

ARTISANAL AND SMALL SCALE MINING IN AFRICA: A REALITY CHECK

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I intend to present an update and reality check on the current situation of the ASM sector in Africa. In so doing, I shall discuss the problems and issues with which we are all familiar and attempt to discuss the way forward. This includes what Africa as a whole can do to help formalise, and provide assistance to, this vulnerable sector. Some of what I am going to say concurs with the findings within the report of the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) Project. Most, however, has come from research that my own company has conducted on behalf of the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

ASM DEFINITION

There is as yet no widely accepted definition of artisanal and small-scale mining. The terms have, therefore, been used to cover a broad spectrum of activities. The distinction is really in the eye of the beholder and attempts down the years to find a workable definition have proved fruitless. The broadest distinction, and the one that I will follow here, is between artisanal mining, which may involve only individuals or families and is purely manual, and small-scale mining, which is more extensive and usually more mechanized. Differing definitions are used in various African countries. Nevertheless, they are usually based on some common criteria, such as: production, depth of workings, capital investment, mineral type, use of machinery or explosives, number of workers, size of concession, etc. For convenience, however, most people now discuss the sector collectively using the acronym 'ASM'.

ASM IN AFRICA

Since there is no clear definition of ASM, and because many of these miners work casually, seasonally or informally, it is impossible to arrive at a total number of miners. Recent research suggests that throughout Africa ASM activity involves between 3.2 and 4 million people directly, and that it affects the livelihoods of a further 16 to 28 million. The worrying fact is that many experts claim that the number of people seeking to work in this sector in many parts of Africa is expected to triple over the next 10 years. This view is based largely due to the continued under-performance of many national economies and the expectation that the formal sector will not be able meet job creation demands.

I believe that by asking the questions of why does this sector exist in Africa and what forces people to work in the sector may help us focus our ideas.

I am sure you will all know that ASM is not a modern phenomenon in Africa. Indeed, historically most mining on the continent could be considered within this category. From 4000 BC Egyptians, Nubians and Cushites mined placer deposits between the Nile and the Red Sea in modern day Sudan and Ethiopia. After around 300AD, many of the African kingdoms and old empires such as Ghana, Mali and Songhai in West Africa and Monomotapa and Great Zimbabwe in Southern Africa used ASM to exploit mineral deposits for building materials, base metals and of course gold. Indeed all over Africa prosperous and rich kingdoms thrived including, Kongo, Kilwa, Luba, Baganda, Kanem Borno, Ashanti, Zulu and many others who all had a tradition of ASM.

But what about more recent times under the influence of post-colonial politics and global economics? ASM activities, influenced by these new factors, started to impact in Africa during the 1970s and 1980s. A combination of decreased demand for minerals, drastic falls in minerals prices, plummeting mineral investment, and widespread drought triggered an attempt in a number of countries to diversify mineral production and reduce dependence on a single mineral for export. Indeed, wide-scale ASM was encouraged in many countries, as it required minimal technological and economic investment for start-up. But why does this sector still exist in Africa in the 21st Century? We all know the simple answer is abject poverty and dwindling livelihood choices with over 40% of Africans living below the poverty line and vulnerable to a great variety of natural and man-made forces.

What are the marco factors in Africa that make people turn to the ASM sector? For instance, today in many parts of Africa, subsistence farmers mine in the dry season when there is less agricultural work in order to supplement their meager incomes or during periods of national economic recession. With over 25 armed conflicts in Africa since 1963, affecting around 60% of the Continent's population, many people have been forced into the ASM sector as a last resort. This has been the case especially in countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan, the DRC and Angola. Many other people can suddenly be drawn into mining following the discovery of new mineral reserves. This has been seen with gold or gemstone 'rushes', during which thousands of new people hope to make their fortunes. One example is the recent rush for sapphires in Madagascar. The number of miners also fluctuates with the international demand for (and thus the price of) a particular mineral. A recent example is the rush for coltan that took place in the Eastern DRC. People are also drawn to the ASM sector following natural disasters or environmental shocks, such as occurred in the severe droughts that effected numerous countries in East and West Africa or the floods and cyclones that devastated Mozambique last year, or even volcanic activity in the DRC and in Cameroon.

At present, African ASM mines are as diverse as the minerals they produce and engage in the extraction of more than 40 minerals. One could crudely state that ASM in Africa falls into two broad categories. The first, is the mining of high value minerals, notably gold and precious stones, which generally for export and are by far the most important group economically. In many African countries gold and diamonds are particularly attractive as they have the advantage of being relatively simple to extract, refine, and transport. The second category is comprised of mining and quarrying for industrial minerals and construction materials. This is mostly for local markets and exists in all African countries.

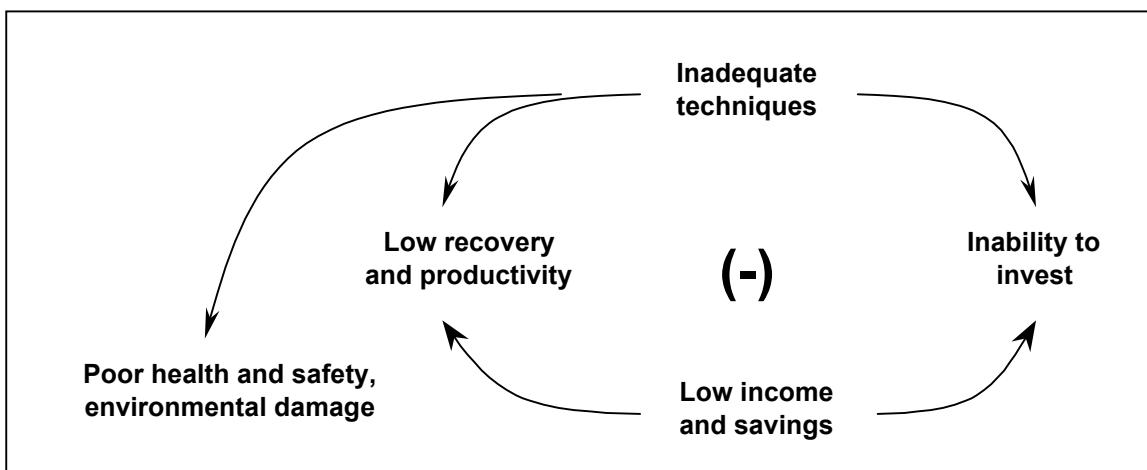
ECONOMIC IMPACT

From a livelihoods perspective, ASM often provides the only means of obtaining income for many poor Africans in remote rural areas who have few employment alternatives. Nonetheless, the ASM sector has the potential to economically empower disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and contribute to national poverty reduction efforts. On a local level it can provide a means of survival and decent work for the miners and stimulate demand for locally produced goods and services and various types of infrastructure. On a national level this can translate into foreign exchange earnings and tax revenue for national governments, providing that ASM is legalised and a mutually conducive environment is created. In fact it has been estimated that gold & gemstones worth US\$1 billion/year are produced by ASM in sub-Saharan Africa. But how much of this capital stays within the Continent and is reinvested?

We must not forget that ASM can also be very disruptive particularly when it takes the form of a sudden 'rush'. When large numbers of new people arrive, they can come into conflict with local residents. This sometimes provokes violence and introduces new social and health problems. But other problems can arise when local people are attracted by these ASM opportunities that cause them to leave their farms. When the rush is over and mining activities have subsided, local people may conclude that they have seen few lasting benefits. Most of the profits will have disappeared while the social and environmental damage persists.

POVERTY

The fundamental problem is that both the ASM sector and governments are caught in negative circles of cause and effect. A poverty trap results from a denial of choices and opportunities whilst living in a marginal and vulnerable environment.



Negative circles affecting ASM communities.

The use of inadequate mining and processing techniques leads to low productivity of operations and low recovery of valuable minerals, which in turn results in low revenues and the inability to accumulate funds for investment. It therefore becomes unsustainable. The lack of funds to improve methods and acquire appropriate equipment traps these miners in crude and inefficient mining and processing: closing the negative circle and perpetuating a subsistence life for the miners and their families. It is important to remember that it is this circle that we must break if we are to really help the sector in Africa and across the globe

ASSISTANCE SCHEMES

Regardless of how many feel, the real truth is that ASM activities are often viewed negatively by many especially those who are really ignorant about the sector. Concerns are wide-ranging, from the use of child labour and the potential for environmental damage, poor health and safety, and smuggling; to the use of ASM revenue to finance conflicts, the social disruption caused by 'rush' operations, migrant alien workers, the high incidence of prostitution, and the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases where migrant workers are involved. The many challenges and aspects that characterize the sector overlap and, in combination, form a very complex situation that is difficult to assist with any quick-fix solutions, especially those advocated by those who do not really understand the people and the real needs of the sector.

In the past, most efforts by the donor agencies have endeavoured to solve one aspect of the ASM sector alone and ignored the others. Whilst being well meaning, these projects have provided little more than superficial gains and little long-lasting impact. In the past there was also a real lack of communication between the various organisations involved in providing funds and assistance to the ASM sector. This lack of systematic long term donor engagement and cross-sectoral understanding has had an adverse impact on the sector since the millions of dollars allocated by the aid agencies have not been effectively or efficiently utilised. There is now an urgent need to take into account the existing socio-economic system and consider how ASM can best contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Future assistance projects must find better ways of integrating miners into the rest of the economy and encouraging ASM communities to invest their revenues in other forms of economic activity as well as in communal services. We must encourage stakeholder ownership and ensure we provide incentives for the continuation of any assistance scheme whilst appealing to self-interest of the miner. Only by adopting such an approach will the sector be able to contribute to sustainable rural livelihoods and contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of poverty alleviation.

One of the most important recent initiatives began in March this year when a group of donors launched the Communities and Small-Scale Mining (CASM) initiative to improve coordination between miners, communities, donors, governments, and other stakeholders. CASM is housed in the World Bank and is currently chaired by the UK's Department for International Development.

GOVERNMENT'S VIEW

The real truth, albeit unfortunate, is that in the past many African governments were unsure as to what their long-term goals were for the ASM sector. They appeared to be caught between the shorter-term national economic benefits that can be gained from encouraging foreign large-scale mining and the idealised vision of having a formalised, mainly local, ASM sector. At the extreme, governments considered the sector illegal and attempted to ban it through various means. In many cases they still simply neglect it, thereby allowing negative social and environmental impacts to be aggravated. Some may claim that this neglect is deliberate, as there are some big and well connected players who actually benefit from this status quo. The sad truth is that not all African governments are convinced or even committed to assisting and formalising their ASM sectors. It should be remembered that governments ignore this sector because they often perceive the sector as having little political influence and, in most instances, providing no tax revenues.

In my opinion it is this unclear Government stance coupled with the lack of real motivation from the ASM miners themselves that has caused many assistance schemes to fail in Africa whilst equivalent attempts have been reasonably successful in Latin America. Regardless of the ambivalent political will, the nations of Africa today face three stark choices:

- To try to stop ASM and thus eliminate the associated problems.
- To maintain the status quo and attempt to undertake the occasional ad hoc assistance project.
- To undertake a radical reform of the sector by tackling ALL of the relevant issues.

I am assuming it is option the third option that is the winner. However, we also need to educate and convince all governments that this strategy is the best for all stakeholders including themselves. We therefore need to mainstream ASM issues within the current Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in order to lever donor funds towards ASM communities. We also need to focus on the means to allow the sector to align itself with the principles of sustainable development and mitigate the threats to the social, economic and biophysical systems throughout Africa. This will necessitate national workshops and the building of partnerships with governments to raise the general level of awareness of ASM issues.

LEGISLATION

The isolation of ASM from the mainstream of economic development prevents it from becoming a recognised economic activity, contribute to government revenue or attractive investment. In some African countries >75% of miners operate illegally. This stance must be changed and ASM development encouraged to generate rural employment and reduce poverty, whilst protecting the rights of indigenous people and in particular women and children. Legalisation is the first step to formalising the sector into a sustainable activity, but we need to ensure we consider a variety of issues including:

- Provision of the right to exploit a particular deposit.
- Provision of full and transferable mining title and security of tenure.

- Curb the illegal trade in precious minerals.
- Encourage the development of ASM deposits.
- Encourage the formation of ASM association and co-operatives.
- Generate stable employment opportunities in rural areas.
- Mitigate the severe environmental & Health & Safety effects of uncontrolled ASM.
- Encourage the entry of nationals into ASM and eliminate alien workers.
- Protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Unfortunately, the mining laws of many African countries still fail to really identify the real needs of ASM operations and do not recognise the importance of the sector. Poverty eradication needs to be included in national mineral policies and more importantly within the PRSPs of individual countries. This may mean that many countries have to revisit their policies and current PRSP to provide a strategic framework for ASM.

Let us not be naïve: we must also develop strong incentives for these miners to participate in the formal sector and answer the question; "What's in it for me...?" For many, simply registering their business to appease the government is a tortuous and expensive process, costly in both time and money and offers limited if any advantages. So why bother? This suggests that they see more disadvantages from working within the formal sector. We need to convince them otherwise. We therefore also have to convince governments to commit to assisting with other problems like access to water and affordable fuel or facilitate linkages with mineral buyers in order to encourage the sector to formalise.

GENDER INEQUALITY

Over time, women's involvement in mining activities has tended to increase, particularly in Africa. Women are engaged in most aspects of ASM and are also involved in ancillary activities resulting from the prevalence of family based activity in Africa (45 - 50% of all ASM workers in Africa are women (varying from 5% - Gabon & RSA, 10% - Malawi, 26% - Tanzania, 30% - Zambia & Mozambique, 35% - Guinea, 45% - Ghana & Burkina, 50% - Mali and >50% - Zimbabwe). Frequently, these enterprises are better managed than those run by men, even though women find it more difficult to get financial, legal, or technical support.

Although many African constitutions protect their position many women still face traditional obstacles (illiteracy, insufficient technical knowledge, sexist/chauvinist attitudes, patriarchal views, social taboos and family responsibilities) in asserting their formal rights and discrimination under customary laws. Future policy in Africa must focus more sharply on removing gender based constraints and incorporate ways to give women more power in their communities and their households through the enactment of gender-neutral legislation (such as that in Zimbabwe and Ghana and in accordance with the ILO Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

As you are no doubt aware, although there are numerous women's mining associations in Africa but we need to provide assistance to help to coordinate them: they have all failed to physically implement real strategies to materially change the conditions under which women work. Remember that empowering women will have a greater impact on alleviating poverty,

as they are more likely to spend the money on family needs compared to their male counterparts who tend to be rather frivolous and irresponsible with their incomes.

CHILD LABOUR

Child labour is illegal in most African countries that have ratified the ILO Convention on the Rights of the Child. On the other hand, with a growing proportion of Africans under the age of 15 and many living in abject poverty, the number of AIDS orphans is rising. A general lack of monitoring means that opportunities to exploit children are considerable. Hence, child labour is unfortunately still prevalent in the ASM sectors of many Africa countries and attitudes towards the issue ambivalent.

Children work in the mines to help their parents, and to supplement the family income in order to buy basic goods and survive. Since much of the work is physically hard, they may not be fully involved at first although as they grow older there is an increase the scope of their activities. Children working in ASM operations are not only exposed to immediate risk but they are also jeopardising their long term development both physically and mentally. This labour is perpetuated due to:

- A lack of opportunities or incentives to go to school.
- No prospects or regular employment.
- No coordinated effort to stop child labour.
- A lack of law enforcement.
- A lack of improved ASM performance.

Remember the unfortunate truth is that despite our best intentions, we have so far failed to really change this situation. Although there is no quick fix solution to child labour, we must all strive to raise awareness, and aim to have more stringent law enforcement and monitoring of the sector. This should be coupled with the generation of alternative income opportunities, family support service and the provision of affordable and accessible education.

HEALTH & SAFETY

For a number of reasons, the health and safety risks to which artisanal and small-scale miners are exposed can be significantly greater than for large-scale mining. Most obviously, the informal and unregulated nature of ASM means that it usually operates beyond the scope of legislation or enforcement on health and safety guidelines. ASM miners are particularly vulnerable to exposure to mercury, dust and other chemicals, the effects of noise and vibration, poor ventilation, over exertion, inadequate work space and inappropriate equipment. Often these individuals are not aware of the risks they are taking and even simple items such as helmets, boots, gloves, and dust masks represent a costly investment with no immediate return. Moreover, some miners have introduced more mechanized equipment or techniques without the complementary safety measures and often these individuals are not aware of the risks they are running. Official studies by the ILO have highlighted the varied reasons for

accidents in ASM operations, from both the management and operational perspective as well as from the actual workplace and equipment view.

The activity of greatest concern for many is the use of mercury (amalgamation) by ASM gold miners. At the risk to their own health, that of others and the ecosystem. Various studies have verified that miners using mercury have elevated levels of mercury in their blood, hair and urine. Indeed, for every gram of gold recovered one gram of mercury is released into the atmosphere as vapour. Remember though that the inappropriate use of mercury often arises due to a lack of knowledge of the process. A first step should be to alert people to the dangers to themselves, their children, and the environment and to encourage them to use simple methods to capture the mercury vapour through retorts. Another option is to introduce alternative forms of gold extraction that do not involve mercury at all.

Unfortunately, despite the best intentions governments have been largely unsuccessful at being able to raising standards immediately simply through legislation and enforcement. A more realistic approach that we must adopt needs to centre around increasing awareness of the risks and to demonstrate less dangerous alternatives that are appropriate to local circumstances, and that allow mining communities to make better-informed choices.

The dangerous environment extends beyond the mines, something that most African countries can definitely do without given the current high infant mortality rates and the many of the worst life expectancies in the world. Those engaged in ASM are already some of the poorest people and are therefore likely to have inadequate sanitation, with little access to clean water or basic health care. These problems are likely to be even worse where miners have converged around a freshly discovered deposit or settled in unorganized camps. Such remote and temporary settlements are unlikely to have public health facilities. In addition to harbouring diseases related to poor sanitation, they can also be breeding grounds for crime, prostitution, and sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs). The latter two of these phenomena are particularly significant, given the pandemic of HIV/AIDS that has ravaged the Continent and that threatens to develop into a serious human resource problem in the future. Other threats include malaria, spread by mosquitoes breeding in water filled pits left by the miners, also cholera, diarrhea, tuberculosis, bilharzia, and other parasitic and infectious diseases are common in ASM communities. Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

What about environmental issues? In general a lack of awareness, particularly of the less visible or long-term environmental impacts of activities, combined with a lack of information about affordable methods to reduce impacts and a lack of obvious incentives to change, all contribute to this problem. The numerous environmental impacts of ASM include mercury pollution, cyanide pollution, direct dumping of tailings & effluents into river, threats from improperly constructed tailings dams, river damage in alluvial areas, river siltation, acid mine drainage (AMD), land degradation and soil erosion damage, deforestation and landscape destruction.

Since ASM operations are often subsistence activities that struggle to survive from day to day, the miners tend to focus more on immediate concerns than the long-term consequences of their activities. This is compounded by the fact that in many cases in Africa, governments do not attempt or lack the capacity to monitor or control these activities, which often occur in remote and inaccessible locations. We must help African governments develop appropriate and enforceable legislation that will draw ASM into national programmes for environmental protection such as those enacted in Tanzania and Ghana. We must also provide the miners with training and appropriate equipment to avoid or mitigate many of the environmental problems.

There is a desperate need to provide accessible, free (or affordable) multi-disciplined advice, services and products to miners delivered in appropriate locations and at appropriate times of the day (when the miners have finished work). It should act a 'one-stop-shop' in terms of outreach to the ASM and communities (with access to rights and entitlements) and will have a duty to advise on best/good practice in accordance with environmental and health and safety policy. All advice and assistance services should take account of the cultural background, gender issues, geographical isolation, capabilities and the working environment of ASM communities. Advice should be clearly worded in an appropriate language (or illustrated considering issues of illiteracy) and be relevant to the local conditions and culture. All potential methods of communication should be examined and appropriate communication media adopted.

LARGE SCALE MINING

The relationship between large mining companies and the ASM sector is poorly understood and often troubled, with mutual mistrust, resentment and increasing conflict. Large companies may consider small-scale miners as 'trespassers', while small-scale miners may see the granting of a concession to a large company as depriving them of their land and livelihoods. In many cases this is obviously because the two sectors are often competing for the same resources. Sometimes this is no coincidence, mining and exploration companies often use ASM miners as unpaid 'geologists' as they are often very efficient prospectors, and concentrate exploration wherever there is ASM activity. Syama in Mali and Bulyanhulu in Tanzania are two recent examples. On the other hand, ASM miners have often congregated around larger-scale mines, taking advantage of the better access and perhaps re-mining some of the larger company's waste.

Once operations have started, some companies have tried to keep ASM miners at bay and built expensive systems of security. However, some companies have now found that building constructive relationships works better than trying to shut ASM miners down and hope the 'problem' disappears, through, for example, finding alternative employment, setting aside areas for them to mine, providing training and buying their produce. Numerous companies have attempted to form partnerships with ASM communities. Examples include South Africa (*Ingwe*), Tanzania (*TANSCAN & Anglo American Exploration*), Mali (*SEMOS*), Namibia, Zimbabwe (*Zimasco & ZimAlloys*), Mozambique (*ALMA/Benicon*) and Ghana (*Gold Fields*).

We must ensure that there is increased encouragement to form such relationships to ensure ASM associations or co-operatives form collaborative partnerships with large mining companies for mutual benefit. We must also convince governments that the development of these two sectors is not mutually exclusive.

FAIR MARKETS

Informality and illegality also extends to the marketing of mineral products. The lack of formal protection increases the risk that the miners will be exploited by intermediaries or traders, and they will rarely get fair prices. It also encourages criminality and smuggling in the commodities chain. In order to ensure a regular cash flow from small amounts of production, mining communities in the ASM sector typically have to sell their products (either refined ore or metal) as quickly as they can. As a result, they usually get low prices. Those working further along the commodity chain, such as traders, intermediaries, and manufacturers, tend to make higher profits. It is important to remember that Illicit marketing is primarily the result of inadequate government policies when official prices are too low or when an overvalued currency and high inflation depress the effective price, or due to the traditional strong ties established by traders through the pre-financing of ASM operations.

Unfortunately we cannot ignore the illegal use of ASM produce to finance and perpetuate rebel activities, as with the 'blood diamonds' in Angola, Sierra Leone and the DRC. In these cases, the links between informality and illegality tend to be self-reinforcing. Hopefully, the new Kimberly Process, to be officially started next January, will establish a means of monitoring the international diamond trade and ensure blood diamonds do not enter the market.

Any proposed marketing scheme must discourage monopoly organisations from controlling mineral markets and pricing of commodities, as well as foster competition among buyers and sellers to ensure that ASM communities have a number of options for disposal of their output. There are a number of ways in which we could increase the profits retained by mining ASM communities including:

- The establishment of official buying centres in remote mining areas where miners receive a fair price (i.e. the margin does not exceed an appropriate percentage).
- A system of licensed buyers who visit mining areas and buy small amounts of mine output. If there were sufficient licensed agents, competition between them should prevent the purchase price from being so low that it leads to widespread black market transactions.
- The use of large mining companies who would act as assured buyers (tributor arrangement) for specific mineral commodities (providing this did not reduce ASM bargaining power and result in a quasi-slavery dependency).
- Links with the growing 'fair and community trade' movement in industrialised countries.
- Increasing the awareness within the ASM sector regarding methods of adding value to mineral commodities by establishing appropriate processing industries.

Buying and selling arrangements for ASM mineral produce should also be supported by appropriate legislation and an ASM license should confer a right to trade the mine output. A

separate buyer's license or registration system could also be established to regulate those persons or companies who trade in ASM products.

FINANCE & CREDIT

Most ASM miners would like to step up to higher levels of productivity and output by mechanizing more of their activities and developing new reserves. But few are able to gain the necessary capital as banks are wary of ASM producers as they lack acceptable forms of collateral (this can be as much as 20% of the requested equity). Many countries in Africa have attempted to initiate some form of credit scheme with varying degrees of success particularly with regard to loan repayment. The reasons why the establishment of a sustainable revolving loan scheme has proved elusive in many cases is still unknown, although inadequate debt servicing, selecting the wrong partners and high administration and set-up costs are all major culprits.

The approach to financing should be tailored to suit the mineral commodity because the 'turnover' and income pattern from commodities with high unit value differs fundamentally from industrial minerals produced for local markets or from bulk commodities for domestic use. A variety of financing mechanisms should be investigated in consultation with all the stakeholders including some form of soft loan guarantees, grants, micro-credit schemes and/or equipment leasing and hire. The overall objective must be to establish a long-term, transparent, fair and sustainable financing scheme, which ensures adequate debt servicing based on firm business terms and results in long term sustainability of the scheme. However, we must also ensure that any future schemes are simple to administer and easy to monitor and take into account the special needs of the ASM sector, as well as problems with exchange rate fluctuations and local currency devaluation. This is one area that will need a lot of thought and effort to make it work.

PRO-POOR POLICY FRAMEWORK

The real question is therefore what exactly needs to be undertaken to achieve these numerous objectives? The following nine points essentially embody the most critical macro tasks that we need to address in order to formalise, develop and assist the ASM in Africa.

- Delineate and define the mineral potential suitable for ASM exploitation.
- Establish and resource a government institution or unit to handle and/or manage the ASM sector.
- Formulate an enabling, appropriate and transparent legislative framework and licensing scheme.
- Encourage the formation of ASM associations or co-operatives.
- Provide outreach services - regional self sustaining technical assistance and training schemes (appropriate and best practice technology).
- Provide a viable and sustainable financing scheme for the ASM sector.
- Provide a fair and effective marketing system for ASM products.
- Define relevant and consistent health & safety standards and practices.

- Establish appropriate and realistic environmental protection practices and principles.

The pro-poor and best-practice policy framework must be multi-dimensional: institutional, legal, technical and fiscal. A holistic approach must be adopted in order to increase human, financial, physical and social capital available to the sector. We must, however, ensure that this macro-policy links with micro-reality of the ASM sector. In full consultation with all relevant and interested stakeholders, this policy framework needs to be implemented to ensure a holistic programme of assistance is undertaken that addresses all the issues. We should also ensure we incorporate the experiences of best practice from countries like Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe that have made significant progress with the development of their ASM sectors.

SUMMARY

It is clear that, if this informal sector is to be turned into an economically viable industry that provides a net benefit to all concerned, including African Governments, real reform is required. Broadly-speaking, with respect to sustainable livelihoods and development, the short and medium term goals of ASM mining in Africa should include:

- Encourage a contribution to poverty alleviation and International Development Targets (IDTs) by including ASM issues in the national PRSP.
- Encourage local economic development by ensuring that revenues are invested in ways that bring sustained benefits and lead to alternative and more sustainable livelihoods.
- Adopt a gender-sensitive approach that gives particular emphasis to the role of women.
- Reduce child labour in mining areas through the provision of viable alternatives.
- Avoid or mitigate negative environmental and social impacts as well as impacts on human health especially HIV/AIDS.
- Encourage equitable markets for mining products.
- Increase the ability of individual enterprises and ASM in general to make a better contribution to sustainable development and alternative livelihoods.
- Develop the collective capacity of miners to contribute to sustainable development and an upscaling of mining activity through the adoption of identified best/good practice.
- Ensure good relationships between miners and other stakeholders.

Remember there must be an emphasis on people rather than merely technology and production increases and that ASM activities will continue for at least as long as poverty drives them. We must therefore respect the rights of individuals to secure a livelihood whether within or outside the ASM sector.

The focus of any reform should be to alleviate poverty by providing financial betterment and empowerment to ASM communities and assist in rural development which could potentially reduce migration to the cities and ease overcrowding. Proper development of the ASM sector may also reduce many African countries' importation demand thereby improving self-sufficiency on national and regional levels and will allow the efficient exploitation of small mineral deposits where only ASM methods are practical.

Remember ASM mining exploits finite non-renewable resources so the challenge for Africa now is to capitalize on the livelihood opportunities while ensuring that ASM also contributes to other goals of sustainable development and national poverty reduction efforts for the long term future of the continent.

I assume that many of you will be fully aware of the various issues and problems that plague the sector that I have mentioned. Many of you will also know what many of the solutions are to these problems. However, what we urgently need now is to move forward. Please, let us have no more dead policies. Let us instead have real action and project implementation.

We must build on the momentum of recent work by the DFID, the UN agencies, the ILO, the World Bank, CASM and the recent MMSD Project and mobilise the current donor will and finance to formulate a sustained programme of assistance. We need to prepare for a long haul to bring the ASM sector in Africa into the mainstream by addressing all the problems that plague the sector in a holistic manner through a concerted effort by all stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and attention. I wish you all a successful week and hope that together we can move forward and really help this vulnerable sector in Africa.
