



Fria, 5 – 8 September 2017

Conference: Mining cities in West Africa
affected by site closures:
infrastructure, environment and political participation

JOINT POSITION ADOPTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FRIA SEMINAR

Fria, Guinea, 8 September 2017

Conference organised with the support of:



ARSYF, Association des ressortissants et sympathisants de la ville de Fria

Warning :

This statement was drafted and voted by the participants in the Fria seminar;
it does not engage in any way the donors who made possible the holding of this meeting.

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Fria, 8 September 2017

As a result of their deliberations in the Fria Seminar, Fria, Republic of Guinea, which took place from September 5th to 8th 2017, the participants from the different countries present (Burkina Faso, Canada, France, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo) decided as a group to adopt a joint position.

Concerning the conditions surrounding mining activities and the resulting risks participants:

1. Underline the risks associated with the increase in confrontations linked to mining activities and the gap between this activity and the process of policy and regulatory improvement in the mining sector;
2. Draw attention to the severity of the problems associated with artisanal and small scale mining and in particular artisanal mining, and underline **a]** the importance of taking account of the fact that such operations are essential to the survival and well-being of tens of thousands of people and **b]** the urgent need to pay greater attention to the solutions proposed by the countries within the sub-region with a view to improving the contribution of the mining sector as a whole to sustainable development;
3. Note the risks of cross-border conflicts, including those linked to artisanal mining.

Concerning the definition of mining, policies in this area and their objectives:

4. Reaffirm that mining must not be an end in itself but a catalyst and a springboard facilitating structural transformations with a view to more equitable and inter-generational development which is respectful of the environment;
5. Aim to make land management policies an integral part of national and local development policies instead of delegating them to the mining companies.

Concerning the regulatory framework of mining activities and the interactions among stakeholders at different levels:

6. Accompany the return of the state in the management and supervision of mining operations;
7. Reinforce the role of the state with regard to its responsibility for the provision of public services;
8. Recognise the existence of different levels of responsibility and intervention, and more particularly the need for the appropriation at the local level of initiatives, solutions and strategies;
9. Draw attention to the importance of the dissemination and improvement of the texts through the increased participation of local communities.

Concerning the role of research

10. Develop a database concerning mine closures and best practices in this area and make this information accessible to all stakeholders;
11. Ensure the links between knowledge derived from research and the formulation of public policies;
12. Systematise the existence of consultative frameworks which bring together researchers, members of civil society along with decision-makers.

In conclusion

13. Pursue the initiative of the Fria seminar with the aim to increase the responsibility of stakeholders, in particular of the state and so ensure greater accountability in order that other communities do not suffer the same fate as the city of Fria and its inhabitants.

The participants wish that the texts and results of this seminar to be shared with the authorities within the sub-region, including the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on a continental level with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU), as well as with the different stakeholders within the industry including decision-makers, mining companies and civil society organisations.

The participants in the seminar held in Fria from September 5th to 8th 2017 wish that the results of their deliberations may benefit the citizens of Fria and to contribute to improving their future.