

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the Natural Resource and Environment sector are calling for effective consultation with mining communities before the issuance of license to mining companies. Such engagement, according to them, will ensure fair compensation to the indigenous people as well as reduce the number of social conflicts that usually occur in the mining communities.

They argue that all new mining exploration and many surface mining activities take place on indigenous land that provide land based livelihood to many rural people. Again, these activities take place in areas of high illiteracy where community members lack the capacity for negotiating on highly technical issues with the Mining companies that can afford the services of experts. "This is where the problem is, even though the law makes provision for fair, adequate and prompt payment of compensation, low levels of compensation payment worsen the problem of poverty in the mining communities and it is what brings about the social conflicts," they added.

They opined that compensation payment was a major source of poverty among the communities because companies pay low compensation on the commonly used formula of 'head counts' method. In addition, they said, peasant farmers whose lands are taken over by surface mining lose huge amounts of money to rich multinational mining companies by way of lands. "We are of the belief that active participation of community members in consultative processes will give them an understanding of the issues and respond positively to them."

These concerns were raised at a workshop in Accra by KRON Finance and Investments Limited under the auspices of Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. It brought together stakeholders in the environment and natural resource sector to seek their input on the development of Sectoral Monitoring and Evaluation system as well as to review the selected performance indicators for the implementing agencies under the Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Programme. The sectors include mining, forestry and environment.

According to Mr. Robert Nartey, Chief Executive Officer of KRON Finance Investments Limited the reason for measuring the indicator particularly in the mining sector was to ensure that there was an improved revenue generation and transparency in the sector, enhance community participation in mining related decisions and also to improve the administration of mining resources.