

Govt will deal with galamsey decisively

By Donald Ato Dapatem & Chris
Nunoo, PARLIAMENT HOUSE

— President Akufo-Addo

THE government remains resolute in dealing with the menace of illegal mining (galamsey) despite the challenges, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has said.

Presenting the State of the Nation Address (SONA) in Parliament yesterday, he said some successes had been chalked up since the government, (backed by the Media Coalition Against Galamsey), took up the fight.

"Mr Speaker, the threat galamsey poses to the future of our country is grave and we cannot shirk our responsibilities but deal with it. I am

appealing to the media coalition not be daunted by the difficulties in the fight against galamsey," he said

NDC gave up fight

Taking a look into history, the President said the Mahama administration gave up on the fight but his administration was determined to face it head-on since the government owed it to generations yet unborn to tackle the problem and save the environment.

"When we came into office in January 2017, galamsey activities were rampant in many parts of our country. Our lands, forests and river bodies were

being systematically degraded and polluted without any care. And this had been the case for several years. Indeed, the previous government had given up the fight against galamsey. We determined that this was an intolerable situation and we owed it to generations yet unborn to tackle the problem and save our environment.

"It is obvious to all that small-scale mining which had always taken place in our communities had now been transformed into something unrecognisable in our history by the introduction of monster machinery that dig up riverbeds and turn serene streams into ugly, toxic, muddy frothy ponds," he said.

Government not against mining

President Akufo-Addo said the battle launched by his administration was not against mining and, therefore, it would be unrealistic for anyone to suggest that there should be no mining in Ghana.

Nonetheless, he said the government would not sit down unconcerned for anyone to abuse the system and create problems for the nation.

"As I have said on countless occasions, the battle we launched was not against mining, so it would be unrealistic for anyone to suggest that there should be no mining in Ghana. The Almighty, having blessed us with all these precious minerals, must surely be in agreement that we would find ways to use them to develop our country and for the benefit of our communities," he said.

The President added that taking the minerals from the bowels of the earth

should not lead to the destruction of water bodies and forests or endanger the sustainable existence of the country.

Training

The President said the University of Mines and Technology in Tarkwa had trained local people in sustainable mining and by the time the ban on small-scale mining was lifted last year, about 4,000 had been trained.

He added that 500 youth who were engaged mainly in illegal mining were trained and they graduated in vocational and technical skills from Community Development Vocational and Technical Institutions last year, with an additional 607 youth currently undergoing similar training.

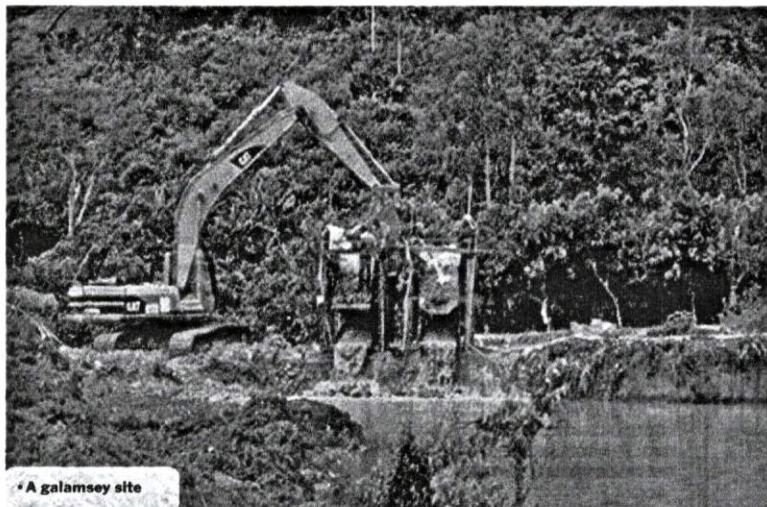
Coronavirus

President Akufo-Addo described the situation of Ghanaians caught up in China as a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid 19) disease as a difficult one and said the government was working with the Chinese authorities through the Ghanaian Embassy in China to find the best way to deal with the state of affairs.

He said experts had advised that a basic principle of public health was to confine the disease to the area of its origin, but did not rule out the option of evacuating the students from Wuhan if that became necessary.

"We have put in place measures to ensure that if they are evacuated to Ghana, it does not lead to dissemination of fear and panic among the general population," the President stated.

"I have written to President Xi Jinping to convey to the government and the people of China the support and sympathy of the compassionate people of Ghana," he added.



• A galamsey site