

Input for the Ministerial Declaration ahead of UNEA7 - EEB

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Strengthening Global Resource Governance: A Call for Urgent Action

The global rush for transition minerals and critical raw materials is accelerating, driven by the demand for renewable energy technologies and the decarbonization agenda. However, without robust governance mechanisms, this surge is exacerbating environmental degradation, threatening biodiversity, and undermining the rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. The lack of enforceable global frameworks has allowed unchecked extractivism, often sidelining social and ecological concerns in pursuit of resource security.

UNEA and UNEP must address these challenges by enhancing global resource governance. UNEA7 must ensure mineral extraction and trade align with human rights, environmental justice, and a sufficiency-first approach. Building on UNEA Resolutions 5/12 and 6/5, and past resolutions, UNEA7 must strengthen mineral governance across its lifecycle. This includes supporting a global study on mining's environmental impact, an expert group on responsible governance, and enhancing international cooperation. These steps align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while promoting a circular economy to reduce impacts and ensure fair mineral procurement.

Key omissions from UNEA6 must be addressed in UNEA7, including stronger commitments on tailings management, certification schemes, and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous Peoples. UNEA6's final resolution failed to deliver a comprehensive global study on mining's environmental impact, instead settling for a digital knowledge hub that compiles existing practices rather than generating new insights. The expert group initially proposed to build on the non-prescriptive proposals (NPPs) from UNEA5 was diluted into general capacity-building, limiting its impact. Additionally, no clear commitments were made to establish a global sand observatory or strengthen knowledge on deep-sea mining, despite these critical issues.

UNEP must be equipped with the necessary capacity to monitor and assess mining activities, particularly concerning transition minerals, with a dedicated mechanism. This mechanism must link with the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Critical Minerals, and support the implementation of due diligence obligations. UNEA7 must go beyond voluntary corporate initiatives and strengthen multilateral governance. Industry-led efforts cannot replace globally coordinated policies. Aligning mining policies with climate and biodiversity commitments, integrating sufficiency into mineral strategies, and ensuring fair resource distribution are key. Resource-rich nations need support to move up the supply chain through industrial policies that reduce raw material dependency.

UNEA7 should also expand the Digital Knowledge Hub to enhance transparency, knowledge-sharing, and policy development. A strong UNEA7 resolution, though non-binding, would signal the need for global cooperation on responsible resource governance.
