



NATIONAL CONCERNED SMALL SCALE MINERS ASSOCIATION GHANA

26 October, 2026

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Concerned Small-Scale Miners Association, Ghana, Backs Government's Cooperative Mining Scheme

The National Concerned Small-Scale Miners Association, Ghana, strongly supports the government's initiative to formalise unlicensed mining activities through the Responsible Cooperative Mining Scheme.

The association sees this initiative as a practical and more sustainable alternative to relying primarily on force to address illegal mining, popularly known as galamsey.

The association expresses concern over the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) opposition to the formalisation of unlicensed mining activities proposed by the Ghana Gold Board (GoldBod). We believe formalisation offers a practical opportunity to bring miners into the legal framework, improve regulatory compliance and reduce the harmful effects of mining on our environment.

Our position is simple: if the NPP disagrees with this approach, the party must tell Ghanaians what better alternative it proposes.

It is not enough to criticise a policy without presenting a workable solution to a problem that continues to affect our communities, forests and water bodies.

Ghana cannot continue to rely on the same enforcement methods and expect different results. Despite years of military and security operations, including Operation Vanguard and GalamStop, illegal mining remains a major national concern. This reality calls for fresh thinking, practical solutions and a more sustainable approach.

We must recognise that the fight against illegal mining requires more than the deployment of security personnel, arrests and the destruction of mining equipment. We need a comprehensive strategy that addresses the challenges preventing miners from entering the formal sector while ensuring that everyone who engages in mining operates within the law.

Formalisation as a Sustainable Solution

Since the introduction of the PNDC law on small-scale mining in 1989 under the leadership of former President Jerry John Rawlings, Ghana has made efforts to regulate

small-scale mining. However, the existing licensing regime has not brought all miners into the formal sector.

We therefore consider the Responsible Cooperative Mining Scheme an important intervention that complements the existing licensing framework and creates an opportunity for unlicensed miners to regularise their activities.

The reality is that many young Ghanaians depend on small-scale mining to earn a living and support their families. We cannot ignore this reality. Rather than treating every miner as a criminal, we must create a system that allows those who are willing to operate responsibly to do so legally.

This does not mean that we condone illegal mining or support the destruction of our natural resources. Far from it. We believe that miners must operate within the law, respect the environment and accept responsibility for the consequences of their activities.

Through a well-designed formalisation scheme, the government can better monitor mining operations, enforce environmental standards and ensure compliance with the laws governing the sector.

Formalisation also creates opportunities for employment, strengthens accountability and allows Ghana to derive greater benefits from its mineral resources without sacrificing environmental sustainability.

In this regard, we challenge the NPP to answer a fundamental question: What superior alternative formalisation approach is the party proposing to mitigate the harmful effects of unlicensed mining?

If the NPP opposes the GoldBod-backed initiative, Ghanaians deserve to know what practical measures the party proposes to bring miners into the legal framework, regulate their activities and protect the environment.

Opposition alone does not solve a problem. Ghana needs workable solutions that address the root causes of illegal mining rather than approaches that simply push miners from one community to another.

The Limitations of the Brute-Force Approach

The previous NPP administration relied heavily on enforcement operations to combat illegal mining. Programmes such as Operation Vanguard and GalamStop sought to reduce the menace through security operations and other enforcement measures. Yet illegal mining remains a serious national challenge. Despite the substantial resources reportedly committed to these interventions, the desired results remain elusive. The association estimates that nearly US\$500 million goes into the fight against galamsey under the previous administration, without the desired outcome.

This experience reinforces our belief that force alone cannot win the fight against illegal mining.

To be clear, we are not asking the government to abandon law enforcement. Anyone who violates the law must be held accountable. However, enforcement must go hand in hand with effective regulation, accessible legal alternatives and genuine opportunities for miners to work within the law.

Instead of relying primarily on chasing miners, seizing equipment and conducting security operations, we must create clear pathways for people to become responsible operators who contribute to national development while protecting our natural

resources.

This brings us to another important question: is the NPP, by opposing formalisation, advocating a return to the coercive methods that fail to eliminate illegal mining? Is the NPP, out of political expediency, pressuring the government to deploy the coercive machinery of the state against miners when formalisation offers a more constructive and potentially sustainable alternative?

We believe the NPP must distinguish between legitimate concerns about the implementation of a policy and political opposition that offers no workable alternative. The livelihoods of miners, the protection of our environment and the future of our mining communities must take precedence over partisan political interests.

Protecting Forest Reserves and the Environment

We fully recognise the importance of protecting Ghana's forest reserves, water bodies and other environmentally sensitive areas from the destructive effects of illegal mining. The association raises concern over allegations that approximately 47 forest reserves are opened to mining activities under the previous NPP administration. Such allegations deserve serious attention because our forest reserves are vital national assets that must be protected from activities that threaten their ecological integrity.

We welcome the current government's stated commitment to safeguarding forest reserves, strengthening security and preventing unauthorised mining in protected areas. Our position is clear: formalisation must never become a licence to mine in prohibited areas or destroy the environment. Every cooperative mining arrangement must comply with the law, respect designated mining boundaries and meet all applicable environmental requirements.

Responsible mining and environmental protection must go hand in hand. Ghana needs a mining sector that creates jobs and generates revenue without destroying the natural resources upon which present and future generations depend.

Against this background, we ask the NPP a further question: Is the GoldBod-backed formalisation proposal not a better and more environmentally responsible strategy than the NPP-initiated community mining approach, particularly in instances where adequate environmental and regulatory safeguards are allegedly lacking?

The purpose of formalisation is to bring mining activities under a structured system of supervision, ensure that operations take place in designated areas and enforce environmental standards. When properly designed and implemented, such a system gives the government greater oversight and makes it easier to hold operators accountable.

The NPP must therefore explain why it opposes an approach that seeks to bring miners under a formal regulatory framework while also addressing the shortcomings associated with previous mining interventions.

For the avoidance of doubt, our support for formalisation is not support for illegal mining. It is not a call to open our forests to destruction or allow our rivers to become polluted.

It is a call for a smarter, more sustainable and more accountable way of managing small-scale mining in Ghana.

Lessons from the Previous Community Mining Scheme

While we support the current initiative, we must also learn from the shortcomings of

previous interventions.

The previous NPP administration introduces community mining schemes with the stated aim of formalising small-scale mining. However, the association believes that the implementation of some of these schemes becomes politicised and fails to deliver the intended benefits to Ghanaian miners and local communities.

We are particularly concerned about allegations that some schemes benefit foreign operators, including Chinese nationals, instead of prioritising Ghanaian miners.

These concerns highlight the need for the current cooperative mining initiative to operate transparently, inclusively and accountably. Its benefits must reach Ghanaian miners, mining communities and young people who are willing to work responsibly within the law.

The government must establish clear eligibility criteria, effective monitoring mechanisms and transparent procedures to ensure that the programme does not become a vehicle for political patronage or the exploitation of our mineral resources.

We believe the success of any formalisation programme depends on its ability to regularise mining activities, protect the environment, create decent livelihoods and ensure compliance with the law. Announcing a scheme is not enough. What matters is how it works on the ground, how fairly it treats miners and how effectively it protects our natural resources.

We therefore urge the NPP to engage constructively with the government's proposal and offer practical recommendations where it identifies genuine weaknesses. If the party believes the scheme is flawed, it must explain those concerns and demonstrate how its preferred approach delivers better results.

A Call for Responsible Mining and National Development

Small-scale mining remains an important source of employment and livelihood for many Ghanaians. We do not believe the answer lies in destroying the sector. The answer lies in regulating it properly, strengthening accountability and making it sustainable.

The National Concerned Small-Scale Miners Association, Ghana, therefore supports the government's efforts to formalise unlicensed mining activities through the Responsible Cooperative Mining Scheme.

We believe this approach creates an opportunity to bring more miners into the legal framework, provide sustainable jobs for young people, improve government oversight and reduce the environmental damage associated with illegal mining.

We call on the government to implement the scheme fairly and transparently, with strict environmental safeguards and effective enforcement against operators who violate the law. Formalisation must come with clear rules, proper monitoring and consequences for those who refuse to comply.

We also urge miners to embrace responsible practices and recognise that the long-term survival of the sector depends on protecting the environment and complying with Ghana's mining regulations. The future of small-scale mining depends not only on the opportunities available to miners today but also on the natural resources we preserve for future generations.

We further call on the NPP to come clear and provide answers to the following questions:

What superior alternative formalisation approach is the NPP proposing to mitigate the

harmful effects of unlicensed mining activities?

Is the GoldBod-backed formalisation proposal not a better and more environmentally friendly strategy than the NPP-initiated community mining approach, particularly in instances where adequate environmental and regulatory safeguards are allegedly lacking?

Is the NPP, out of political expediency, pressuring the government to deploy the coercive machinery of the state against miners when formalisation provides a more constructive option for bringing their activities under the law?

These are legitimate questions that deserve clear and honest answers.

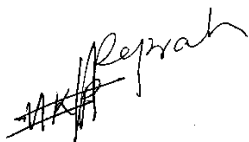
The NPP cannot simply oppose formalisation without explaining how it intends to address the persistent challenges of illegal mining, protect our environment and secure the livelihoods of thousands of Ghanaian miners.

We urge the party to state its position clearly and provide practical alternatives. Miners deserve to know whether the opposition to formalisation reflects genuine concerns about the policy or political considerations that do little to address their circumstances.

We also urge miners to examine the issues carefully and advise themselves accordingly. Every miner has a stake in the future of this sector, and every Ghanaian has a stake in protecting our forests, rivers and other natural resources.

Ghana must move beyond approaches that repeatedly fail to deliver lasting results. By combining formalisation, responsible mining, effective monitoring and environmental protection, we can build a mining sector that creates jobs, supports livelihoods, respects the law and contributes meaningfully to national development.

Yours faithfully,



Michael Kwadwo Peprah

PRESIDENT

(0248775556)