



Press release

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UN-convened Panel to address equity, sustainability and human rights across the value chains of critical energy transition minerals

Secretary-General's initiative aims to build trust through global guiding principles

New York, 26 April 2024 – With ever-growing needs for minerals that are critical for renewable energy technologies, Secretary-General António Guterres is leveraging the United Nations' convening power to bring together a diverse group of governments and other stakeholders across the entire minerals value chain to develop a set of global common and voluntary principles to safeguard environmental and social standards and embed justice, in the energy transition.

A newly established *Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals* – co-chaired by Ambassador Nozipho Joyce Mxakato-Diseko of South Africa and Director-General for Energy Ditte Juul Jørgensen of the European Commission – will address issues relating to equity, transparency, investment, sustainability and human rights.

“A world powered by renewables is a world hungry for critical minerals,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres said at the launch of the Panel. “For developing countries, critical minerals are a critical opportunity – to create jobs, diversify economies, and dramatically boost revenues. But only if they are managed properly. The race to net zero cannot trample over the poor. The renewables revolution is happening – but we must guide it towards justice.”

“In establishing the Panel, the UN Secretary-General is commendably responding to a normative gap identified by many countries, especially developing countries, related to critical minerals and rare earths required for sustainable development and just transitions,” Ambassador Mxakato-Diseko said. “The objective of the Panel, aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, is to build trust and certainty towards harnessing the potential of these minerals to be utilized to unlock shared prosperity, leaving no one and no place behind”.

Director-General for Energy Ditte Juul Jørgensen said, “the global energy goals we all agreed at COP28 require a rapid scale-up in the manufacturing and deployment of renewables globally and critical energy transition minerals. I am honored to have been asked by the UN Secretary-General to co-chair this panel and help develop principles to ensure a fair and transparent approach globally and for local communities in the entire value chain, – upholding the highest sustainability and human development standards.”



Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, to avert the worst impacts of climate change, will depend on the sufficient, reliable and affordable supply of critical energy transition minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements, which are essential components of clean energy technologies – from wind turbines and solar panels to electric vehicles and battery storage.

At COP28, governments agreed to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030. There is no pathway to achieving this goal without a significant increase of supply of critical energy transition minerals. According to the International Energy Agency, mineral demand for clean energy applications is set to grow by three and a half times by 2030 on the pathway to reaching global net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

Developing countries with large reserves of critical energy transition minerals have an opportunity to transform and diversify their economies, create green jobs, and foster sustainable local development. However, mineral resource development has not always met this promise. Increased demand for these minerals and their geographical concentration risk perpetuating commodity dependence, exacerbating geopolitical tensions and pose environmental and social challenges with adverse impacts on sustainable development including on livelihoods, the environment, health, human security and human rights.

Responding to calls from developing countries for globally agreed guidance to ensure responsible, fair and just value chains, the UN-convened Panel brings together governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, industry, and civil society to build trust, guide the just transition and accelerate the race to renewables.

The panel builds on existing UN initiatives, particularly the Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development and its flagship initiative on 'Harnessing Critical Energy Transition Minerals for Sustainable Development' and will draw from existing standards and initiatives to strengthen and consolidate existing efforts.

List of panel members:

Government and intergovernmental actors

1. African Union
2. Australia
3. Botswana
4. Brazil
5. Chile
6. China
7. Colombia
8. Democratic Republic of the Congo
9. Egypt
10. European Union



11. India
12. Indonesia
13. Japan
14. Kazakhstan
15. Namibia
16. South Africa
17. United Arab Emirates
18. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
19. United States of America
20. Viet Nam
21. Zambia
22. Zimbabwe

Non-State Actors

23. Climate Action Network International
24. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
25. Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance
26. International Council on Mining and Metals
27. International Energy Agency
28. Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development
29. IndustriALL Global Union
30. International Renewable Energy Agency
31. Natural Resource Governance Institute
32. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
33. Principles for Responsible Investment
34. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
35. United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change
36. World Bank

For more information, this web page will go live on 26 April:

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/critical-minerals>

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