

Ms Sherry Ayittey, Minister of Environment, Science and Technology, has commended the Aboso Goldfields Limited (AGL), Damang in the Western Region, for honouring its corporate social responsibility. This follows a working visit to Damang on Friday during which she assessed the company's operations and projects for the community.

The Minister was first taken to the east tailings storage facility of the mine, which is where the residue from the gold processing plant is stored. She then visited an 18 hector oil-palm plantation located on a reclaimed tailings storage facility, which has been handed over to the Kyekyewere Community. The Minister later paid a courtesy call on the Chief of Damang, Nana Amoakwaw III and elders his elders.

She was accompanied by Mr. Daniel S. Amlalo, acting Executive Director of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Mr. Ransford Sekyi, Director of Mines, EPA, and top officials from AGL, Damang. Briefing the media after the visit, Ms Ayittey said the rationale for her visit was to ensure that the rights of citizens of communities where mining activities were undertaken were respected as enshrined in the constitution.

The Minister said the Government was keen about issues on the Environment, therefore, her Ministry would ensure that companies who violate conditions of their environmental permit and terms of their contract were checked. She praised AGL, Damang, for their commitment to the communities in which they operated, especially the oil palm plantation project, which is being managed by a women's group from Kyekyewere.

The Minister said this would encourage women from engaging in illegal mining activities, (galamsey) which exposes them to dangerous chemicals such as cyanide. She, however, called on the company to provide the women's group with an oil palm processing machine and a pick up truck to help them produce palm oil to support their families financially.

Mr. Francis Nyame, Environmental Manager of AGL, Damang, said as a leader in sustainable gold mining, the company would do all it could to put measures in place to curb any environmental effects of its activities. He said resources such as fertilizers and farm implements would be made available to the farmers regularly.

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