



## NEWS RELEASE

To All Media Agencies

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### **BMW Group, Tetra Pak and Schüco International Raise Concerns Over Atewa-sourced Bauxite**

Three global manufacturing companies – BMW Group, Tetra Pak and Schüco International KG – have responded to concerns over the use of aluminium made from bauxite mined in the Atewa Forest.

Their positions have been communicated in letters to the Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape (CCAL), the grassroots movement advocating against bauxite mining in Atewa Forest.

The three companies are all members of the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) established to certify members and their products in the bauxite-aluminium supply chain that meet its sustainability standards.

While the companies recognise the Ghana government's desire to develop the aluminium sector for economic development and poverty reduction, they have firmly stated that their commitments to sustainability will not be compromised. All three companies pointed to their endorsement of the ASI's social and environmental standards, and said they also want their suppliers to meet these same standards.

The **BMW Group**, a founding member of the ASI, said "Bauxite from the region of the Atewa Forest needs to be in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNFCCC Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Ghana's voluntary national contributions towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. If this is not the case the BMW Group will not accept aluminium in its supply chains that originates bauxite from the Atewa Forest".

**Tetra Pak** said that "sourcing aluminium produced with bauxite mined in the Atewa Range Forest Reserve at Kyebi in Eastern Ghana presents a level of risk that is completely unacceptable to Tetra Pak... No matter how high the environmental standards that are applied, any form of mining at this site will have an unavoidable destructive impact on the values inherent in such a natural habitat".

**Schüco** said it "would therefore oblige our aluminium suppliers not to supply aluminium derived from bauxite mined in the Atewa Range Forest Reserve, and we intend to encourage other aluminium users to join us in this commitment".

Campaigners advocating for protection of the Atewa Forest have repeatedly stated that mining bauxite in the Atewa Forest would not meet ASI's requirements. Bauxite mining in Atewa would threaten species with global extinction, undermining the Convention on Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals that both set clear targets to stop extinctions.

If bauxite from Atewa forms part of Ghana's aluminium supply, the Ghana Integrated Aluminium Development Corporation (GIADEC) risks outright rejection of all Ghana's bauxite and aluminium by responsible aluminium users such as these.



Mr. Oteng Adjei, President of CCAL, said “Saving Atewa Forest from mining should be an intergenerational priority, and we are happy and grateful that big businesses in the aluminium value chain understand the importance of a healthy forest and the environmental services it provides. We appreciate their commitment to supporting local and international efforts to secure Atewa Forest against bauxite mining that is certain to destroy the forest, its water services and biodiversity.”

The companies’ letters concerning Atewa-sourced bauxite follow soon after the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) passed a resolution demanding global action to save Atewa from bauxite mining, serving as yet another strong call to drop the plans to mine bauxite in the Atewa Forest.

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**Notes for editors**

In 2016, the Ghana government identified the legally protected Atewa Forest as one of three sites to mine bauxite to support repayment of a USD2 billion infrastructure loan from the People’s Republic of China. The government plans to establish an integrated aluminium industry, and repay the loan with receipts from processed bauxite.

Located in Ghana’s Eastern Region, Atewa Forest forms part of the threatened Upper Guinea Forest, one of the world’s global biodiversity hotspots. Atewa Forest is a Protected Forest Reserve and a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), and meets the conditions for [Alliance for Zero Extinction](#) status.

The forest is home to many [endangered, endemic and rare plants and animals](#), over 100 of which are threatened or near threatened with extinction. Four species are listed as Critically Endangered (CR) on the IUCN Redlist of Threatened Species, and many more as vulnerable. The forest is also home to [five species believed to be endemic](#) to the forest, meaning they are found nowhere else on Earth.

Bauxite mining is planned for the [tops of the forests](#) that are also richest in biodiversity and from where many small streams rise. The forest also harbours the headwaters of three rivers – the Ayensu, Densu and Birim – that together provide clean water daily for over 5 million people.

Like most bauxite around the world, Ghana’s bauxite lies in flat layers close to the surface. The only way to mine it is by destructive ‘strip mining’ that clears all vegetation and top soils over a wide area. Key habitats for endangered and endemic species will be lost.



Besides loss of the forest and habitats, bauxite mining is very likely to pollute the water sources of forest communities and downstream users. Heavy metals leach from bauxite mines causing a wide range of health problems including [nervous system damage, cancer, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease](#). Communities around bauxite mining sites in Malaysia have been warned not only to [avoid drinking water](#) from local streams but even to [avoid direct contact with it](#) due to leached heavy metal contamination. These metals cannot be cleared by boiling or any other cleaning method. Communities' livelihoods and the access to the lands and resources they depend on are also [impacted negatively by bauxite mining](#).

Despite legal obligations contained in Ghana's own laws (Regulation 1652 of the EPA), road building through the forest and exploratory borehole drilling [has already taken place](#) without the legally required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Convention on Biological Diversity that Ghana is signatory to requires this EIA even before a decision is made on whether or not to pursue a development.

Communities around Atewa Forest have firmly resisted bauxite mining in the forest. While many were initially in favour because of the promised jobs, a trip to Ghana's only bauxite mine at Awaso [soon changed their minds](#) and they formed the Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape, now a legally registered CSO. They have organised many activities including a [95km walk](#) from the heart of Atewa Forest to the seat of government carrying clean water from Atewa's streams; a [petition](#) delivered to Ghana's president; [demonstrations](#); and continuing to visit all 49 communities around Atewa Forest to raise awareness of bauxite mining impacts, show videos, give talks and hold discussions.

There has also been widespread support both within and outside Ghana urging government not to mine Atewa: [Institute of Foresters](#); Ghana Forest Commission's Executive Director; [KBA partners](#); [Professor E.O Wilson](#); [Chair](#) of IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group; [International conservation organisations](#); [US Forest Service](#); and petitions by [Rainforest Rescue](#) and [Change.org](#) together signed by over 200,000 people.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recently [passed 'Motion 103](#): Urgent measures to safeguard the globally important Atewa Forest, Ghana', which has now become IUCN Resolution 087.

Led by A Rocha Ghana, a group of CSOs and individuals are also taking government to court over its decision to mine Atewa for bauxite. This has been well-publicised including by [Reuters](#) and [Mining.com](#), and [Client Earth in the UK](#) that is supporting the case.