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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fifth session**

Nairobi (hybrid), 22–26 February 2021
and 28 February–2 March 2022*

**Draft resolution on mineral resource governance (version of
17 December 2021)****

**Submission by Argentina, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Senegal
and Switzerland**

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The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/19 on Mineral Resource Governance (UNEP/EA.4/Res.19), and *taking note* of the findings and recommendations from the consultations which were organized to implement the resolution, as reflected in the UNEP Executive Director’s report on *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/19 on mineral resource governance* (November 2020) and in the final Report “*Mineral Resource Governance and the Global Goals: An agenda for international collaboration*”¹.

Recognizing that minerals are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) and its target 12.2 (By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources) as well as to the Paris Agreement;

Noting with concern that the demand for minerals, including sand and gravels, is expected to significantly increase in the coming decades, posing serious supply risks, as well as environmental, economic and social challenges at local, regional and global scales;

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and its principles;

Deeply deploring the human and environmental costs of tailings dam disasters, and *underlining* that preventing catastrophic tailings dam accidents is essential and achievable;

* In accordance with the decisions taken by the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its meeting held on 8 October 2020 and by the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives at their joint meeting held on 1 December 2020, the fifth session of the Environment Assembly was adjourned on 23 February 2021 and is expected to resume as an in-person meeting in February 2022.

** The present document has not been formally edited.

¹ [INSERT LINK WHEN AVAILABLE.](#)

Welcoming the launch of the *Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management* as an important milestone towards the ambition of zero harm to people and the environment from tailings facilities and *stressing* the need for the effective implementation of the standard;

Underlining the specific environmental governance challenges related to artisanal and small-scale mining, and their associated health impacts;

Stressing the urgency for enhanced global policy action on governance of mineral resources to address environmental challenges;

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/1 on Innovative Pathways to Achieve Sustainable Consumption and Production and its progress report UNEP/EA.5/4; as well as resolution 4/5 on sustainable infrastructure and its progress report UNEP/EA.5/7, and *taking account* of relevant developments in resource efficiency, circular economy and secondary resources;

Taking note of UN Secretary-General Policy Brief “[Transforming Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development](#)” (May 2021) and its calls for action,

Recalling the findings of the International Resource Panel’s report “Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want *Global Resources Outlook 2019. The Future We Want*” ([UNEA/EA.4/INF/18](#)), which highlights the fact that minerals and metals extraction and processing up to ready-to-use materials account for about a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions, and about a fifth of the health impacts;

Noting that the International Resource Panel is currently working on an assessment report on how the financing of minerals production could be reformed to bring about sustainable production of these commodities, and the equitable distribution of their economic and social benefits.

1. *Encourages* Members States and relevant stakeholders active along the mineral supply chain, including the financial sector and international financial institutions, to align mining practices and investments in mining with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the Minamata Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and ‘build back better’ following the COVID19 pandemic;
2. *Decides* to convene an ad-hoc open ended working group with the aim of developing recommendations to UNEA on reducing the environmental impacts of minerals extraction and along the full life-cycle of the mine, including processing and refining where relevant, enhancing responsible business practices including transparency and environmental due diligence in line with internationally agreed environmental goals, and:
 - (a) *Requests* the Executive Director of UNEP to provide administrative support for this work;
 - (b) *Decides* that the ad hoc open-ended working group will be informed by and build on UNEP/EA.4/19 and its progress report UNEP/EA.5/14, bearing in mind UNEP/EA.4/1 and the progress report UNEP/EA.5/4, UNEP/EA.4/5 and its progress report UNEP/EA.5/7 as well as other relevant resolutions, decisions and reports by the UNEP, the International Resources Panel, the work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) and other organizations, Member States and stakeholders as appropriate;
 - (c) *Decides* that the ad hoc open-ended working group will include experts with the relevant expertise from all Member States, representation from relevant international organizations, multilateral environmental agreements and stakeholders;
 - (d) *Decides* that the ad hoc open-ended working group will convene at least [...] meeting(s), but no more than [...] meetings, before the sixth [or seventh] session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, including enabling the participation of developing countries, and be funded by voluntary contributions;
3. *Decides* that the ad hoc open-ended working group will have the initial following mandate:
 - (a) develop a proposal for global common vision and objectives towards the sustainable management of mineral resources for 2030, primarily addressing extraction and the full lifecycle of the mine, including processing and refining where relevant, for consideration by UNEA;
 - (b) assess existing international policies and legal instruments in terms of their coherence with internationally agreed environmental goals and their adequacy to address existing challenges, in view of identifying governance gaps, regarding but not limited to artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), mine tailings, rehabilitation of contaminated sites and closed mines, transparency, environmental due diligence, sand;

- (c) consider the recommendations of the International Resource Panel concerning a “sustainable development license to operate” and evaluate possible implementation actions;
 - (d) make recommendations to UNEA, including policy option proposals, on how to enhance the coverage of environmental issues of existing initiatives and standards, and on the potential need to develop new ones;
 - (e) examine the feasibility and effectiveness of these recommendations;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director, through the Global Resource Information Database (GRID Geneva) to strengthen scientific, technical and policy knowledge with regard to sand, to support global policies and action regarding its environmentally sound extraction and use.
 5. *Requests* the Executive Director to commission further research on tailings management (natural hazard triggered technological accidents, tailings reduction, re-use and recycling) working with the relevant organizations and stakeholders and to work with Member States and the private sector to improve the safety and environmental outcomes of tailings facilities;
 6. *Highlights* the importance of the establishment of an independent entity to design, manage and promote an authoritative certification process for the *Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management*;
 7. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its sixth [seventh] session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution, including on the results of the intergovernmental working group.
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