

Newmont Ghana Ahafo Mine
Media Reports of Fish Mortality at the Water Storage Facility and Allegations of a Cyanide Spill
19 January 2011

Over the last several weeks there have been a number of media reports and statements made by one Ghana-based NGO regarding a reported fish mortality incident (6th January, 2011) at the Ahafo Mine Water Storage Facility. Speculation and allegations have been made in the media that the incident was the result of a cyanide spill from the Ahafo Mine or its associated facilities. Other media reports have stated that fish died as a result of chemicals used by fishermen to kill and harvest fish living in the pond.

Newmont Ghana unequivocally asserts that there has been no incident, spill, or accidental release of any process solutions containing cyanide or any other chemical agent from the Ahafo Mine or its associated facilities that caused the fish mortality. The information here is intended to provide facts and background to ensure that accurate information is available to key stakeholders.

On 6th January, 2011, the Ahafo Mine received a report that some dead fish had been observed in the Water Storage Facility (WSF) - a fresh water reservoir. The report was made by the company's community-based patrol team who actively engage with hamlets and households that live in areas near the reservoir. Local authorities and regulators were immediately notified and invited to conduct an investigation into the matter. The community-based patrol team's mandate is to educate and inform neighbouring community members on the operations and activities of the company as well as to inform the Ahafo Mine's Community Relations Team regarding incidents or activities that occur at the reservoir.

The Water Storage Facility is located *upstream* from all Ahafo Mine infrastructure including the process plant site, mining areas, and the tailing storage facility. The reservoir is designed to collect natural runoff from existing drainage basins located up-gradient from the reservoir. The water runoff is stored in the reservoir and utilized as needed by the Ahafo Mine for mining and processing activities. The reservoir is a restricted area and sign posts have been erected prohibiting entry into that area. The reservoir is not utilized by local communities as a potable water source. The communities and hamlets that are in close proximity to the reservoir have been provided with eight boreholes and seven wells to meet their potable water needs. The fish were put into the reservoir by Newmont to assist in controlling malaria larvae as part of the company's overall malaria management programme.

The Ahafo Mine reported the incident to local, regional and national officials from the District Assembly, the Ghana Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Minerals Commission Inspectorate Division immediately on 6th January, 2011. The Ahafo Mine has been fully cooperating with all local, regional and national officials to conduct investigations and interviews to understand the causes of the incident. Preliminary

investigations conducted by the Ahafo Mine show no indication of cyanide or other process-related chemical agent in the water and there has not been any accidental discharge from the Ahafo Mine operations.

Unfortunately, a number of media outlets are reporting that stakeholders and community members claim the incident is due to cyanide spillage from the Ahafo tailings storage facility (TSF). The reservoir (WSF) is located adjacent to but up-gradient from the TSF, so it is not possible for any mine process water from the TSF to flow uphill to the water reservoir. The location in the TSF where the process solution collects is situated approximately 800-1000 metres away from the reservoir. The two facilities (WSF and TSF) are also separated by an embankment (dam) which has been designed and constructed to internationally-accepted standards and are regularly monitored internally and independently. Monitoring of the dam has shown no seepage from the Tailings Storage Facility into the Water Storage Facility.

The Ghana EPA conducted on-site detailed investigations, independent water quality sampling and interviews with surrounding community members during the last week. In addition, the company has completed a detailed water quality sampling program. All results collected to date do not indicate any evidence or occurrence of an incident related to the Ahafo Mine or its associated facilities. A report will be released and shared with all participating government agencies once laboratory analyses are received and reviewed. Newmont Ghana will continue to update all stakeholders based on new information and developments relating to this incident as they become available.

Demonstrating leadership in safety, stewardship of the environment and social responsibility remains one of our key commitments.

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