

8.103 Safeguarding biodiversity and human rights in energy transition mineral governance

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of integrating biodiversity and climate action and protecting Indigenous Peoples' rights as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as those of local communities as appropriate, in a just and sustainable energy transition;

CONSIDERING that the global shift to renewable energy and decarbonisation has significantly increased the demand for energy transition minerals, such as lithium, nickel, copper and bauxite;

CONCERNED that poorly regulated mining for these minerals drives biodiversity loss and habitat destruction, including of IUCN Red-Listed species, water insecurity and pollution, and in some cases have led to violations of human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples as set out in UNDRIP as appropriate, disproportionately affecting critical rainforests, wetlands and protected areas;

ALSO CONCERNED that such mining may cause widespread and long-term severe damage to the environment, increased social conflict, exacerbate climate vulnerability, and affect women, girls and youth and other groups who may be in vulnerable situations due to social, economic and environmental inequalities;

REAFFIRMING the importance of guaranteeing the good health of local populations by working to reduce the health impacts of mining activities, particularly in the context of illegal and unregulated mining;

APPRECIATING United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 6/5 (UNEP/EA.6/Res.5) *Environmental aspects of minerals and metals* and the 2024 United Nations *Principles to Guide Critical Energy Transition Minerals Towards Equity and Justice*, prioritising environmental protection, human rights and equitable benefits for all stakeholders;

REAFFIRMING that the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement emphasise the need to halt biodiversity loss;

RECOGNISING the critical role of forests, wetlands and biodiversity in combating climate change;

NOTING that healthy ecosystems, including protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and Indigenous and traditional territories where applicable are vital for ecological balance, climate resilience and planetary security;

STRESSING that the participation of Indigenous Peoples and the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) as set out in UNDRIP, are fundamental for equitable and responsible resource management, and;

RECALLING Resolution 7.121 *Reducing the impacts of the mining industry on biodiversity* (Marseille, 2020) urging precautionary approaches to minimise mining impacts on ecosystems:

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. REQUESTS the Director General to:

a. develop, with the technical expertise from the relevant IUCN Commissions and Members, including by working effectively and coordinating with bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and industry fora to ensure value added and practical implementation, and share guidance on responsible energy transition mineral governance, including best practices for safeguards, no-go zones and engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities in accordance with relevant national legislation, the principles of FPIC where appropriate, international instruments, including UNDRIP as appropriate, and human rights law; and

b. facilitate collaboration among governments, companies, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and civil society organisations to advance these objectives; and

2. ENCOURAGES governments to:

a. promote sustainable and equitable energy and mineral consumption;

b. promote circular economy approaches to enhance efficiency of energy production and resource consumption and reduce waste;

c. ensure socially and ecologically sound mineral governance, strengthening national policies to protect ecosystems, water resources, biodiversity and respecting human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples as set out in UNDRIP, as well as local communities, where appropriate;

d. consider appropriateness to enforce no-go zones for mining in critical ecologically or culturally significant areas, such as World Heritage sites, Ramsar Sites, Key Biodiversity Areas, Indigenous and traditional territories, sacred sites, protected areas and OECMs, deep sea, watersheds and other areas vital for biodiversity, carbon storage or the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;

e. expand and strengthen the network of protected areas, OECMs and Indigenous and traditional territories, where appropriate;

f. foster full, equitable, informed, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including women and youth, respecting their human rights;

g. implement the recommendations contained within the 2024 United Nations *Principles to Guide Critical Energy Transition Minerals Towards Equity and Justice* to ensure fairness and justice across the transition mineral value chains; and

h. ensure that mining practices, including post-mining rehabilitation, comply with human rights commitments and with the highest environmental standards and minimise negative impacts on local populations and workers' health, and embed zero tolerance policies for attacks on and criminalisation of human rights defenders and attacks on human rights defenders and whistleblowers within the transition mineral supply chain.