

A group of people are seated around a large conference table in a meeting room. They are looking at laptops and documents. The room has large windows with blinds. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent box containing text.

IGF-WIMOWA WORKSHOP

GENDER AND MINING GOVERNANCE: ENHANCING WOMEN'S VOICES AND PARTICIPATION IN WEST AFRICA

November 26, 2020

BACKGROUND

The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) received a request from the [West African Monetary and Economic Union](#) (UEMOA, in French) for capacity-building support for members of [Women in Mining of West Africa](#) (WIMOWA). Specifically, the IGF was called on to promote a better understanding of the important issues related to gender and mining governance and to highlight relevant examples of good practices for members. WIMOWA is a network of women's associations in the mining, oil, and gas sectors in West Africa and was created under the aegis of UEMOA in 2015.

The IGF responded first with a training needs assessment survey to map WIMOWA members' existing capacities, learning needs, and expectations. In turn, the IGF used the survey results to develop a tailored half-day training program for WIMOWA members that

“This capacity building is necessary to participate in good governance through advocacy and other means.”

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

was delivered on November 26, 2020. The training was the first of a series of trainings on gender to come.

This workshop falls under a Memorandum of Understanding between UEMOA and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), which has hosted the IGF Secretariat since 2015. Under the agreement, the IGF's role is to promote capacity building for officials in UEMOA and its member states to support mining's contribution to sustainable development in the region.



The workshop's main facilitator was Mokshda Pertaub, an expert in gender equality and gender-based violence.

The program also included issue-specific presentations from:

- Clémence Naré, Law Advisor and Outreach Manager, IGF
- Ege Tekinbas, Gender Equality Advisor, IGF
- Suzy H. Nikièma, International Law Advisor and Regional Coordinator for Africa, IISD

DESIGNING TRAINING TO MEET THE AUDIENCE'S NEEDS

In developing the training, the IGF incorporated the findings from the training needs assessment survey that attracted responses from 20 members representing 11 national associations and/or networks of women in mining. The survey was offered in English and French.

The survey responses revealed important details about the audience. The trainees were well educated, with many holding advanced academic credentials: 10% with a doctorate and 55% with a post-graduate degree. Most respondents (17 out of 20) indicated that gender influenced their work

to a great extent, and a majority said they had received introductory training on gender issues. With this profile of the audience in mind, the IGF took an approach using self-motivation and experience-based learning wherein the trainer acts as a facilitator and allows participants to reflect on their knowledge and experience in a structured format.

Answers to the survey's qualitative questions also showed that most of the respondents were active in advancing women's participation in the mining sector via civil society or women's organizations in their countries while also working in the mining industry or public sector. They expected the training to cover various issues, ranging from advocacy tools to compliance with international mining standards, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative's requirements on [gender balance and the collection of data](#).

A total of 65% of respondents said that they had at least some knowledge on gender and mining, and they requested technical and deeper training on specific issues related to gender equality and mining governance. Among the list of training topics, the following three were the most requested:

1. Advocacy for integrating gender equality into judicial and policy-level mining frameworks



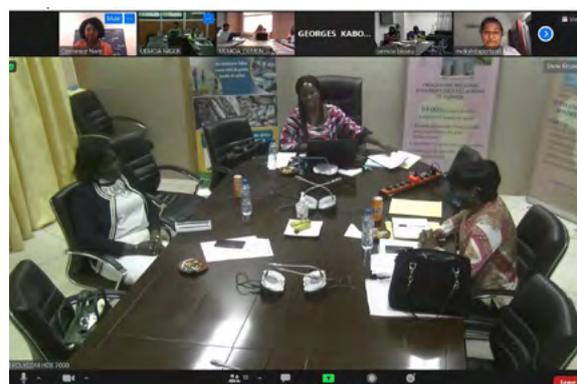
2. Enhancing women's voices and participation in local communities affected by mining operations
3. Gender impact assessments and integrating gender into environmental and social impact assessments

Accordingly, the event was created with a two-part structure. First, the trainers presented the main concepts of gender and mining governance, with a focus on the reasons behind women's systemic exclusion in the sector and the main barriers to women's equal representation. The second part of the training was a deep-dive session focusing on topic 2, which was identified as critical and relevant to all participants in the survey.

The session tapped into rich training materials used for a [Gender and Mining Governance](#) course developed and implemented jointly by the IGF with the UNDP's Environmental Governance Programme and Learning for Nature platform. It also incorporated the considerable literature on mining governance and gender, specifically using in-depth reports and case studies on West Africa, including court judgments pertaining to women facing injustice and prejudice in the mining sector.

TRAINING STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The training took a hybrid approach, with participant groups together in their respective country offices and the trainer joining them virtually. This method helped the participants interact while the trainer promoted engagement with questions, discussion, experience sharing, and group activities—all of which enhanced the learning process.



PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOT

The training was delivered in French, with English translation, to 36 participants from WIMOWA national networks and associations from:

UEMOA countries

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Guinea-Bissau
- Ivory Coast
- Mali
- Niger
- Senegal
- Togo

Broader West African countries

- Ghana
- Guinea
- Nigeria
- Sierra Leone
- The Gambia



Participants pointed to some specific challenges, such as the lack of a legislative framework to support women's effective participation and contribution in the mining sector.

The session started with a description of gender concepts, including a discussion about understanding gender as a broad spectrum rather than a binary concept. Participants wanted more information on the concept of intersectionality and gender, and they discussed the concepts of patriarchy, social laws, and inequality. Participants also discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated some of the established challenges facing women in the sector, specifically those related to patriarchy. The trainer then sparked a discussion about how the pandemic has affected women's employment and the barriers to gender equality in both large-scale mines and artisanal and small-scale mining operations.

Following a case study examination, the training focused on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders to improve women's participation in the mining sector. Participants pointed to some specific challenges, such as the lack of a legislative framework to support women's effective participation and contribution in the mining sector. In those jurisdictions where such frameworks do exist, they pointed to the lack of implementation and resources to commit to enforcement. The participants also discussed the effectiveness of employee gender quotas—which tend to represent a maximum limit for many companies rather than a minimum standard—and do not necessarily require equal pay for equal work.

Next, the trainer initiated a role-playing session wherein a hypothetical idea was posited, and participants took on the roles

of industry leaders to share their ideas on how to improve gender equality in the mining sector. A flood of interesting ideas poured out from the participants, including daycare in the workplace, recruitment tests to bypass gender bias, career plans for women joining the mining industry, training and advocacy programs to change ingrained corporate patriarchy, legal clinics for women miners, and alert mechanisms to prevent gender-based violence that include quick remedies and psycho-social support systems.

At the conclusion of the training, the IGF Secretariat reiterated its commitment to offer further support UEMOA and WIMOWA to build capacity on gender and mining governance. Participant feedback suggests that this workshop was well received, and a second training on the topic is scheduled for the second half of 2021.

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