
Concept Note for Side Event at the ACS-2

High-Level Dialogue: Towards an African Position on Critical Green Minerals Diplomacy

Date/Time: 10 September 2025 (Day 3) at 16:00–17:30 (EAT)

Venue: Room M1, Addis International Convention Center, Addis Ababa,

Format: High-Level Panel Discussion and Q&A session

A. Background and Context

The global push for decarbonization and the transition to clean energy are accelerating demand for critical green minerals such as lithium, cobalt, graphite, rare earths, copper, and manganese—resources in which Africa holds significant endowments, estimated at over 30% of global reserves. This surge presents both opportunities and risks for African countries.

On the one hand, Africa can leverage its green mineral endowment to accelerate industrialization, regional value chain development, job creation, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. On the other hand, the lack of a coordinated African voice in global negotiations and the asymmetries in power, finance, and technology risk perpetuating extractive models, environmental degradation, and inequitable value distribution. Without a coordinated African position on green mineral diplomacy, the continent risks repeating historical patterns of raw commodity exports with limited local value addition, job creation, and revenue retention.

There is therefore a pressing need for Africa to articulate a unified diplomatic stance on green minerals—one that safeguards the continent’s development priorities, aligns with the Africa Mining Vision (AMV), the African Green Minerals Strategy (AGMS), and supports a just energy transition. The 2024 UN Secretary-General’s Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals (CETMs) has called for a rethinking of mineral governance and diplomacy.

Against this backdrop, UNECA, working in alignment with the Africa Mining Vision (AMV), the African Green Minerals Strategy (AGMS), UN Agenda 2030, and the African Union’s Agenda 2063, proposes this High-Level Dialogue to convene policymakers, industry actors, and civil society to deliberate on key building blocks for an African position on green minerals diplomacy. This will strengthen Africa’s negotiating voice in engagements with global partners while fostering intra-African cooperation.

B. Objectives

The High-Level Dialogue seeks to:

1. Promote a shared understanding of Africa’s green minerals potential and the implications for global climate goals.
2. Identify the strategic priorities for Africa’s green minerals diplomacy, including equitable partnerships, financing mechanisms, and just transition principles.
3. Generate consensus on pathways towards an African position for future global negotiations and partnerships on green minerals.
4. Explore ways to strengthen Africa’s bargaining power.

C. Expected Outcomes

1. A set of recommendations outlining Africa's key priorities for critical green minerals diplomacy.
2. Strengthened coordination among African governments, regional organizations, and other stakeholders towards a unified continental position.

High Level Dialogue: Towards an African position on critical green minerals diplomacy”			
Moderator: Dr. Marit Kitaw, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECA			
16.00-16.10	Opening Session		
1	Opening remarks	Executive Secretary, <i>Claver Gatete</i>	UNECA
2	Welcome Statement	Minister of Mines and Petroleum, <i>HE Habtamu Tegegn</i>	Government of Ethiopia,
16.10-16.20	Keynote Address: The Strategic Importance of Africa's Green Minerals in Global Climate Diplomacy		
3	Mr. Selwin Hart	Assistant Secretary General and the Secretary General's Special Adviser on Climate Action and the Just Transition, <i>Selwin Hart</i>	UN
16.20-17.00	High-Level Panel		
4	HE Ruth Nankabirwa Ssentamu	Minister of Energy and Mineral Development	Government of Uganda
5	Ms. Luisa Mahocha	National Director of Geology and Mines of Mozambique	Government of Mozambique
6	Ms. Sibongile Mavimbela	Senior Programme Officer- Environment and Climate Change	Southern African Development Community (SADC)
7	Ms. Kome Ajegbo	Vice President	Africa Finance Corporation (AFC)
8	Dr. Claude Kabemba	Executive Director	Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW)
9	Mr. George Kanty	Intern	Youth Representative, UNECA
10	Dr. Ruwa Matsika	Program Lead	Quadrature Climate Foundation (QCF)
11	Ms. Ellen Davies	Head of Program	Africa Climate Foundation
12	Mr. Brian Kagaro	Managing Director of Program	Open Society Foundation (OSF)
17.00-17.20	Interactive Dialogue		
17.20-17.30	Closing Session		
Closing remarks	Dr. Cosmas Ochieng	Director CFND	UNECA

D. Alignment with ACS2 Strategic Pillars

- Contributing to the Resilience Track through advocacy for fair green mineral governance and diplomacy.
- Advancing the Nature-Tech Track by addressing sustainable resource use aligned with climate goals.
- Supporting Finance and Policy Tracks by exploring equitable partnerships and financing for just energy transition.