

# Collaborate to eliminate child labour in mining

From Timothy Ngenbe, OBUASI

THE International Labour Organisation (ILO) has called for stronger collaboration among government ministries, regulatory bodies and key stakeholders to, as a matter of urgency, eliminate child labour from the mining sector.

It said the ministries of Employment and Labour Relations and Lands and Natural Resources, regulatory institutions and stakeholders in the mining industry should collaborate towards that cause.

The Coordinator of the ILO's Caring Gold Mining Project (CGMP), Mr Giovanni Soledad, who made the call, said the involvement of children in the small-scale mining sector was a threat to the future of the children and could affect sustainable national development.

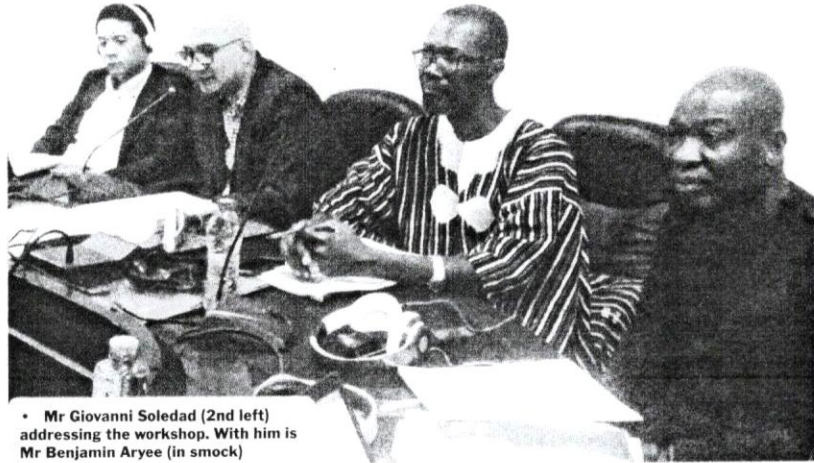
"The ILO did a study about the involvement of children in the small-scale mining sector and realised that there are a lot of children in artisanal small-scale mining (ASSM) and performing the most hazardous kinds of work.

"The number of deaths from child labour in the mining sector is high because the children are exposed to mercury and other chemicals," he said.

Mr Soledad was speaking at the opening session of a one-week international workshop on eliminating child labour in African countries in Obuasi yesterday.

## Workshop

The workshop is a collaboration between the CGMP and Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Supply in Africa (ACCELI) both projects being



• Mr Giovanni Soledad (2nd left) addressing the workshop. With him is Mr Benjamin Aryee (in smock)

implemented by the ILO in some African countries.

Participants at the workshop are drawn from Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali.

The participants from Ghana are from the ministries of Lands and Natural Resources and Labour and Social Welfare, the Minerals Commission, the Ghana National Association of Artisanal Small-scale Miners (GNASSM), representatives from metropolitan, municipal and

causes of child labour in mining find ways to address the challenge and children out of the menace.

The project was implemented in the Ashanti Region.

The ILO is also implementing the project in Mali, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire to address the challenges, with funding from the Netherlands.

The workshop in Ghana is meant to assess the impact the CGMP was having and influence the ACCEL project.

## Formalisation

Mr Soledad said eliminating child labour in the ASSM sector was a daunting accomplishment and would require the concerted effort of multiple stakeholders.

He said in order to eliminate child labour, it is pertinent that the government formalise the ASSM sector.

"Illegal miners under the ASSM operate in the shadow of self-regulation and mining regulations. This makes child labour issues. Therefore formalisation of the ASSM is critical to eliminate child labour," he stressed.

## Government's commitment

For his part, the Special Adviser on Lands and Natural Resources, Mr Benjamin Aryee, read a speech on behalf of the Asomah-Cheremeh, said the gov-

ernment has implemented the project in some district assemblies (MMDAs) in mining communities and community leaders.

## Knowledge sharing

The implementation of the ILO's CGMP was begun in Ghana in 2018 and is expected to end in March this year.

The project rallied policy makers, actors in the ASSM sector and community leaders to identify the root

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the Minister of  
in Aryee, who  
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was concerned

about the involvement of children in illegal mining and would collaborate with the ILO and other development partners to tackle the menace head on.

He said the free senior high school policy by the government was one initiative that would help address the danger in the long run.

In addition, he said, the alternative livelihood project that involved distributing oil palm seedlings to mining communities, as well as the community mining programme, would together contribute to eliminate the threat of child labour.

Mr Aryee urged all stakeholders in the mining value chain to make the campaign to eliminate child labour from the sector a priority in order to protect the future of the country.

## Fact Sheet

**The ILO estimates that as of 2017, 4.5 million people were engaged in artisanal small-scale mining across the world.**

**Additionally, an estimated 150 million others depend on the artisanal small-scale mining sector for their livelihoods.**

**Furthermore, about 80 per cent of operations in the artisanal small-scale mining sector are informal.**