

# AFRICAN CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON CRITICAL MINERALS AND JUST TRANSITION

*Theme: Evading the “resource curse” in the critical minerals driving the net-zero transition and NDCs implementation in Africa*



SOUTH AFRICA



21<sup>ST</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> AUGUST

## CONCEPT NOTE



OPEN SOCIETY  
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ECA

UN   
environment  
programme



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The global transition towards renewable energy and sustainable practices has highlighted the important role of critical minerals essential for the manufacturing of clean energy technologies such as electric vehicles (EVs). These 'critical metals' rush is pivotal to the global NetZero Emissions scenario by 2050.

Sub-Saharan Africa, with its vast wealth of critical minerals, is central to this technology transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. In this context, Africa is in midst of another resource rush perpetuated by the global demand for these transitional mineral resources. With fairly weak frameworks for implementation of national mining visions as demonstrated by the slow domestication and implementation of the Africa Mining Vision, a framework that aimed to optimize benefits from the extractive sector for African countries, the continent could be poised for another heightened 'resource curse' moment.

The demand for critical minerals experienced strong and robust growth in 2023, with lithium demand rising by 30%, while demand for nickel, cobalt, graphite and rare earth elements all saw increases ranging from 8% to 15%. Clean energy applications have become the main driver of demand growth for a range of critical minerals. Electric vehicles (EVs) consolidated their position as the largest-consuming segment for lithium, and increased their share considerably in the demand for nickel, cobalt and graphite. Already it is in public domain on the resource potential of critical minerals for Africa continent:

- 30% of global mineral reserves that are essential for powering just transition are in Africa
- Africa is home to about 30% of the world's lithium reserves, with the DRC and Zimbabwe being the largest producers
- The DRC produces up to 70% of the world's cobalt
- Zimbabwe has 11 million tonnes of lithium reserves yet produce less than 1% of global supply.
- Africa is home to about 10% of the world's copper reserves, with Zambia being the largest producer, though now being mined at unprecedented rates

Unfortunately, Africa continues to fall into the "natural resource curse" trap where Africa's mineral riches fail to optimally contribute to meaningful, inclusive, competitive socioeconomic transformation. The strive to avoid this must be at all costs this time around!

The UNEP Report, August 2023, aptly captures the opportunities the critical minerals value chain can generate and the immense socioeconomic benefits, yet this remains under-exploited. For example, powering Africa's economic growth using clean, renewable energy could lead to a 6.4% higher GDP, 3.5% more economy-wide jobs, and a 25.4% higher welfare index between 2020 and 2050.

The assertion of this report is collaborated by the Africa Union Green Recovery Action Plan that points to the global contribution of the renewable energy sector in creating 11 million jobs in 2018. The Action plan calls on Africa Renewable Energy Initiative to provide sufficient support to enable African countries to take bold action to leapfrog to the smart, people-centred renewable energy and energy efficient systems as well as value chains in terms of new and emerging markets and job creation. Investments in renewable energy and a diversified energy mix could as well shield economies in the case of future pandemics and economic crises.

There is a wide consensus on what should be done to address the paradoxes and for the critical minerals to contribute to virtuous growth including: i. Anchor investments in scaling value addition ii. Form regional conglomerates in value addition to create back and forward linkages in the sector iii. Scale-up investments in grid energy for renewables to enhance energy access, among other proposals aimed at enhancing access to skills.

These measures are reinforced by computations that have already been done on what value addition to critical minerals would portend in practice. It's no longer rocket science for African governments to see the huge potential that lies in value chain development for these critical minerals, for instance:

- ◆ Selling copper as a **metal instead of as an ore** sees an approximate increase in revenue of 275%
- ◆ A case study from the DRC shows that producing \$500 million worth of copper-based products could result in \$112 million in additional exports and create 1,300-2,000 new jobs
- ◆ Producing green aluminium in Africa would save 335 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e every year – close to 1% of all global GHG emissions and would generate 60,000 new direct jobs, nearly 280,000 new jobs in total. It would generate \$ 37 bn in additional African revenue
- ◆ Overall, the additional renewable energy capacity that is required for the value addition would spur demand for investments in energy and contribute to reduction in energy poverty.

However, this potential in the critical minerals' sub-sector is not devoid of human rights abuses. The Human Rights Watch has documented a wide range of human rights violations in mining, including the use of child labour, chemical pollution threatening health, water scarcity and police violence. The extraction and processing of transition minerals in particular is also characterised by abuses. Children do hazardous work in cobalt mining; Indigenous people's rights have been violated for lithium mining; workers in manganese processing suffer manganese-related illnesses; and communities face severe pollution from nickel mining and smelting.

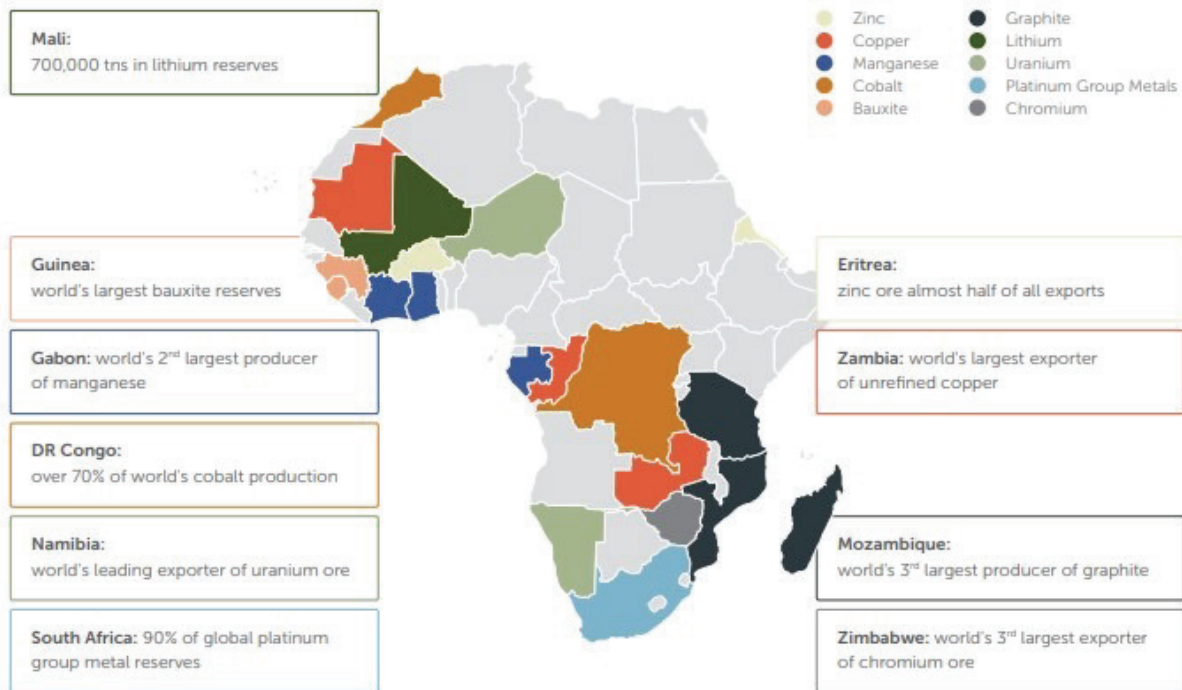
A holistic approach to the transitional minerals in a manner that weans the sector of violations of international human rights law is an imperative of both social and climate justices. The pursuit for investments in a manner that promotes actualization of the sustainable goals, particularly on environment, water, health, decent work while contributing to climate action is important.

There is need to amplify principles and safeguards to environmental and social standards and embed justice in the energy transition as envisioned in the UN Body – the Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals inaugurated by Antonio Guterres, the Secretary-general of the United Nations.

While amplifying the critical minerals as an essential ingredient in the Sustainable Development Goals, its important to recognize the harm mining has caused to local communities and ecosystems, and ensure sufficient safeguards. The international human rights and environmental standards must be the absolute baseline and measures to enforce their adherence must be institutionalized.

## 2. COUNTRY SPECIFIC CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

African countries: selected low carbon minerals (2019)



Source: MIF based on Atlas of Economic Complexity, United States Geological Survey & World Nuclear Association

Historically, mining laws in Africa have been restrictive, often leading to socio-economic inequities. It is crucial to reform these laws to eliminate unjust binary narratives and ensure that the benefits of mining, particularly of transition minerals, extend to all societal segments. A good education and historical awareness are also vital for the envisaged sustainable development driven by renewables.

The mining industry, once seen as merely exploitative, is now recognized as integral to providing the raw materials needed for global low-carbon transitions, and this was recognized during the Africa Climate Summit where the Leaders recommended the establishment of the Green Industrialization strategy for the continent.

South Africa, alongside countries like Gabon, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, among others, holds substantial reserves of critical minerals such as manganese, lithium, and platinum group metals (PGMs). These resources position these countries as potential leaders in the global green economy. However, realizing this potential requires overcoming inward-looking policies that lead to inefficiencies and market distortions.

In some African states, the need for transition is acute as the economies are still dependent on dirty sources of energy. For instance, South Africa is highly dependent on coal as an energy source; the fuel provides approximately 73% of primary energy. South African coal production has hovered between 250-260 Mtpa over the past 15 years, peaking in 2014 at 261 Mt (CoM, 2016). Between 70-75% of production is used domestically and around 25-30% is exported.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOGUE**

The Forum aims to foster rights-based, environmentally-conscious and ecologically-just extraction of critical minerals that benefits all stakeholders.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Strengthen thematic analysis, and build synergy between extractive, climate and energy campaign organisations, and exploring opportunities presented by transitional minerals for broad-based development in target countries and regions.
2. Foster collaborations between government, industry, academia, and civil society in the transformative governance of the critical minerals for sustainable development
3. Galvanize broad-based action plans from different stakeholders for improved policy making processes in enhancement of people-centered approaches in investments in transitional minerals subsector, securing critical minerals for sustainable growth.
4. Empower stakeholders to uphold, reclaim, and defend their inalienable rights in the evolving climate investments sector

### **4. FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY**

The Forum will be structured as a series of interactive sessions, including:

- ◆ Plenary Sessions: Keynote addresses and panel discussions by government representatives and experts from various sectors.
- ◆ Workshops: Thematic workshops to delve deeper into specific issues and develop actionable recommendations.
- ◆ Roundtables: Stakeholder roundtables to facilitate dialogue and consensus-building.

### **5. PARTICIPANTS**

- ◆ Government Representatives: Policymakers from relevant departments, ministries and agencies.
- ◆ Industry Leaders: Representatives from the mining, energy, technology, and Banking sectors.
- ◆ Academia: Researchers and experts from universities and research institutions.
- ◆ Civil Society: NGOs, community leaders, traditional authorities, and advocacy groups focused on environmental and social justice.
- ◆ International Partners: Representatives from international and regional development cooperation organizations and countries with interest in critical minerals and green energy.

### **6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- ◆ Policy Recommendations: Concrete policy proposals to support the sustainable development of critical minerals and a just energy transition.
- ◆ Action Plan: A strategic action plan outlining the steps needed to implement the recommendations.
- ◆ Partnerships: Strengthened partnerships and networks among stakeholders.
- ◆ Awareness and Engagement: Increased awareness and engagement on the issues of critical minerals and just energy transition.

## 7. REFERENCES:

1. "Towards Declaring Zimbabwe's Green Metals Strategic National Assets for Global NetZero Emissions by 2050" by Prof Godwell Nhamo (PhD), Prof Kaitano Dube (PhD), Dr. Lazarus Chapungu (PhD), and Dr. David Chikodzi (PhD)
2. "Re-thinking African mineral wealth under the NetZero Emissions by 2050 movement" – Presentation by Prof Godwell Nhamo (PhD)
3. AUC Green Growth Action Plan
4. Environmental Aspects of Critical Minerals in clean energy transition UNEP, August 2023
5. Global Mineral Outlook, International Energy Agency
6. <https://www.financialinstitutionslegalsnapshot.com/2024/02/12/the-south-african-critical-mineral-opportunity-and-the-junior-mining-exploration-fund/>
7. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2024/04/29/cf-harnessing-sub-saharan-africas-critical-mineral-wealth>

## 8. AGENDA

### Day 1: August 21, 2024

TIME	AGENDA ITEM AND KEY SPEAKERS	MODERATION
9:00 – 10:00	<b>HIGH LEVEL OPENING SESSION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Dr. Mithika Mwenda</b>, Executive Director, PACJA</li> <li>● <b>Dr. James Murombedzi</b>, Officer-in-Charge, ACPC, ECA</li> <li>● <b>Government Representative</b>, South Africa</li> <li>● <b>Dr. Meseret T. Zemedkun</b>, Head, UNEP Southern Africa Sub Regional Office</li> <li>● <b>Mkhululi Ncube</b>, Africa Mineral Development Centre (AMDC)</li> </ul>	Moderator: Mandla <b>Mbongeni Hadebe</b> , Executive Director, Economic Justice Network of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa
<b>10:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>HEALTH &amp; TEA BREAK</b>	
10:30- 12:00	Setting the scene: <b>The extractive Landscape in Southern Africa Region: Hits and misses in securing human rights and broad-based development in the region</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Presenter: <b>Dr. Claude Kabemba</b>, Executive Director of Southern Africa Resource Watch</li> </ul> <b>PLENARY SESSION</b>	Moderator: <b>Dr. Kgaugelo Chiloane</b>
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Understanding the Energy Sector in the Southern Africa Region: How dirty is the sector and what fixations impair transition to cleaner sources of energy in the southern Africa region?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A perspective from <b>Trusha Reddy</b>, WOMIN</li> </ul>	
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>	



TIME	AGENDA ITEM AND KEY SPEAKERS	MODERATION
14:00 – 15:30	<p><b>Expert Paper: Opportunities presented by transitional minerals for broad based development in the southern Africa Region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenter: <b>John Sloan</b>, Lead, Critical Minerals program, ACPC, ECA (Virtual)</li> </ul> <p>Panel session to unpack and develop approaches and strategies for actualizing these opportunities</p> <p><b>Discussants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Jackson Kimani</b>, CEO, CAP Africa</li> <li><b>Prof. Siphamandla Zondi</b>, Director, Institute for Pan African Thought &amp; Conversation, Co- Director Institute for Global African Affairs</li> <li><b>Eugene Nforngwa</b>, Thematic Lead, Just transition and Energy Access, PACJA</li> </ul> <p><b>PLENARY</b></p>	Moderator: <b>Philip Kilonzo</b> , Head of Policy, Advocacy & Communications, PACJA
<b>15:30 – 15:45</b>	<b>WORKING TEA &amp; INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS</b>	
15:45 – 17:00	<p><b>Panel Session: A reality check on human rights: How can we exploit transitional minerals in a manner that do not exacerbate these ills?</b></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Placide Hamisi</b>, Coordinator, DRC Climate Change Network</li> <li><b>Farai Maguwu</b>, Executive Director, Centre for Natural Resources Governance, Zimbabwe</li> <li><b>Meshack Mbangula</b>, MACUA, South Africa</li> <li><b>Francina Nkosi</b>, Waterberg Women Advocacy Organization (WWAO)</li> </ul>	Moderator: <b>Prof. Elvis Nkoana</b> , Lecturer, University of South Africa & Doctoral candidate in Environmental sciences, Antwerp University in Belgium
	<b>TEA AND CLOSURE OF THE DAY, INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS</b>	
<b>Day 2: August 22, 2024</b>		
9:00 – 10:30	<p>Expert View: A deep dive on the policy landscape - Policy in/ consistencies and an introspective view of what requires to be urgently fixes for the just transition agenda to deliver broad based development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Prof. Patrick Bond</b>, Distinguished Professor Sociology and Director of the Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg and PACJA Associate</li> </ul> <p><b>PLENARY SESSION</b></p>	Moderator: <b>Dr. Julia Mambo</b> , PACJA SA Steering Member
<b>10:30 – 11:00</b>	<b>TEA &amp; HEALTH BREAK</b>	

TIME	AGENDA ITEM AND KEY SPEAKERS	MODERATION
11:00 – 12:00	<p>Nexus issues – Climate Change agenda and Critical minerals: Exploiting the climate agenda to advance human rights and environmental rights in extraction of critical minerals for just transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thando Lukuko, South Africa Climate Action Network (SACAN)</li> </ul> <p><b>PLENARY</b></p>	Moderator: <b>Tracy Sonny</b> , Coordinator, Botswana Climate Change Network
12:00 – 13:00	<p>An Outlook on Data Ecosystem on proceeds from the extractive sector: Potential and pathways for optimizing incomes from transitional minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nsama Chikwanka, Publish What You Pay, Zambia</li> </ul> <p><b>OPEN DISCUSSION</b></p>	Moderator: <b>Philip Kilonzo</b>
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>	
14:00 – 15:00	<p>Shaping the future outlook: Proposals for a regional development agenda based on transitional minerals: <b>Dr. James Murombedzi</b>, Officer-in-Charge, ACPC, ECA</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bhekumuzi Dean Bhebhe, Power Shift Africa</li> <li>Dr Janet Munakamwe – Wits Mining Institute, University of Witwatersrand</li> <li>Mutuso Dhlwayo/Shamiso Mtisi, ZELA</li> <li>Prof. Harald Winkler, Director of the Energy Research Centre, University of Cape Town.</li> <li>Paps Lethoko, Artisanal Small-scale Miners</li> </ul>	Moderator: <b>Eugene Nforngwa</b> , Thematic Lead, Just Transition and Energy, PACJA
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>PLENARY SESSION: WHAT IS NEXT FROM HERE?</b>	Moderator: <b>Philip Kilonzo</b>
15:00 – 16:00	<p>Adopting a statement &amp; Closure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eugene Nforngwa, Thematic Lead, Just Transition, PACJA</li> </ul>	





## **Panafrican Climate Justice Alliance**

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