
Mines Minister Engages Companies on Ebola

Freetown, 5th August 2014. In proactive response to the President's call for concerted efforts to stem the spread of the Ebola epidemic, the Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Hon. Alhaji Minkailu Mansaray, on Tuesday 5th August 2014, engaged mining companies operating in Sierra Leone, through the Chamber of Mines, to discuss important issues relating to the epidemic, and exchange ideas on how mining companies can complement Government's efforts to contain it.

The Minister called on the mining companies to join Government, as good friends at a time of need, to fight the Ebola disease, and he thanked those companies who have already made financial, logistical and other contributions to the fight.

The Minister explained how critical the mining sector is to the economy, and noted that government has based its growth forecast on projections from the mining companies, meaning that any disruption in mining operations will adversely affect the country's development.

Noting concerns over speculations that some mining companies may fold up operations and evacuate staff, the Minister maintained that this is not advisable, as Government has already put measures in place to contain the Ebola disease. He explained these measures, and encouraged companies to stay around and support Government in the fight.

The mining companies' representatives dispelled rumours of their intention to leave Sierra Leone, and maintained that they have already put measures in place to contain the spread of the disease, but have no intention to withdraw from the country.

The companies further explained that they are already part of the fight, and are supporting government's efforts through various contributions in cash and in kind, some of which include the following:

1. African Minerals Limited (AML) has provided an infrared thermometer to check temperature of passengers at Lungi Airport;
2. AML has funded joint sensitization programmes across the country;
3. London Mining Company (LMC) has supported sensitization activities in their localities;
4. LMC is also mobilizing resources from social service agencies overseas, and a 40-foot container load of Personal Protective Equipment donated by friends of the Company is on its way to Sierra Leone;
5. OCTEA (Koidu Holdings) committed to make financial contribution to the fight;
6. The other mining companies also made commitments to support government's effort in responding to the epidemic.

The Minister advised the mining companies to coordinate their activities through the Chamber of Mines to ensure transparency and effective impact. He called on the Chamber of Mines to put together an 'Action Plan' to coordinate their activities relating to Ebola.

The Minister encouraged the companies to continue to work with Government, through the

Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resource, and assured them of Government's commitment and determination to work with all stakeholders to find a lasting solution to the Ebola epidemic.

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