

A SENIOR Mineral Sector Governance Advisor in charge of the African Mineral Development Centre of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Dr. Kojo Busia, has called for strong policy reform in Africa's extractive sector.

He said royalties derived from the extractive sector only supported government's budget tax revenues rather than the people who resided in mining communities. Dr. Busia said if efforts were not made to regulate the sector to benefit the locals, then it could degenerate into chaos or conflict more especially where the people thought they were being slighted.

Speaking at a two-day work shop at a policy dialogue on the implementation of the African mining vision and ECOWAS mineral development policy in Accra, Dr. Busia described as worrying the conditions of mining companies. Generally, he said, there were lists of expectations from the communities which needed to be addressed. However, he said, it required strong policy transformation aimed at addressing the needs of the people and not the national kitty.

"It is governance issue which requires all hands on deck to help see how best to address the needs and recommendations of the people in the mining areas," he said. Deputy Executive Director of the Network for Justice and Development in Sierra Leone, Ms. Josephine Koroma, called on civil society organisations to hold government and mining firms accountable on their responsibility to attend to the needs of the locals. Some of the communities, he said, lacked potable water, good roads and other amenities, saying that despite their cries, they were not listened to.

*Source: The Ghanaian Times*