Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

The Launch of Mubende United Miners Assembly's Small-Scale Mining License in Kassanda District

November 11, 2025

1. Abstract

On the 6-11 of November, 2025, other members and I at UGEITI Secretariat, headed by the Head of Secretariat Ms. Gloria Mugabe, visited and witnessed the Launching of MUMA's gold license in Bukuya, Kassanda District.

Therefore, this field report highlights the purpose, observations, findings, analyses, and conclusions from the above visit to Mubende United Miners Assembly in Kassanda District.

Overview of the Field exploration

The physical structures are present in the area, activities of legal and proper mining as guided by the Mining and Minerals Act of 2022.

The people working within the mines are of age and suitable for the exploration, though more protective gear could be provided to them to further strengthen their safety.

The infrastructures, like the roads, are not yet tarmacked, which would be of great help if it were done to further soften the transportation, ease of access, and security of Gold ore and the people working in these mines.

The event of the launch was successful and productive for both the locals and the direct beneficiaries of the exploration of Gold.

2. Introduction

The Mubende United Miners Assembly (MUMA) is an association of small-scale miners in the greater Mubende district, which formerly had Artisanal mining operations but later upgraded to a small-scale mining License.

With the help of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the miners came together to collectively address the government's concerns that had led to their eviction following their illegal mining, failure to pay taxes, employing child labour, hiring foreign nationals in a trade ring-fenced for locals, and the careless use of dangerous chemicals and mercury – harming the environment in the process.

After getting organized and more vocal, the state issued the group 32 location licenses in 2019, allowing members to resume mining legally. But with the repeal of the Mining Act, 2003, the location license was replaced

by artisanal and small-scale mining licenses under the new Mining and Minerals Act, 2022

2.1 The Enablers

The preparation and rewarding of this license did not come out of the blue, it was the careful engagements and cooperation of the concerned parties like the Uganda Association of Artisanal and Small-scale miners (UGAASM), the Uganda extractives industries Initiative (UGEITI) and the Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines (DGSM) and of course the Ministry of Energy and mineral Development (MEMD).

The above Organisations had different tasks towards the rewarding of this license.

2.2 The Uganda Association of Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners Limited (UGAASM)'s key functions included advocating for and representing the interests of small-scale miners to the government and policymakers. They also assisted members with formalization, obtaining the licenses and permits, and complying with mining regulations, safety standards, and environmental management. Additionally, UGAASM provided training, helped members access financial resources, and engaged in community development projects to improve livelihoods.

2.3 The Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (UGEITI), which is the Ugandan implementation of the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a standard that promotes the open and accountable management of a country's mineral resources, like gold in Kassanda district.

3. Observations and Findings

(i) In attendance: The event that was held at Kagaba Playground in Bukuya Town Council and attended by, the Resident District Commissioner-Kassanda, Hon. Member of Parliament for Bukuya , Hon. Dr. Michael Bukenya, Kassanda, District Local Government Leaders, CEO -Uganda Chamber of Energy and Minerals; CEO Uganda Artisanal and Small Scale Mining Association (UGAASM), Uganda Chamber of Commerce, Representatives from Bank of Uganda (4); Representatives from URA, Representatives from Uganda National Mining Company,

Uganda EITI, PMPU, Community members and NGOs such as (Solidadad, GIZ, UNDP, Impact Facility) as well as miners and buyers of gold ore (over 100 miners)

(ii) **Purpose**: John Bosco Bukya, the chairman of the Mubende United Miners Assembly (MUMA) and the chairman of the Uganda Association of Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners Limited (UGAASM), said that the acquisition of a Small-Scale Mining License marks the start of great things for Uganda's miners – not only in Kassanda District, where the license is operational, but countrywide.

(iii) **The lifespan of the license**: This five-year license will enable MUMA to undertake small-scale gold mining operations in Bukuya, Kassanda, over an area of 100.8 hectares.

(iv) **The legality of the assembly (MUMA):** Emmanuel Kibirige, the MUMA general secretary, noted that the assembly had initially emerged as a pressure group through which artisanal miners sought to regain access to their livelihoods. Today, MUMA stands strong and is legally recognized by the state.

(v) **Communication from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development**: Agnes Alaba, the Acting Director of the Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines (DGSM), represented the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Hon. Dr. Ruth Nankabirwa, noted that being one of the core centers of gold deposits, it was significant that Kasanda and the Greater Mubende district receive the first small-scale mining license in the central region and the fourth overall in the country since the new law was enacted.

(vi) So far, **eight small-scale and one artisanal mining licenses** have been issued, she added.

(vii) **The purpose of Artisanal Mining**: "Artisanal mining is the pathfinder to key mineral deposits, with most mining projects starting out as artisanal operations. Since the artisanal mining sub-sector employs over 60% of the workforce in mining in Uganda, it was important that we formalize and regulate it," Alaba said

(viii) **The Eight (8) Small Scale Mining Licenses:** SML000575 is one of the 8 Small Scale Mining Licenses that the Ministry has so far issued to promote the participation of Ugandans in the Mining sector and the development of small-scale mining that contributes over 60% of workforce.

(ix) **MUMA's upgrade to Small scale Mining:** The Minister, through the director, commended MUMA for upgrading to Small scale Mining and for putting in place a tracking system that tracks gold ore from mining to the processing site. This forms basis for mineral tracking system and supply to the Mineral Market.

(x) **Cooperation with the government policies:** The Director urged MUMA to conduct its mining operations in line with Government policies and approved mining plans, while being cognizant of the ESG and ensuring their mining operations benefit the community and eradicate child labor in their mining operations.

(xi) **Government support to the ASM sector:** The government of Uganda supports the ASM sector through training programs, sensitization, benchmarking (2trips to Tanzania), Strategic collaboration with development partners such as PlanetGold, UNDP, GIZ to support the ASM sector, provision of basic geoscientific data, streamlining the licensing process through the cadaster. Enhance the regulatory framework to align with international best practices, thus promoting the development of the ASM sector.

(xii) **Future prospects include**: integration of licensing systems with other systems; Establishment of the Mineral Markets to formalize trade in the sector and protect miners, and many more.

3.1 The Launch: On the 7th November 2025, the Acting Director of the Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines (DGSM), Agnes Alaba, who represented the Permanent Secretary and the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, launched the Small-Scale Mining License number SML000575 issued to Mubende United Miners Assembly (MUMA).

3.2 A Handbook: The Ministry also launched a handbook for the Uganda Association of Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners (UGAASM), 2025. The handbook will be updated bi-annual basis.

3.3 Partnership reward: The UGEITI was recognized for its efforts and pillar-strength contribution in the attainment and implementation of good governance in the extractive industry, like the MUMA.

4. Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

a. A 2020 Uganda Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (UGEITI) report noted a mismatch between gold exports and local production.
b. The MUMA is no longer under artisanal mining operations but has increased its standing as a small-scale mining licensed association, which gives it leverage in the gold market.
c. Crucially, formalization of the industry is expected to expand the government's revenue base, with minerals currently among the sectors earmarked to anchor Uganda's ambitious plan to expand the country's economy from $50 billion to $500 billion by 2040.
d. According to Uganda's tenfold Growth strategy, the MUMA chapter contributes significantly to the realization of the strategy because of its nature of operation.
e. Uganda Vision 2040, developed through the National Development Plan IV, speaks with surety about the importance and value proposition of the formalization of small-scale miners. This will translate into a very boastful achievement of the economic objective through the MUMA license.

5. Conclusion

i. With the new license, MUMA can now participate in the Bank of Uganda's Domestic Gold Purchase Programme, which seeks to buy only locally mined gold from licensed miners to supplement the country's foreign currency reserves while boosting the economy and the Uganda shilling.
ii. "The mining license is one of the major requirements for miners to prequalify to sell gold to BoU. This MUMA mining license confirms that they are authorized to mine gold in a particular area in Uganda and can legally sell gold to the central bank," said George Achanga, the Deputy Director, Financial Risk Management Division at BoU.
iii. The tarmacking of the road running from the Mityana-Mubende junction through the Kassanda district headquarters to the gold mining area of Bukuya to be fast-tracked by the local leaders.

iv. Buying local gold helps the central bank trace the source of the mineral, which is one of the cardinal components of the BoU pilot gold purchase program.
v. Supporting local Ugandan miners is a strategy already bearing dividends, with proceeds being reinvested in local economies. Like the development of the Bukuya Town council, which is in progress and experiencing steady growth.
vi. The spike in revenues from gold exports in Uganda over the last five or so years has raised many questions about the origin of the product, with many observers pointing to the mineral-rich but conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan as the source, but with this and many more licenses, Uganda's credibility on the international market is boasted.

In essence, Uganda is on a steady and progressive journey to a self-sustaining economy, if these and more interventions are done in the extractives industry, of Minerals, oil, and gas. Therefore, the MUMA license opened a great door of possibilities and great potential for our growth, achieving both the 10-fold growth strategy and the Vision 2040.