



WOMEN EXCEL IN MINING SECTOR

By John Ricks Kayizzi

Despite their significant contribution to the extraction of valuable resources and raw materials, women have frequently been excluded from many forms of mining.

The International Day of Women in Mining is commemorated on June 15 every year.

This year's theme, *Equity in Mining is Everyone's Responsibility*, emphasises how gender inclusion can be one of the greatest assets the industry has to ensure its long-term sustainability.

The celebration seeks to further empower women to share their passion for the industry, as well as commemorate the industry's achievement on gender inclusion to date.

The primary objectives

of the International Day of Women in Mining include celebrating the pioneers who paved the way for women in the extractives, those currently working in the mining value chain and others who will join the mining sector.

The second objective is to campaign for industries and individuals to collectively and collaboratively work on actionable initiatives towards a more sustainable, diverse and inclusive mining industry.

Uganda's advocates on this campaign is the Ntinda-based Global Rights Alert. Its mission is to make natural resources benefit the people.

"Our work is rooted in empowering communities to negotiate for equitable benefit sharing, influence decisions that impact their lives and mitigate human rights abuses associated

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Irene Bateebe, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, says women have earned their place in the mining industry.

"Gender balance is crucial if society is to advance on an equal front. That's why we help women forge ahead here at the energy ministry," she says, adding that women have earned their rightful place in the extractive industry through working hard and being focused.

with the exploitation of natural resources," Lydia Ainomugisha, the organisation's public relations officer, says.

She says they strive to bridge the gap between mineral host communities and actors to ensure an inclusive and accountable development of the sector.

Global Rights Alert also focuses on governance and human rights framework, which considers challenging inequality and injustice as central to inclusive development.

The body's vision is to become East Africa's leading civil society organisation defending



Resty Naturinda (extreme right), a Global Rights Alert staff member, sensitises women in Buhweju on safety in the mines. The International Day of Women in Mining recognises women's contributions to the industry

and promoting human and community resource rights in the extractives industry.

They, henceforth, promote respect for human and resource rights of communities along the entire value chain of the extractives industry, advance gender inclusiveness in natural resources governance and promote transparency and accountability in the industry.

Initiated last year, the June 15 commemoration celebrates women's perseverance, contributions, talent and spirit.

To underscore the importance of women in the extractives industry, the global mining fraternity has been called upon to celebrate female talent and pledge to work towards gender equality in the sector.



GLOBAL RIGHTS ALERT

GLOBAL RIGHTS ALERT (GRA)

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MINING

Global Rights Alert (GRA) joins the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day of Women in Mining (IDWIM) which is annually observed on 15th June across the globe.

The International Day of Women in Mining observance honors the achievements and advancement of inclusion in mining for all women. The theme for this year's event - *"Equity in mining is everyone's responsibility"* underscores the need for an inclusive mining sector for both men and women, a responsibility for all humanity

The commemoration of this day provides an opportunity for relevant sector players to reflect on progress made and consolidate efforts to prevent and eliminate gender inequalities and inequities in the mining sector.

According to the Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (UGEITI) FY 2019/20 Report, macro-economic data provided by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) indicates that the mining and quarrying sector accounted for UGX 2,266.31 billion in the FY 2019-2020 which represents 1.63% of the national GDP on current

basic prices. Up to 200,000 people are estimated to be directly involved in Uganda's artisanal mining. According to a UNEP report, around 45 per cent are estimated to be women, although this varies in different regions of the country.

The report estimates that 25 percent of women in the central region of Uganda including Mubende and Kampala Camp are involved in artisanal mining.

GRA believes that promoting Equity in Mining requires addressing the current bottlenecks that hinder women from doing safe, profitable, productive and sustainable extraction of mineral resources.

Over the years, GRA has supported Women in Mining to increase productivity, improve safety at workplaces, and advocated for legislative and policy reforms geared towards shaping the legislative and policy reforms. GRA has also supported Women Miners to coalesce and form formidable investment groups such as Mubende Women Gold Miners Association, the only Women group with an exploration license in the country.

Our work with the mining communities from Kasanda, Buhweju, Mubende, Busia, and Moroto districts through various interventions have enhanced transparency and accountability, fostered conflict resolution, and bolstered confidence among women miners, and most importantly provided an environment that promotes the rights of women and children in mineral rich districts and mining sites.

This is in line with our mission of making natural resources equitably benefit the people, we pledge our support to women in Mining. And in line with this year's IDWIM theme, we encourage government and mining companies to commit the necessary resources needed to meaningfully promote and monitor efforts towards creating an inclusive and equitable mining sector for Uganda.

Once again, we congratulate Ugandan Women in Mining on this special day. We see you lifting your families out of poverty, putting food on the table, proving medical care, paying school fees, and most importantly, we see you as formidable investors in your communities. For each bead of sweat, you break while mining, we are a better country.

