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Dist C'ttees Against Illegal Mining launched in E/R

FROM DAVID KODJO, KYEBI

The fight against illegal mining was taken a step higher yesterday when the Inter-Ministerial Committee on

Illegal Mining inaugurated District Committees Against Illegal Mining (DCIM) for nine districts in the Eastern Region.

The nine endemic illegal mining districts included East Akyem, Denkyemboor, Atiwa, Fanteakwa, Kwabebirem, Birem North and Central, Lower West Akyem and Akyemansa.

Inaugurating the committees, Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining and Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Prof Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng said

the DCIM were major players in government's strategy to effectively tackle the menace of illegal mining activities in the country.

The DCIM, among other things, he said were expected to monitor and supervise the activities of miners to reduce its harmful effects on the vegetative cover of the country.

The committees were also to tackle all illegal mining issues, train the small-scale miners on responsible and sustainable mining methods, designate small scale mining sites and manage a good relationship between small scale miners and other mineral right holders, he stated.

Each district, he said, would receive GHC10,000 seed money and a tablet to facilitate the operation of the committees.

It is estimated that about 10 per cent of the country's productive lands have been destroyed by the activity of illegal miners and would

require about \$65 billion for reclamation of the land and restoration of the vegetation.

Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Mrs. Barbara Oteng Gyasi disclosed government's intention to restructure the Minerals Commission by increasing the number of district offices from nine to twenty-five as well as creating additional satellites in all the mining districts to bring the Commission closer to the small-scale mining sector.

She said government would implement a five-year Multi-Sectoral Mining Integrated Project (MMIP), which entails law enforcement and the provision of alternative livelihood programmes for illegal miners as well as train and license them to enable them undertake the legal means of mining.

The Eastern Regional Minister, Eric Kwakye Daffour cautioned



• Mr John Peter Amewu, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources.

recalcitrant individuals who continued to flout the ban on small-scale mining, saying that government would employ all means to protect the environment.

Although the mining industry has been significant and important to the socio-economic development of the country, he said the negative effects of illegal mining was a source of worry for Ghanaians and called for concerted efforts to address it.

He therefore pledged the com-

mitment of the Regional Coordinating Council to warmly accord the committee all the necessary support in the performance of its responsibilities.

The Minister of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Kofi Dzamesi, Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Hajia Alima Mahama and Minister for Regional Organisation and Development, Dan Botwe were all present to support the inauguration.