

An overview of Artisanal Mining in Liberia

Presented:

Abayomi B.C Grant

Environmental Protection Agency

Country profile

Country : Liberia

Capitol : Monrovia

President : Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Population : approximately 3.5 million

Land area : 37,198 sq mi (96,320 sq km)

Total area : 43,000 sq mi (111,370 sq km)

15 political subdivisions

Map of Liberia with political sub divisions and boundaries



Artisanal Gold Mining in Liberia

Small scale gold mining/ Artisanal mining is a world wide phenomenon and Liberia has been and still a part. Currently, it is estimated that there are about 30,000 – 45,000 persons who are engaged in small scale/ artisanal mining throughout the country.

- The current state of small scale/ artisanal mining is not fully understood. However, partial information coming in has indicated that there are improvement in some areas, such as reduction in mercury used and selling price, but lapses in management of the environment still remains a challenge.

Mercury and its use

Mercury has been widely used in the past to mine gold in Liberia. But in the in last few years the used of mercury have drastically reduce. This is partly due to the hike in price of the chemical and the unavailability of such chemical on the local market. Also,

the availability of cheaper technologies
(carpeting, panning and jigging respectively)
have also contributed to the reduction in the
used of mercury.

Impact of artisanal mining on the environment

Small-scale mining can be carried out as a sustainable activity, but is unfortunately mostly carried out by non-educated people with little knowledge of the environmental and health hazards related to small-scale mining as with the case of Liberia.

One obvious environmental problem is deforesting of vast areas, where the wood is used for processes related to small-scale mining. Tunneling and digging of numerous pits in unconsolidated river sediment releases large amounts of fine-grained material, which tend to clog up the rivers and increase the risk of flooding.

Rivercess County



Grand Gedeh



Sinoe county



Challenges facing artisanal/small scale mining

The sector like most sector in Liberia is face with great challenges:

Regulations

Payment of Taxes

Security implication

- *Licensing processes*
- *Security implications and hold ups*
- *Law Enforcement and role of Mining Agents*
- *Abandoned Gravel or Pit*
- *Child Labor*
- *Land reclamation*
- *Chemical applications*

- *Lack of access to Health Facilities*
- *Education and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*
- *Deplorable Roads Conditions*
- *Poor Shelter*

Promises of the PRS

- With the finalization of the Poverty Reduction strategy document. The mining sector should improve in all aspect
- A National Mineral Policy that will provide a guiding framework for decision makers in the management of Liberia's mineral resources

- . The Policy will advocate the optimal development and utilization of these resources, including iron ore, gold and diamonds, through transparent and accountable financial arrangements, the development of local infrastructure, a reduction of adverse social and environmental impacts of mining activities, and the targeting of illegal mining.

- Legal and regulatory reforms will be will included developing favorable regulations for small-scale mining and the initiation of sensitization and awareness campaigns.

Capacity Building, the Government will develop technical audit functions to enable it to verify production and payments due from mining companies under their contracts once mining activities commence. The MLME will also give special attention to making regional offices operational as soon as possible so as to enable provision of services to mining companies and artisanal miners at the regional level.