



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY
4TH, STREET SINKOR, MONROVIA LIBERIA



**THIRD STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION MEETING FOR THE OPERATION OF THE
PROPOSED MATAMBO OPEN PITS GOLD MINE PROJECT**

**IN FAVOR OF BEA MOUNTAIN MINING CORPORATION IN BANGOMA, GRAND
CAPE MOUNT COUNTY**

HELD ON JULY 11, 2024

IN BANGOMA, TEWOR DISTRICT, GRAND CAPE COUNTY, LIBERIA

Group Photo



I. INTRODUCTION

Bea Mountain Mining Corporation (BMMC), a subsidiary of Aversoro Resources, which operates several Gold mines (New Liberty, Weajue and Ndablama) in Grand Cape mount County. In fulfillment of the ESIA process an Environmental and Social Impacts Assessment Report was submitted to the EPA on February 27, 2024 for the acquisition of an environmental permit to operate the proposed Class “A” Open Pits (I, II, & III) Gold Mine Project in Matambo, Tewor District, Grand Cape Mount County, Liberia. The report was prepared on the company’s behalf by Petra Resources (a Liberian firm) and ABS (an international consultancy firm).

In line with the Standard and Regulations of the Agency and in fulfillment of the ESIA Process, the Agency, upon receipt of the ESIA Report, internally reviewed the document. The decision from the review process suggested the conduct of a Joint Stakeholder’s consultation in continuation of the ESIA Process. Initially, two stakeholders meeting were held on April 25, 2024 and May 13, 2024. Those meeting ended unsuccessfully due to the agitation and request from the project affected communities to have their lawmakers in attendance (the first meeting) and to signed a MOU with the Proponent (in the presence of their lawmakers, the second failed meeting). These two requests led to the failure of the two meetings. However, the proponent along with other key actors of the PACs had a resolution to resolve the obstacle to the meeting. A MOU was signed by both parties and based on the agreement this stakeholders’ consultation was organized.

The stakeholders’ consultation brought together representatives of the Project Affected Communities, Ministries, Agencies and Commissions of government, Civil Society Organizations, representatives of BMMC, persons of interest, Petra Resources, Inc., and technicians from the EPA.

At this point, the stakeholders’ consultation was meant to confirm and disclose every clause written in the MOU document to the project affected communities. The legal defendant, Mr. Richard **Koheiney** of the EPA presided over this session. Of all the clauses read by the lawyer, the PACs differed with the clause on the structure erected at the new Bangoma relocation site.

The following events, as part of the agenda for the day, took place before the citizens began their protest:

1. **Welcome Remarks:** Hon. kamara, acting town Chief of Bangoma Town. Mr. Kamara thanked all participants for being part of the meeting, pray for a successful conclusion of the meeting and informed the gathering of the death of one of its citizen on Tuesday, July 9, 2024.
2. **Self-introduction:** The process was guided by Mrs. Margaret Beyslow, Master of Ceremony. At this consultation, the name of participating towns and institution was recognized and the leaders of said towns and institutions stood to present the presence of the towns or institutions.

Special Statement: Hon. Mustaphe S. Passewe, Paramount Chief, Tewor District welcome all participants and prayed for a successful conclusion of the meeting.

3. **Special Statement:** - Hon. Aaron B. Sambollah, District Commissioner, Tewor District thanked all participants for attending the meeting and advised participants' especially effected communities to keep silent and observed the ground rules as laid down by the moderator Madam Beslow. He sent a caveat to participants who felt disenchanted to channel their disenchantment through a peaceful manner. Hon. Sambollah reminded participants about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was entered into by citizens of Bangorma Town and Bea Mountain Mining Company (BMMC). He expressed optimism for a peaceful settlement between the parties so that the peoples' lives can be transformed.
4. **Special Statement:** Clan Chief, Porkpa: Hon. Boakai Gonah, who, according to him, came for another meeting, was happy to form part of the consultation. He assured of his participation in the process.
5. **Special Statement** -Hon. Mohammed Dosii, Representative district 2, Grand Cape Mount County. Hon Dosii, appreciate the PACs for the full attendance and encouraged them to remain calm as the issue on the MOU will be resolved. However, we appealed on behalf of the people of all the affected communities especially Bangorma Town for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permission to issue Bea Mountain Mining Company (BMMC) permit to operate.
6. **Special Statement:** Acting Commissioner, Tewor District: Hon Mohammed J. Sheriff used the opportunity to recognize the presence of all statehooders, including EPA, BMMC, chiefs, project affected communities, other line ministries and agencies. He promised maximum security for everyone attending the meeting.
7. **Special Statement:** Mr. John K. Jallah, Manager, Compliance and Enforcement, Mr. John K. Jallah in a brief statement greeted the people of Bangorma Town and other invited towns and villages on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Executive Director, Dr. Emmanuel K. Uray Yarkpawolo.
He also informed the gathering that the Executive Director would love to attend the stakeholders meeting, but due to an impressive invitation from other partners he could not attend. The manager also informed the audience about the loss of three of the agency's staffs with the latest being his assigned driver Mr. Elijah Gleekan affectionately known as Jack. Mr. Jallah concluded by expressing hope for the successful conduct of the stakeholders.
8. Below are the institutions that honored the invitation to attend the Bangorma consultative engagement on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bea Mountain Mining Company (BMMC) and the people of Bangorma Town on one hand and the proposed Matambo's Class "A" open pits (I, II, & III) gold mine project on the other hand.
 - ✓ Ministry of Justice (MOJ) represented by Hon, B. Ramsey Ziankan, Assisting Minister for codification acting on behalf the Minister
 - ✓ Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) represented by Mr. Ben S. Acting Director of Mines

- ✓ Forestry Development Authority (FDA) represented by Saah Tamba Benjamin
- ✓ Ministry of Public Works (MPW) represented by Madam Yah Miaqueh
- ✓ Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) represented by Mr. McDonald T. Wlemus
- ✓ National Bureau of Concession (NBC) represented by Mr. Binda
- ✓ ministry of Labor (MOL) represented by Zah Philips
- ✓ Community Land and Development Committee represented by Scheck who recounted on the June 19/2024 Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between the people of Bangorma Town and Bea Mountain Mining Company (BMMC).
- ✓ In a brief remark also by the Bea Mountain Mining Company (BMMC), Mr. Morris Gontor representing the company called for oneness between they the development partner and the project effected communities especially Bsnrgorma Town.

II. TECHNICAL SESSION

A. Overview of the Stakeholders' Consultation

Mr. John K. Jallah, Manager of the Department of Compliance and Enforcement (C & E) gave an overview of the engagement. The manager first apologized on behalf of the EPA for the short notice, acknowledged that mistakes were made along the way and recounted on the following below:

- ✓ That in 2023 a notice of intent was published by Bea Mountain Corporation
- ✓ That Petra Resources along with ABS Consultant (international consultants) were hired to developed the ESIA report
- ✓ He explained that the ESIA report encompasses many aspect and in the case of Matambo Gold Project, the relocation of Bangorma Town is pertinent and require Resettlement Action Plan.
- ✓ The presentation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bea Mountain Mining Company (BMMC) and the people of Bangorma Town.

Presentation of MOU

The Presentation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was done by the Legal Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Mr. Richard Koheiney. He explained to the audience that meeting is meant to validate the signatures on the MOU and to give a clear picture of the MOU's content. He informed the PACs and other representatives that the MOU is divided into three Components. See points below

- Acknowledgement of the Mineral Agreement
- Relocation of Bangoma
- Livelihood support after relocation

All of the clauses of the MOU were accepted except for the clause that has to do with the type of structures that are designed to be built in Bangoma. In a later time, there was disturbance from the clause on Bangoma relocation clause and this led to exclusive meeting with the people of

Bangoma. The issue of new bangoma relocation structure was not resolved at the time of the stakeholders.

Conclusion

This report reveals that the Matambo Corridor stakeholders' consultation meeting is the most contentious stakeholders' consultation in recent EPA activity due to all the hindrances created by the management of BMMC in the implementation of the ESIA report. In actuality, the company started implementing the report before the consultation meeting by building the relocation houses which according to the community are sub-standard.

Therefore, the management of EPA should timely engage BMMC and the Bangorma community with utmost caution so as to amicably resolve the issue of the new Bangoma relocation to have a smooth coexistence between the PACs and BMMC.

Hence, the EPA should swiftly implement the below recommendations to avert the present crisis in the community.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Stakeholder Meeting for the commencement of mining at the proposed Matambo Gold Mine was successful this time due to the swift intervention of the EPA and other MACs in ensuring that the MOU between the company and the PACs is signed any meeting in which BMMC is present, hence the following recommendations are proffered for the successful re-hosting of the meeting:

- a. That the EPA ensures that the issue of new Bangoma structures be handled properly and resolve before the relocation process.
- b. That BMMC ensures to implement every clause in the MOU.