
NMA and Partners Sensitize Mining Communities on CDA

Freetown, 15th September 2015. The National Minerals Agency (NMA) and stakeholders, including GIZ, IBIS, NMJD, NACE and the World Bank Country Team, have completed community sensitization on the draft model Community Development Agreement (CDA) in five chiefdoms in Moyamba and Bonthe districts.

The sensitization, which targeted primary host communities of Sierra Rutile Ltd. (SRL) and Sierra Minerals Holdings Ltd. (SMHL), was held from 10th to 12th September for community stakeholders from Bumbe Ngaw, Kpanda Kemoh, Lower Banta, Upper Banta, Dasse, Imperi, and Jong chiefdoms. The objectives of the public meetings were to introduce and inform ordinary community members of the CDA, what it means, why it was set up and how it will be implemented; Inform community members of their role in the implementation process and monitoring process; Inform community members of their duty to elect able representatives to the Community Development Committee to represent their interests; Explain to community members procedure to nominate and elect representatives to the Community Development Committee; Inform community members of the roles and responsibilities of representatives to the CDC and the TG; Record the comments and feedback from community members on the CDA to inform and shape the development of the final draft model.

In his remarks, the Director of Community Affairs and Communications of the National Minerals Agency, Ibrahim Satti Kamara, explained to stakeholders that community development agreements if effectively implemented can promote sustainable development benefits for communities affected by mining operations as well as improve relations between extractive companies and communities. Section 139 (1) of the Mines and Minerals Act, 2009 provides that small scale or large scale mining licence holders are required to have and implement a community development agreement with primary host communities. This, he said, provides a unique opportunity for local development to occur in mining areas which although home to vast mineral deposits have paradoxically experienced high levels of poverty and low levels of development.

Madam Halima Tejan-Sie of GIZ explained that the CDA Working Group, convened by the Strategic and Policy Unit, has developed a draft model CDA which incorporates the requirements of the Mines and Minerals Act, 2009 as well as the building blocks for a successful CDA. The draft model anticipates high levels of community participation as shown by the governance structures it establishes and hence requires similar levels of community knowledge and awareness about the process if it is to work.

Civil Society representatives explained to the community stakeholders their rights and obligations under the CDA, as well as the rights and obligations of mining companies. They emphasized that for the process to work, all sides to the agreement must demonstrate sincerity and respect the rights of each other.

Community stakeholders were admonished to organize themselves, as the next step in the process will be the setting of the Community Development Committees, which will be made up of different interest groups in the community, such as youths, women, landowners, traditional

leaders, etc. This committee will be responsible for approving community development projects to be implemented and funded under the CDA, and monitoring project implementation, among others.

This sensitization exercise is the first in a series of steps including elections and capacity building for elected representatives which aim to ensure that outcomes for CDA implementation are successful. This exercise is also designed to elicit the feedback and comments of communities on the draft model.