

JOINT HEALTH SECTOR UNIONS & PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



06th September, 2024

JOINT STATEMENT BY HEALTH SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIONS ON GALAMSEY

We have observed with alarm, the unchecked destruction of forest reserves, water bodies and grave threats posed to public health and Ghana's ecosystem by individuals and organizations engaged in unethical and illegal mining (Galamsey).

Our various Associations and Unions have issued press statements and actively participated in public discussions on numerous occasions regarding the risks posed to the health of Ghanaians.

It was our hope that the warnings would have helped deter the individuals and organizations involved in the unethical and illegal mining to curtail their activities. However, the vast destruction of arable lands, deforestation and rampant pollution of water bodies with harmful chemicals from surface mining activities such as mercury, lead and cyanide continue unabated and the situation is getting worse by the day leaving irreversible damage to our environment which portends a bleak future for our nation Ghana. Heavy machinery such as excavators continue to be used in destroying the rest of our already depleted forests.

The allegations that some political and traditional leaders are directly or indirectly involved in these acts of sabotage against the nation have become rampant and the apparent lax in law enforcement by the agencies entrusted with this responsibility gives credence to the allegations of them being complicit in Galamsey activities in Ghana.

The ineffectiveness of the Executive and Legislature in dealing decisively with Galamsey is resulting in the continuous loss of lives and the slow poisoning of many others in Galamsey prone areas and indeed the entire population. Media reports over the last few years have highlighted the increased number of deaths occurring at Galamsey sites from direct and indirect causes.

The Ghana Water Company recently reported a reduction in water production by over 60% in Western region, 30 % in Central region with a total loss of about 50% of treated water due to the pollution and silting from Galamsey activities.

Ghana's cocoa production in recent times has been severely affected by Galamsey activities resulting in lower yields, decreased quantities for export and reduced quality of the cocoa beans.

Several scientific publications have linked the pollution of our water bodies and the general environment with a rise in birth and developmental defects, kidney diseases, cancers as well as other serious medical conditions.

Efforts by the media and Civil Society Organizations have yielded little impact. We are at a point where if immediate action is not taken, Ghana will face an environmental catastrophe that will severely compromise the health, well-being, and future of its people.

Therefore, we as Associations and Trade Unions in the Health Sector holding Collective Bargaining Certificates on behalf of health sector employees make the following demands:

1. The President of the Republic of Ghana should direct a total ban on small scale mining operations **with immediate effect**, whether legal or illegal.
2. The Government of Ghana should strengthen regulatory enforcement by resourcing the relevant security agencies to clamp down all persons who flout this directive and prosecute them expeditiously.
3. All political parties should make a public declaration and publish a duly signed document on their commitment to fight, illegal and unethical mining activities in Ghana.

The survival of our forests, water bodies, and ecosystems is directly linked to the survival of our people. It is imperative that the government acts now, without delay, to safeguard the future of our dear nation Ghana.


As health professionals, we are duty-bound to advocate for the health and safety of the public. We therefore urge the President of the Republic of Ghana to take these necessary and urgent actions to halt the Galamsey menace which threatens the future and the very survival of this country.

Leadership of our Associations and Trade Unions will be following keenly how events unfold and would like to state that we cannot guarantee industrial harmony if our demands are not heeded.

We must act swiftly to save our environment and water bodies NOW !

SIGNED

1. Ghana Medical Association (GMA)

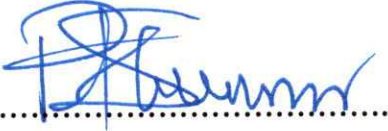


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DR. (MED) FRANK SEREBOUR

President

2. Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (GRNMA)



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MRS. PERPETUAL OFORI-AMPOFO

President

3. Government and Hospital Pharmacists Association (GHOSPA)



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DR. EMMANUEL OWUSU OWIAFE

National Chairman

4. Health Services Workers Union of Ghana. TUC



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MR. FRANKLIN OWUSU ANSAH

General Secretary

5. Medical Laboratory Professional Workers' Union (MELPWU)



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DR. CEPHAS KOFI AKORTOR

General Secretary

6. Mortuary Workers' Association of Ghana (MOWAG)



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MR. RICHARD KOFI JORDAN

General Secretary

7. Ghana Association of Certified Registered Anesthetists (GACRA)

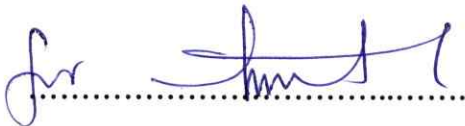


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MR. JAMES NWINSAGRA

President

8. Health Accounting Staff Association (HASAG)



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MR. EMMANUEL DENNIS AMOAH

President

9. Ghana Physician Assistants Association (GPAA)



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MR. PETER AKUDUGU AYAMBA

President