



**KIMBERLEY
PROCESS
CIVIL SOCIETY
COALITION**



WEST AFRICA KIMBERLEY PROCESS REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY

THE GRAND-BASSAM DECLARATION “FOR RESPONSIBLE MINING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

Preamble

We, the member organizations of the Mano River Union Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, participating in a Regional Workshop held in Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire, from 23 to 24 April 2024, deliberated on the impact of extractive activities on local communities in the region, analyzed the drivers of these unacceptable situations and agreed on strong recommendations to ensure that mining is done from a rights-based approach and that it is economically beneficial, socio-ecologically responsible, politically transparent and accountable to ensure social justice and sustainable development.

Mindful of the fact that these reflections and analysis were done within the framework of the set objectives which seek to:

- a) *present and acknowledge the significant advances as well as the good practices achieved and promoted in diamond governance in the countries of the Mano River Union (MRU);*
- b) *address the persistent and numerous challenges faced by the various key players, especially local communities;*
- c) *jointly consider remediation approaches for diamond governance with a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic, social, environmental and ecological impact;*

Noting that at the end of the two days workshop, the member organizations namely NMJD, WoME, GRPIE, CECIDE, ACTION MINES, GREEN ADVOCATES INT, SCOOPS SEQUELA committed to the vision of “defending the rights of mining communities” ;

Acknowledging and appreciating with great satisfaction the efforts of regional and national projects, as well as the several notable advances being made by members and their partners and the level of implementation of activities and projects;

Recognizing the effective and harmonious functioning of the Coalition, and welcoming the level of implementation of activities and projects;

Acknowledging the importance of members committing to the set of Principles to promote best practices, for the benefit of the global diamond industry: labour rights, human rights, environmental protection, development of local communities, anti-corruption, and responsible diamond mining as provided for in the Declaration on Principles for Responsible Sourcing as Best Practices (Frame 7) adopted on 12 November 2021, in Moscow;

Consciously aware of the reported several chronic challenges associated with mining in the region, such as:

- 1) *The complete dispossession of and denial of communities to be fully integrated into the resource supply and value chains leading to gross inequalities, impoverishment, deprivation and lack of development in mining communities;*
- 2) *Limited positive and transformative impacts of actions/projects with little room for addressing emerging issues that can add value to the processes;*
- 3) *Low capacity to mobilize financing / insufficient funds that can be ploughed to sustain engagement at various levels;*
- 4) *Restriction of civic space (with laws, certification, service level agreements at each administrative level, etc.);*
- 5) *Poor integration of gender and women into diamond mining and governance;*
- 6) *Institutional instability occasioned by frequent change or movement of political appointees and limited political will;*
- 7) *The industry operating not in compliance with environmental and social standards;*
- 8) *Insecurity at mining sites through the use of security forces that brutalize citizens to 'protect' the companies; and*
- 9) *Weak, non-comprehensive and non-inclusive approach to the coordination of the MRU Regional Approach;*

Now thereof, we, the member organizations of the Mano River Union Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, noting that it is imperative to continue to move the Coalition forward, recommend the following:

1. *That governments of the ECOWAS countries recognize that communities own their land and, by extension, also own the minerals on and under their land or soil. There is therefore a need to reform all*

legislations in the ECOWAS region to give local communities co-ownership of minerals beneath or in the subsoil to local communities;

- 2. That governments of the ECOWAS countries establish as a guiding principle the full and active participation and involvement of communities in the management of diamonds and other minerals at all levels;*
- 3. That civil society actors working on the natural resource sector in ECOWAS adopt a POLICY, STRATEGY and CAMPAIGN towards the recognition of the property rights AND MINERAL RIGHTS of communities in mining areas;*
- 4. That the Coalition initiate a study to assess the degree of community involvement in the governance and management of diamonds and other minerals;*
- 5. That the Coalition carry out a diagnostic study on the state of implementation of the principles and requirements of the MRU, the KP in relation to mining governance and specifically diamond governance;*
- 6. That the Coalition develop a GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK to define areas of reflection on a strategy and an advocacy plan to improve diamond governance at the level of the MRU Secretariat, ECOWAS and other relevant regional institutions; and*
- 7. That for the purposes of implementing some of the recommendations above, an inclusive ad hoc Committee be established composed of ONE representative from each of the four (4) member countries of the MRU with the focus to;*
 - a.) Work towards strengthening the legal framework at the level of KP authorities with a view to improving the participation and involvement of local communities, integration of gender/women;*
 - b.) Strengthen community capacities through intensification of information, training and awareness campaigns; and*
 - c.) Use the Public Interest Lawyering mechanism, such as PILIWA (Public Interest Lawyering Initiative for West Africa) to defend the rights of communities and better take into account their aspirations.*

Done in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire on April 24, 2024