

# Don't politicise fight against illegal mining — NPP

By Desmond Kofi Tawiah

**T**HE New Patriotic Party (NPP) says the fight against illegal mining popularly referred to as galamsey should not be politicised.

It said the issue was a grave national concern which required concerted efforts to deal with.

## Reaction

Speaking at a press conference in Accra last Wednesday in response to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) branding of the government's fight against galamsey as a sham, the Communications Director of the NPP, Mr Yaw Buaben Asamoah, said the fight against galamsey should have attracted a bi-partisan approach from both the NDC and the NPP.

"They have reduced this major policy into three things: blaming the President, screaming loudly that the solutions are not working and asking for the vote of the people without providing any alternative. The NDC should speak to the matters at hand instead of engaging in divisive politics. This should have been bi-partisan and we should have dealt with it within the context of the challenges facing the fight against galamsey," he stated.

## District mining committees

Briefing the media on the progress of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Illegal Mining (IMCIM), Mr Asamoah said 80 District Mining Committees (DMC) had been formed throughout the country to monitor illegal activities in mining communities.

In addition to that, he said, about



• Mr Yaw Buaben Asamoah, Communications Director of the NPP, addressing the media in Accra. Picture: GABRIEL AHIABOR

4,500 miners had been trained in sustainable mining and mineral processing practices by the University of Mines and Technology.

Mr Asamoah also noted that the government, in collaboration with the Environmental Pollution Monitoring Organisation, organised a training workshop on Remote Sensing Technology (RST) for state regulatory agencies.

The workshop, which was sponsored by the European State Agency, according to him, was to equip the state regulatory agencies with the technology and requisite skills needed for monitoring illegal mining activities using Sentinel-1 Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data.

## Vetting of miners.

Mr Asamoah said 900 out of a reported 1,300 small-scale mining

companies were vetted to ascertain the actual state of the small-scale mining industry.

"As a result, the directors of the mining companies, their company and personal Tax Identification Numbers (TIN) and the actual locations of new concessions were verified and uploaded on to the Galamstop Software, a software developed to automate the application of mineral rights and also monitor the lifecycle of licenses," he added.

## Training of drone pilots and divers

In order to monitor mining activities, Mr Asamoah said government had trained 140 NABCO graduates to monitor illegal mining activities in 70 mining districts.

"To monitor the turbidity of our water bodies effectively, 60 experienced

divers were sent to the military camp at Asutsuare to assist Operation Vanguard with their riverine operations," he added.

## Sensitisation

He also indicated that the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs and the IMCM embarked on various tours throughout the country to sensitise mining communities through the traditional and opinion leaders.

Mr Asamoah, who is also the Member of Parliament (MP) for Adenta, suggested the IMCM should consider ways of managing galamsey in order to maintain the clean state of rivers in the country.

"We cannot ban galamsey. If we say we are stopping galamsey permanently and forever, it would drive the trade underground. Then people will work in the forest and in the night, they will go deeper and the destruction will even be more massive because they will be reckless and drop chemicals in the rivers. If we are able to control mining properly, we would succeed," he noted.

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