

## Regional Sectoral Meeting on Women in Mining: women for a more inclusive mining future in Africa

Dakar, Senegal, 17 – 19 July 2023

### ► Introduction

This document is the outcome of the Regional Sectoral Meeting on Women in Mining: women for a more inclusive mining future in Africa, held in Dakar, Senegal, from 17 to 19 July 2023.

The purpose of the meeting was to exchange experiences, generate consensus, and identify building blocks to address the obstacles that women in mining encounter and to advance gender equality and decent work in large and small-scale mining in Africa.

Mining and quarrying is of strategic importance to many African countries and contributed to around 4.5 per cent of the continent's GDP in 2018. Forty-two out of 54 African countries are resource dependent. The industry plays a critical role in driving economic growth and development on the continent.

In the context of climate change and growing pressures to foster the use of renewable sources of energy, mining plays an essential role in meeting demand for minerals that are critical to wind turbines, solar panels and batteries. The region accounts for significant reserves and is a major producer of gold, diamonds, cobalt, bauxite, iron ore, coal, copper and key other commodities.

While mining is a male-dominated industry, the presence of women working in mining companies and on mine sites in both large-scale mining and in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) operations is growing. Yet, traditional gender stereotypes and outdated legislation have excluded women from decent employment opportunities in the sector and from representation in decision making structures. Some women in the mining industry, especially in informal ASM operations, face unsafe working conditions and violence and harassment at work.

In recent years, the benefits of greater inclusion of women and diversity in mining are increasingly recognized. The need to empower women and reach full gender equality in all spheres of life, including employment, is highlighted in the African Union's Agenda 2063. It is also part of the Africa Mining Vision and seen as a means to creating a sustainable and well-governed mining sector as well as a step towards fostering resilient ASM communities. In the ILO Abidjan Declaration, the African region commits to promoting social dialogue and ensuring gender equality.

The meeting had 32 participants representing Governments (both Ministries of Labour and Ministries of Mines), employers and workers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Representatives from the African Union, IndustriALL Global Union, the International Organization of Employers, and the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development attended as observers.

During the three days, in addition to presentations and discussions led by experts on the topic, participatory approaches were used to enable interactive tripartite dialogue. This approach allowed participants to identify challenges and opportunities, share their experiences, and learn from each other, while identifying key policy priorities for advancing decent work, gender equality and social justice in the mining sector in Africa.

## ► Building blocks for advancing decent work and gender equality in the mining sector in Africa

The following building blocks were agreed at the Regional Sectoral Meeting on Women in Mining: women for a more inclusive mining future in Africa. They set out key areas for advancing decent work and gender equality for a more sustainable and inclusive mining sector in Africa.

As a general principle women and/or their representatives should be involved in all decisions that concern them and be adequately represented in governance and management structures at all levels.

| <b>Women in Mining: women for a more inclusive mining future in Africa</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Effective and inclusive legal frameworks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, revise and duly implement and enforce coherent, effective and gender-sensitive laws, regulations and policies</li> <li>• Respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work for all*, including the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, and the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the mining sector</li> <li>• Ratify and effectively implement International Labour Standards in law and in practice</li> </ul> | <b>Mining policies and social dialogue</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream decent work and gender equality into national mining policies</li> <li>• Engage governments and employers' and workers' organizations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of mining policies through effective and inclusive social dialogue in all its forms and at all levels</li> <li>• Engage multinational enterprises in line with the the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy</li> <li>• Promote and share good practices of gender-sensitive collective bargaining with the inclusion of women</li> <li>• Promote and engage women in mining structures and other advocacy organizations</li> </ul> | <b>Labour administration and inspection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen capacities and improve the coordination of the sometimes separate functions of labour, mine and social security inspectorates</li> <li>• Provide guidance to mining enterprises, employers' and workers' organizations to comply with national laws and regulations</li> <li>• Address lack of financial resources and invest in capacity building for labour and mining inspectors</li> </ul> |
| <b>Decent jobs and sustainable enterprises</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Towards a just transition for all</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Skills development, capacity building and training</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement effective policies to promote decent, productive and sustainable employment for women and men</li> <li>• Incentivize multinational mining enterprises to provide stable employment and build linkages with local enterprises</li> <li>• Create and strengthen an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises</li> <li>• Provide special support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including those owned or led by women</li> <li>• Support supplier development programmes</li> <li>• Facilitate access to information, finance, land, equipment and technology for women</li> <li>• Promote women entrepreneurship in the mining supply chain</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities for female employment with the sector's expansion into critical minerals</li> <li>• Optimize employment opportunities as mining operations shift to renewable energy sources and introduce new technologies</li> <li>• Establish effective partnerships for a just transition for both women and men in mining communities</li> </ul>                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in skills development and lifelong learning for both women and men in mining operations and along its value chains</li> <li>• Detect, identify and address skills gaps and shortages through skills forecasting, reskilling and upskilling</li> <li>• Develop national strategy to increase women and girls' participation in STEM education</li> <li>• Engage schools of mines and other educational and vocational training institutions to increase the share of women</li> <li>• Prioritize and incentivize women to benefit from bursaries, on-the-job training and apprenticeships</li> <li>• Involve families and communities in promoting STEM education for girls</li> <li>• Address gender- and cultural biases and change the mind-set of men and women</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Occupational safety and health for women and men</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratify and effectively implement the <a href="#">Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No 176)</a> and the OSH-related fundamental principles and rights at work: <a href="#">Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)</a> and <a href="#">Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>Social and labour protections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update classifications of mining occupations</li> <li>• Ensure equal pay for work of equal value</li> <li>• Establish gender-sensitive working arrangements</li> <li>• Adopt solid contractual arrangements and sound employment relationships, including for contracted and outsourced workers</li> <li>• Review, design, implement and monitor gender-responsive social protection systems,</li> </ul> | <p><b>Gender equality and non-discrimination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities and other people vulnerable to discrimination</li> <li>• Adopt anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies</li> <li>• Combat violence and harassment at work in line with the ILO <a href="#">Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate and implement the ILO codes of practice on <a href="#">Safety and Health in Underground Coalmines</a> and on <a href="#">Safety and Health in Opencast Mines</a> as well as the <a href="#">Safety &amp; Health in Small-Scale Surface Mines: A Handbook</a></li> <li>Increase investments to ensure a safe and healthy working environment in the mining industry</li> <li>Provide gender-appropriate personal protective equipment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>including the right to parental leave and access to affordable child care and flexible working arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide general welfare facilities for women miners (e.g. child care, toilets, showers, washbasins and laundry, changing and breastfeeding rooms)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish grievance mechanisms and psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence and harassment</li> <li>Analyse and promote the roles and work of women as contractors, subcontractors and suppliers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Artisanal and small-scale mining</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generate a better understanding of decent work challenges and opportunities for women and men in ASM</li> <li>Support and encourage the formalization of enterprises, cooperatives and workers in the informal ASM sector</li> <li>Provide policy advice and technical assistance to advance decent work and gender equality in ASM</li> <li>Promote collaboration and links between large-scale mining and ASM and establish gender inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms</li> <li>Take measures and implement development cooperation projects to eradicate child labour and sexual exploitation</li> </ul> | <p><b>Institutional capacity building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the capacities of workers' and employers' organizations in the mining industry to represent the interests of their members and advance gender equality</li> <li>Ensure balanced representation of women and men in internal governance and management mechanisms at all levels</li> <li>Establish mechanisms for effective consultation and engagement of both women and men in indigenous and local communities</li> <li>Support women workers in ASM to organize and protect their rights</li> </ul> | <p><b>Data and research as well as knowledge development and sharing on women in mining</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support national statistical offices to collect more, better and standardized data disaggregated by sex</li> <li>Analyse, disseminate and use up-to-date data effectively for better and more gender-sensitive mining policies and action</li> <li>Conduct evidence-based research on women in mining, including lessons learned and best practices across the sector</li> <li>Put effective mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate progress in advancing gender equality in mining</li> </ul> |

\* freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and a safe and healthy working environment.

## Next steps and way forward

Participants have agreed to disseminate the outcomes of the workshop and report back to the relevant national mechanisms and sectoral constituents and stakeholders in their respective countries and promote the approaches set out in the building blocks, including through national action plans and sectoral platforms.

The ILO is requested to work with tripartite constituents in the mining sector across Africa to:

- Promote the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards, declarations and tools and the promotion of gender equality and strengthen capacity to respect, promote and realize the ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work;
- Build capacity for them to engage in effective social dialogue to promote gender equality, decent work and sustainable enterprises;
- Conduct evidence-based research and collect data, statistics on women in mining;
- Support the implementation of the building blocks, including through identifying opportunities for development cooperation activities in the mining sector;
- Strengthen partnerships with the African Union, UNECA, SADC and ECOWAS, and other strategic partners to advance decent work and gender equality in a more sustainable and inclusive mining sector in Africa.