

Achieving sustainable mineral and metal supplies to make the 'Green Transition': Twin conferences in Geneva, Sept 4-8

Major back-to-back conferences of the World Resources Forum and UNEP on mineral and metal resource governance

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, August 13, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Climate change discussions often overlook the central role played by the excessive extraction and use of natural resources.

The topic, however, will be the central focus of two events being hosted back-to-back in Geneva:

* The [World Resources Forum 2023](https://www.wrf2023.org) (Sept 4-6), www.wrf2023.org and

* The [UNEP Global Intergovernmental Meeting on Minerals and Metals](https://bit.ly/3OP4EAA) (Sept 7-8), <https://bit.ly/3OP4EAA>



Says WRF Managing Director Mathias Schlupe: "Minerals and metals are the backbones of major industries, including energy, construction, mobility, and electronics. If international governments and industry leaders do not source and use these resources with long-term sustainability in mind, no transition will be green. This issue looms over the climate debate and deserves far greater attention."

Research shows, for example, that a typical electric car requires six times the mineral input of a combustion-engine car – mainly copper, graphite, cobalt, and nickel for the battery system. Around 67 tons of copper can be found in a medium-sized offshore turbine. To extract this amount of copper, miners have to move almost 50,000 tons of earth and rock, around 5 times the weight of the Eiffel Tower.

Minerals and metals are essential components for our transition to clean energy and a green

economy. Every year, the world mines 150 billion tons of rock to produce 65 billion tons of mineral products. In the process, 72 billion tons of waste rock and 13 billion tons of mine tailings are also produced. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), global demand for critical raw materials will quadruple by 2040 – in the case of lithium, demand is expected to increase by a factor of 42.



Climate change discussions often overlook the central role played by the excessive extraction and use of natural resources. The topic, however, will be the central focus of two events being hosted back-to-back in Geneva in early September

As international companies make large investments to meet the minerals and metals demand boom, the sustainability performance behind big mining projects has come under increased scrutiny. Many minerals and metals are concentrated in just a few countries, and the search for further deposits is taking companies to more remote regions such as the high Andes and the Arctic, provoking new environmental and social challenges.

Urgent shift required



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Mathias Schlupe, Managing Director, World Resources Forum

Unsustainable extraction, use, and disposal of resources are having detrimental impacts on people and the planet, and are driving the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, WRI says.

Currently, the extraction and processing of material resources is responsible for a large proportion of biodiversity loss, global greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution impacts. The energy transition and growth in the infrastructure stock globally risk making environmental challenges even more acute.

At the 5th UN Environment Assembly last year in Nairobi, delegates adopted a resolution, initiated by Switzerland together with Argentina, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, and Senegal, on environmental aspects of minerals and metals management.

Member States stressed "the need for enhanced action to support the environmental sustainability management of minerals" along their full lifecycle, from extraction until end-of-life.

Since then, Switzerland has been co-chairing the intergovernmental process together with Pakistan.

Between April and July, the United Nations Environment Programme convened intergovernmental regional consultations with African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and other States.

The global consultation on 7 and 8 September in Geneva will highlight key regional consultation findings and gather additional feedback.

Needed: unprecedented levels of international collaboration

Mineral and metal value chains are global in nature, which means challenges and responsibilities are shared across actors, from those extracting resources to those trading and consuming these resources.

Currently, resource extraction plays a dominant role in the economy of 81 countries. These countries account for 25% of the world's GDP, half the world's population, and nearly 70% of those living in poverty. Sustainable sourcing of metals and minerals, therefore, has a high stake not only in the efforts to halt climate change but also to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty.

Due to the complexity of global supply chains, finding sustainable solutions requires an unprecedented level of international cooperation, including public-private partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration. In the current global geopolitical context, this comes with evident challenges.

Amongst others, multi-level collaboration is needed for the transition to a more resource-efficient and circular economy, which may lead to an increase in the recovery rate of precious minerals and metals, a reduction in global demand for primary resource extraction, and the sustainable use of resources across the whole life cycle.

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