

Amina's presentation

Good morning ladies and gentlemen

My name is Amina Tahiru and I am from Ghana. I am a small-scale gold miner and have been involved in mining for the past 15 years. During the past 5 years, I have been the Women's Coordinator for Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners in Ghana, as part of the GNASSM (which is the Ghana National Association of Small-Scale Miners)

Today, I would like to share with you my experiences as a woman in ASM, and explore key challenges we face and what support we need to be successful in our profession.

In the early years, when artisanal and small-scale mining was formalized in Ghana, women participated from the outset. Although very few women owned and operated their mine sites, the majority of women took up various jobs ranging from cooking for the men to fetching gravels and ore in basins on their heads.

Today, I am pleased to see women in ASM have been taken more seriously and many are now proud small-scale mine owners who employ proportionally more women in the process. However, we still have much more work to do if women are to break the glass ceiling and succeed in mining.

Before I go into what we need in order to realize this success, I would like to briefly mention why it is so important for women to succeed.

Firstly, a successful woman in ASM not only provides financial security for her family but also to the extended ones. Priority for women is education for the children and not big cars to impress friends.

Secondly, in my experience, women miners are more likely to follow and adopt good mining practices and are mindful of environmental matters. I have never seen a woman illegally dredging our rivers and destroying our river banks in the name of mining. In other words, we will always strive for environmental sustainability.

Thirdly, women miners stand as role models for others to emulate.

And lastly, successful women in ASM have the potential towards economic diversification and export promotion.

In order to achieve the kind of success I have just outlined, we will need help and support. I would like to outline the nature of such help.

1. Find novel ways to offer financial support for women in ASM, for example, the recipients of micro-finance schemes were predominantly women traders who were able to lift themselves from poverty and increased their capacity and development. Women in ASM would also benefit from a

similar finance scheme, proportional to their work's capacity. Some only need a small amount, as small as US\$500.

2. Create a so-called "level playing field" so that women have the same opportunity to obtain good mining areas.
3. Offer women enhanced safety conditions on work sites. This is an urgent matter because many women still have to endure unsafe working conditions and suffer from adverse health issues.
4. Provide technical support and training for women. With the right tools at their disposal women can significantly increase their productivity in a safe manner.

My final thought and wish is for artisanal and small-scale miners to be integrated into the formal mining sector. If this happens, women in ASM will enjoy the same recognition and development. Success will not only empower us but also boost our contribution to the nation's economy.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all at the IIED who have made it possible for me to attend this international platform.

Thank you.