

African governments have relegated the implementation of the African Mining Vision (AMV) to the back burner after it was unanimously adopted in 2009 by African Heads of State. The ECOWAS Mineral Development Policy (EMDP), a related document, has also suffered a similar fate. The AMV, according to experts, is the most ambitious national, sub-regional and continental mining reform framework that has been developed in Africa in recent years.

While recognising the need to improve the fiscal regime of mining, the AMV sets out a multifaceted framework for mineral-based industrialisation and structural transformation of Africa's mineral dependent economies.

Like the AMV, the EMDP also envisions the exploitation of minerals as a key element of strategy of an industrialisation-driven structural transformation of the ECOWAS. EMDP also accepts the need for far-reaching reforms in the overall governance of the mineral economy and greater accountability of firms and governments.

Considering the prospects of the two documents for Africa, many observers therefore find it strange that the continental leaders appear unwilling to implement them, leaving them for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) for advocacy purposes.

At a four-day workshop organised in Accra by the Third World Network- Africa (TWN--Africa) for public officials and CSOs drawn from various parts of the continent, participants expressed disappointment at the slow pace at which the frameworks were being implemented.

The participants noted that majority of African citizens, including Parliamentarians and public office holders had no knowledge about the AMV. "Very little is being done on the continent after the adoption of the AMV. In general the Vision has been driven by Civil Society Organisations and governments are not forthcoming. AMV has been seriously relegated," one participant observed, while speaking to the issue.

A former Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission, Mr Ben Aryee, also lamented the inactivity of governments relative to the implementation of the AMV.

Mr Aryee, who chaired the first part of the programme, admitted in an interview with *Public Agenda* that: "All these is to be championed by government, it is unfortunate that it is civil society which is doing that."

He said the AMV was adopted as a broad means of promoting sustainable development and growth in Africa but unfortunately nothing much was heard about it. He said, ideally, the AMV should be heard on daily bases for people to understand the framework so that it could drive what was being done in the mining sector. He said governments were essentially focused on getting investment to the mining sector and then trying to maximize revenue from it but that was just for the short term. He added that looking at the potential of mining; we could do better than that.

He explained that the AMV sought to ensure that mining was not isolated but got to be integrated with the rest of the economy and all the other sectors development agenda.

It was also to ensure that the environment was not unduly degraded and that human right issues were respected. According to Mr Aryee the workshop was meant to raise awareness to ensure that not just civil society, but government officials get to understand a bit more in order to implement the tenets of the AMV. He said development in Africa should be promoted.

On his ordinator of TWN- Africa, Dr. Yao Graham, said exploitation of minerals has been a major driver of many activities in Africa. Thus, frameworks, such as the AMV and the EMDP, should be taken seriously.

Dr. Graham said the AMV should be the key driver of all industrial policies in African countries and all political leaders should commit to its implementation. The AMV, formulated by African nations, puts the continent's long-term and broad development objectives at the heart of all policy making concerned with mineral extraction. It was adopted by Heads of State at the February 2009 African Union (AU) summit, following the October 2008 meeting of African Ministers responsible for Mineral Resources Development.

*Source: Public Agenda*