators. If Kojo Oppong Nkrumah and the likes of him have presidential ambitions they should pursue it on merit and not attempt to destroy a hard working patriot, whose only ambition is work to achieve a Ghana Beyond Aid.

After the 2020 general election, Opong Nkrumah on many occasions attributed the below expectation performance of the NPP to the Government's management of the "banking crisis and the galamsey fight". The fact is that those who did not vote for the NPP in the galamsey areas were not the miners but rather the hundreds of thousands of people living in the communities bordering the forests reserves, who were being harassed by mining companies such as Heritage Imperial.



### **Senior Minister Yaw Osafo Maafo**

The Senior Minister also engaged in something that was horrible. In October 2019, one Mr. Seth Mantey, a journalist working with Peace FM, was apprehended because of unlawful excavator sales. In the course of the investigations, Mr. Mantey confessed that he was contracted by Mr. John Ofori-Atta, then National Security Coordinator for the Central Region and Mr. Ekow Ewusi to use his Bank Account at the National Investment Bank for what effectively was money laundering. Effectively, the proceeds from the excavator sales were lodged in Seth Mantey's bank account. The moneys lodged were later cashed and given to Mr. John Ofori Atta, who in turn gave some of the money to Ekow Ewusi. Seth Mantey's handwritten statement to the police is seen on pages 27 and 28.

The Senior Minister sent someone to me for a copy of Seth Mantey's statement as well as a copy of the bank transactions as recorded in Seth Mantey's bank statement from the National Investment Bank.

After going through the documents the Senior Minister is reported to have remarked that Ekow Ewusi is his boy and would not do such a thing. However, if there was a bad person it would be Prof. Frimpong-Boateng. The Senior Minister then encouraged his emissary and his friends to organise themselves, gang up and fight Frimpong-Boateng.

The emissary swore to me that what he told me was true. His love for the NPP and his devotion to duty as a government appointee gave me reason to believe that he was not lying to me.

My kneejerk reaction was to confront the Senior Minister but I was so annoyed that I rather decided to inform the President, hoping that he would organize a meeting so the three of us could discuss it. I informed the President and he promised to deal with it himself. I never had any feedback.



## STATEMENT OF SETH MANTAY

My name is Seth Mantay, a reporter with Peace FM. I worked with the Central Regional Security Coordinator, John Ofori Atta A.K.A. Commodo as his errand boy and part of the team with Galan Stop. In the course of the operation, I became the contact boy for miners whose excavators has been seized. Under the direction of Mr. Ofori Atta, the miners pay between GH¢ 50,000 to GH¢ 55,000.00 to my <sup>at NIB</sup> accounts to influence the team for their seized excavators to be released. I then inform the team and ~~the money is released~~ about the payment of the monies, into my account, which I then withdraw and give to Mr. Ofori Atta, who then give some to Mr. Elkow Ewudzie of the Inter-Ministerial Committee. ~~As~~ I can estimate so far we have released closed to between 27 to 30 excavators under cover, but the money paid to my accounts have all been withdrawn and given to Mr. Ofori Atta A.K.A. n.

Inter ministerial Committee. The excavators were seized from mining sites at ~~Obuasi~~, Tarkwa, ~~Diafo~~ and centralised at Obuasi, Tarkwa and Diafo. Our activities is mainly with Galam stop and the leaders for this Cartel are Mr. Ofori Atta and Elkon Ewubzi, who were handed all the monies realized from the released excavators. Sgt = 16/10/2019

Phone Nos:

Time: 3.36

Mr. Ofori Atta — 0244801935

Seth Mantey — 0240057208.

Elkon Ewubzi —

ADDITIONAL INFO:

I can cite several other examples where members of Government and government appointees as well as party people, including a "party mother" in Kumasi who on a number of occasions met with people in hotels in Kumasi to plot my destruction.

I was the last man standing to carry out what I thought to be the wishes of the President. In the end I was unappreciated, backstabbed and betrayed. I can live with these things because I know in heart that I did my work well. **The battle is still the Lord's.**

### **Eastern Region**

We are all aware of the pollution of the River Birim in the Eastern Region. The Eastern Region is the most difficult area to control illegal mining activity. It appears the miners are determined to embarrass the President and Osagyefuo, the Okyenhene, a well-known potent environmentalist. The NPP National Women's Organizer has been a miner for over 30 years, so also the Eastern Regional Chairman of the NPP. I am not by this statement attributing any illegal activity to these individuals but it is a fact that they are unable to rein in the hundreds of party officials and members who degrade the land and pollute the water bodies.

About two years ago the attention of the IMCIM's task force was drawn to a site that had been degraded and the tailings from there were directed in the Birim River near Anyinam. The task force impounded two excavators and deposited them at the police station in Anyinam. Frantic telephone calls were received from Capt. Kodah of the Presidential security detail, who asked for the excavators to be released. He informed the task force that the owner of the concession, Hon. George Kwame Aboagye, the MP for Asene Akroso Manso is his brother.

The impunity in the Eastern Region is exemplified by near unbelievable activity in Kyebi. I had a telephone call from Mr. Eric Antwi of the Office of the President and he narrated that the youth organizer of the NPP in Kyebi was excavating for gold in a field close to the house of H.E. the President of the Republic. When we checked it was true. Indeed part of the garden of the President had been affected. Apparently, the President did not know about this. We quickly dispatched a bulldozer and an excavator to the area to reclaim the land and vegetate it. I need not say that nothing happened to the local youth organizer who caused the damage.



### **Missing/Stolen Excavators?**

About two years ago I was invited for a studio interview on JOY FM Morning Show hosted by Kojo Yankson. At the tail end of that interview someone called in to find out about 500 excavators that were seized by Hon. John Peter Amewu when he was Minister for Lands and Natural Resources. The caller claimed that the excavators were missing. Nothing I said would change the mind of the interviewer, and the press, from that moment, propagated that the IMCIM could not account for 500 excavators.

Hon. Amewu at his vetting recently disclosed that he did not seize excavators, not even one.

The excavators in the custody of the IMCIM were those that were seized by Operation Vanguard (OV). It is important to note that OV seized the excavators at mining sites in the bush. The team did not have the machinery, especially low-bed trucks to carry the excavators to the District Capitals for safe keeping either by the police or the Municipal/District Chief Executives. To make the evacuation of the excavators effective a task force was formed to carry out that task. That is how Ekow Ewusi came into the picture. He was brought in by Charles Bissue, the Secretary of the Committee. Ekow Ewusi was introduced as a hard working auctioneer, who was also the Vice Chairman of the NPP in the Central Region. I did not know him and had not even heard the name before but I trusted the judgement of Mr. Bissue.

In the course of time we received reports that Ekow Ewusi and his assistant, Kojo Addo, who was the chairman of the Agona East Constituency of the NPP were extorting monies from miners and also selling excavators. No evidence was provided so I could not take any action against Ekow, a party official who was working on a government sanctioned project.

The arrest of Seth Mantey and his confession of guilt and the involvement of Ekow Ewusi in the sale of an undisclosed number of excavators gave me enough reason to have Ekow Ewusi arrested.

So far about two hundred excavators were retrieved from the field. As stipulated by law, all the seized excavators are in the custody of the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources. Details can be seen from the table below.

## EXCAVATORS IN CUSTODY OF MINISTRY OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Summary Report	
IMCIM	209

IMCIM (Yards)	
Obuasi	29
Tarkwa	9
Aviation (Adenta)	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>

Number of Excavators Released	
Release letters available	20
KMA excavators	3
Nadmo Coordinator Ashanti	1
Akrofuom Community Mining	2
White Volta & Tributaries	4
CAITEC Court Order	9
AMA	1
Other Court orders	4

Unaccounted for: Four (4) excavators

### The Way Forward

The way forward in the fight against illegal mining may be discussed under three major topics.

#### 1. Respecting the Pronouncements and wishes of the President

The major pronouncement made by the President, when he took office in January 2017 that touched the hearts and rekindled the enthusiasm of many Ghanaians, including me, was about his preparedness to put his presidency on the line to fight the menace of illegal mining.

I took this statement literally and seriously and I was determined to do everything I could to protect the environment and biodiversity.

I was expecting people such as Mr. Gabby Asare Otchere Darko, Captain Kodah and others like them, who knew the President better and certainly had his interest and success at heart, to support the fight against illegal mining.

I was thus horrified to receive a telephone call from Mr. Otchere Darko telling me he was the legal advisor to Mr. Donald Entsuaah and his Imperial Heritage Mining Company and that the company should be allowed to work in the Kopro and Apaprama Forest Reserves.

It was this same Donald Entsuaah and his friend Simon Ayman, a Canadian national, whose company C&J Aleska caused havoc in the Diaso forest. These two gentlemen were close allies of the Mahamas and soldiers from the Ghana Army gave them protection. Captain Mahama died in the course of his duty protecting Donald Entsuaah's interests.

The IMCIM was able to dislodge E&J Aleska from Diaso. Shortly thereafter Donald Entsuaah established Imperial Heritage Mining Company and was given a prospecting licence to work in the Kopro and Apaprama forests in Awasie Central. Here again he managed to get military protection contrary to all directives from government. Worse still, an important NPP member also provided legal advice.

**Going forward, if there will ever be such an undertaking, I expect the President's pronouncement and wishes to be respected and supported, especially by those close to him.**

## **2. Respecting Directives from President and Cabinet**

For four years there were directives from the President and his Cabinet that were designed to help fight illegal mining. These directives were to be respected and carried out by Ministries and some agencies.

### **Ban on importation of excavators**

The destruction that excavators can cause in the environment is well known. Technically, heavy equipment such as bulldozers and excavators are not permitted in small scale mining. As indicated earlier, In the 3rd quarter of 2018 the Government directed that there should be a ban on the importation of excavators for small scale mining. The Ministry of Transport was responsible for making sure that the ban was respected. Subsequent events indicated that the ban was not respected and presently new excavators are found at illegal mining sites.

### **Ban on manufacture, transportation and use of dredging equipment (popularly known as Chang Fang)**

In Ghana dredging equipment, popularly known among small scale miners as Chang Fang, have no other function apart from being used on water bodies to dredge. Directives were given to the police to impound these pieces of equipment but again nothing happened and dredging is still going on.

### **Sanctioning of government appointees such as Regional Ministers, MMDCEs**

There were directives to sanction government appointees engaged in illegal mining. It is needless to say that nothing happened.



### **3. Active measures to Stop Illegal Mining**

All the measures taken by the IMCIM are there to serve as a guide. These range from the application of the GalamStop software to the use of drones and satellite imaging and onsite monitoring and many more. Curtailing the practice of dredging in the water bodies is a good example of the excellent performance of the IMCIM.

#### **Dredging in the Rivers**

Here I wish to emphasise the effective way we adopted in fighting dredging on the water bodies. The men from Operation Vanguard had the habit of burning the engines powering the dredging equipment. Other more important and more expensive equipment such as the floating platforms were left on the water bodies. It took less than a day for the miners to get new engines and get back to business.

The IMCIM partnered with the task force of the Small Scale Miners Association, who formed a security company called ENVIRONMENTAL WARRIORS GH. LTD and trained its members to become experienced divers.

In this partnership IMCIM provided speed boats and landing sites and the private security company provided other logistics that enabled all the equipment used in dredging to be towed away from the mining sites. The illegal miners thus lost everything and that helped in curtailing the illegal and dangerous practice. This partnership should be encouraged to continue.

Some pictures:



*Policemen from Operation Vanguard burning 'Chang Fang' motors*



*Dredging platform attached to the two sides of the speed boat*



*Dredging equipment at a depot far away from mining site*

In conclusion, I believe that it would take more commitment, resilience and goodwill of Ghanaians to not only preserve our rich biodiversity for present and future generations but also preventing disease and death of the vulnerable in mining communities.



**PROF. KWABENA FRIMPONG-BOATENG**

**19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021**