



## African Minerals for Africa's Development: A campaign for thriving communities and energy access through a just transition in Africa

### The Problem

Rich countries are jostling to secure Africa's transition mineral deposits. This urgent competition is bringing with it intense pressure to weaken governance, human rights and environmental safeguards in favour of faster extraction so that raw materials from the continent can be exported in order to build cleaner energy systems elsewhere. Left unchecked, the dash for Africa's minerals will leave the continent and its people facing environmental damage, social injustice, and the worst impacts of the climate crisis without the funds, technology, skills or minerals they need to build domestic renewable energy supplies needed to drive development.

### The Context

Demand is soaring for the raw materials the world needs to secure a clean energy future.<sup>1</sup> Africa has abundant reserves of these 'transition minerals' which are used in wind- and solar-powered technology and electric vehicle production. The continent holds more than 40% of the global reserves of key minerals for batteries and hydrogen technologies.<sup>2</sup>

1. International Energy Agency, The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions (2021), [www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions](https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions)

2. International Energy Agency, Africa Energy Outlook 2022, <https://www.iea.org/reports/africa-energy-outlook-2022/key-findings>



Fierce competition to secure these minerals is accelerating among foreign powers, spurred in part by China's dominance in global mineral processing. In response, countries and blocks like the USA and European Union are abandoning multilateralism in favour of securing deals for minerals bilaterally.

The extraction of minerals in Africa is already beset by corruption, profiteering, environmental damages and human rights abuses. The urgency and scale of the demand for Africa's transition minerals will only increase pressure on producing countries to "fast-track" licensing and open up mining in sensitive and high risk areas. This will lead to increased corruption and human rights and environmental abuses, in particular land grabs, pollution and contamination of water and land.

**There is a significant risk that rampant transition mineral extraction will leave African countries stuck as providers of raw materials with mining bringing harm to local communities and the environment but none of the potential to provide domestic energy access for the people who own those minerals.**

But there is a window of opportunity; a more mature discussion is emerging about Africa's own vision for just transition, energy sovereignty and its transition minerals, including how they will be used, by whom and who will benefit from them.



**This scramble to secure Africa's resources comes at a time when African countries face critical choices about their own energy and development paths that will determine possibilities to deliver well-being and prosperity for decades to come.**

**Just Transition: A Climate, Energy and Development Vision for Africa**

## A PAN-AFRICAN RESPONSE

**Vision:** Strategic, responsible and sustainable extraction and use of Africa's transition minerals which unlocks the continent's development, energy sovereignty and prosperity

**Goal 1: Put African minerals for African development on the regional political agenda**

For too long Africa's resources have been exploited to meet the material needs of Western industrialisation and development. Africa's mineral wealth makes it strategic for the energy transition, and there is growing public awareness across the continent's institutions that Africa is the owner of these essential resources.

Transition minerals must be used as a strategic leverage to drive investment (both financial and material) in renewable energy access and sovereignty – and the infrastructure needed to achieve this.

**We will build political will for transition minerals that contribute to the prosperity and development of all Africans.**

**Goal 2: Strengthen responsible mining practices to respond to transition mineral demand**

Historically, African countries – particularly communities in producing areas – have not benefited from their mineral wealth. On the contrary, mining in Africa has too often left a legacy of conflict, human rights violations, and environmental degradation.

Mining governance, human rights and environmental safeguards must be strengthened to stem the harm of irresponsible mining practices, and be fit for purpose to the increasing demand.

**We will advocate for the development and implementation of policies, laws and business practices that ensure responsible mining practices.**

# 1

## **Raise Africa's transition minerals for Africa's development on the continent's political agenda**

*Led by PWYP Secretariat with coalitions & members*

In the face of the climate crisis and the complexity of energy transition it is critical that we champion a positive vision for a cleaner, fairer energy future in Africa and link this explicitly to the responsible management of transition mineral deposits. We want African minerals to unlock prosperity for all Africans; we want the benefits of Africa's transition minerals to reach every segment of society, including marginalised communities and vulnerable groups. To do this we must build political will and buy in from African leaders by raising these issues on the regional political agenda. Creating this political will and buy in supports the national level advocacy set out in objective 1. Tactics include:

- Build an 'umbrella' narrative that sets out a positive vision of a better future where Africa benefits from its transition minerals to introduce our more specific policy recommendations. Use this narrative to make the links between necessary good governance of transition minerals, revenues & taxation, development, human rights, civic space, energy transition and just transition.
- Work with strategic allies like the African Minerals Development Centre to engage in regional policy spaces to put forward our positive vision for transition minerals in Africa.
- Increase cross movement collaboration with the climate movement to raise the profile of transition minerals and ensure that we jointly call for policy changes that promote both climate action and responsible transition minerals. For example building on our relationships with the Global Gas and Oil Network, Climate Action Network and the Global Strategic Communications Council.
- Link our asks to broader needs for debt cancellation, climate financing, unequal global consumption. Build alliances with movements working on these issues to ensure our demands sit coherently alongside a broader systems change agenda.
- Commission research to assess the outflows of transition minerals from the continent and make the case for minerals to contribute to Africa's development, universal and equitable energy access, and energy transition.
- Coordinate a joint open letter from high profile African leaders (politicians, economists, academics, faith leaders etc) to call on African governments with transition minerals to ensure they are making decisions to ensure these contribute to long term prosperity, including respecting communities' rights and the environment.
- Use strategic communications around high profile moments or events (see below for 2023 & 2024) to elevate the issues of responsible transition minerals, minerals for development and energy sovereignty through press releases, op-ed and press conferences.

# 2

## **Development and implementation of laws, policies and business practices to ensure responsible and sustainable extraction and use of transition minerals which contribute to Africa's development and respond to community concerns**

*Led by PWYP national coalitions & members*

We will use the renewed interest in transition minerals to centre responsible and sustainable mining in the national level debate linking it explicitly to the energy transition and climate action agenda. We will advocate to ensure the decision to extract is based on a holistic assessment of the true costs and benefits of mineral extraction, and on communities' free, prior and informed consent. We will advocate for new laws and changes to policy to ensure rigorous environmental, human rights and community and anti-corruption safeguards are put in place and adhered to. National level campaigns and advocacy will respond to the specific policy gaps in their context but be united by a common narrative (Objective 1).

Tactics include:

- Develop a shared communications toolkit to be deployed at a domestic level to build media coverage, political will and community understanding around the links between a country's transition minerals, energy transitions and climate justice. This toolkit will reflect communities' voices and perspectives.
- Increase knowledge and understanding of transition minerals and their role in the energy transition through policy briefs and other communications products tailored to different audiences, such as mineral producing communities, local and national government and wider civil society.
- Advocate for changes to mining codes and related laws to be updated to respond to the increasing demand for transition minerals and follow up in implementation, drawing on communities' expectations and priorities.
- Develop policy recommendations for how to ensure revenues from transition mineral extraction are invested back into national level energy transition.
- Coordinate, share learnings and strategy through the Transition Minerals Working Group (currently made up of representatives from DRC, Madagascar, Mali and Zambia). This includes growing the working group and this campaign to include additional strategic countries including Côte d'Ivoire (manganese), Mozambique (graphite), Guinea (bauxite), Gabon (manganese), Ghana (manganese), South Africa (chromium and manganese) and Zimbabwe (chromium).



# 3

## Insert issues of responsible and sustainable mining into emerging bilateral deals and partnerships

*Led by PWYP Secretariat with coalitions & members*

As countries seek to move fast to secure transition minerals the policy landscape, and the advocacy opportunities to influence it, are evolving rapidly. This is characterised by an increase in opaque bilateral agreements. We will track these deals and partnerships and call for stronger governance, human rights and environmental safeguards to be implemented in these projects. Tactics include:

- Monitor for bilateral deals and partnerships and connect PWYP members in producing countries with civil society in the 'buyer' country to raise concerns. This could include bringing civil society from production countries to speak to rulemaking bodies, such as the EU's Strategic Raw Materials Act and partnerships, the US Minerals Security Partnership's, Germany's Critical Raw Materials Act, the UK's Critical Minerals Strategy, and the Australian Critical Minerals International Partnerships programme.
- Advocate for transparency of bilateral deals and partnerships, particularly those between producing countries and the US, EU, Germany, UK and Australia, as well as those being spurred by the Minerals Security Partnership and other similar partnerships. Link this advocacy to the #DiscloseTheDeal campaign as much as possible.
- Scope opportunities to identify and influence Chinese and Russian deals being made with African countries for their minerals.
- Develop policy options and influencing strategies to increase financing, knowledge and technology transfer through bilateral deals, including a shared price for the minerals.
- Draft blogs, op-eds and press releases to amplify concerns from civil society in prospective production countries in the country initiating the deal.
- Engage with African regional bodies to explore a fully African stance and joint positioning in negotiations with the EU, US and other countries engaged in mineral processing and manufacturing.
- Identify and build case studies on a flagship, emblematic project that embodies our key concerns and recommendations.

*Partners & allies PWYP will engage with on this effort: NRGI, Global Witness, European Environmental Bureau & the EU Critical Raw Materials Coalition.*

## HOW WE BUILT THIS CAMPAIGN PLAN

*A working group on transition minerals has been set up. Initially made up of representatives of the PWYP DRC, Mali and Madagascar coalitions, this working group was subsequently opened up to other civil society players and researchers working on the issue of energy transition. One of the working group's mandates was to help identify priorities for action to ensure that transition minerals are a source of growth for the countries of the African continent. In this context, in May 2023, national consultations were organised for civil society stakeholders in the DRC, Mali and Madagascar. Facilitated by a consultant recruited by PWYP's international secretariat, these national consultations, together with interviews with other non-governmental and governmental stakeholders, led to the development of a pan-African advocacy plan on transitional minerals.*

### REGISTER FOR THE MAILING LIST

To receive and share key updates about transition minerals advocacy and campaigns happening in Africa, [please fill in this form](#).

You will be added to the [transitionminerals@pwyp.org](mailto:transitionminerals@pwyp.org) mailing list.

### MORE INFORMATION

To receive more information about the campaign, please write to [zsprietmezoued@pwyp.org](mailto:zsprietmezoued@pwyp.org)



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