

From Resolution to Action: Strengthening Environmental Law and Governance for Minerals and Metals

Date: Tuesday 8 September 2026

Time: 13:15 to 14:45 (Nairobi time, EAT)

Location: Conference Room 3, United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON),
and online via [Microsoft Teams](#)

Concept note

Minerals and metals are essential to economic development, infrastructure and the clean energy transition. Growing demand creates important opportunities for resource-rich countries to diversify their economies, promote local value addition and industrial development, create decent jobs, increase revenues and advance the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, mineral development can place significant pressure on biodiversity, land and water resources; generate pollution, waste and greenhouse gas emissions; and affect human health and communities. Strong environmental laws, institutions and implementation capacity are therefore central to ensuring that mineral and metal value chains contribute to sustainable development.

Since 2019, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has progressively advanced international work on the environmental sustainability of minerals and metals. UNEA resolution 4/19 strengthened the knowledge base and initiated international dialogue on mineral resource governance. UNEA resolution 5/12 led to intergovernmental consultations and 24 non-prescriptive proposals covering policies and tools, circularity, tailings management, mine closure and international cooperation. UNEA resolution 6/5 further emphasized international cooperation, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, supported by UNEP through UNEA resolution 6/5 Digital Knowledge Hub.

In December 2025, UNEA adopted resolution 7/3 on strengthening international cooperation on the environmentally sound management of minerals and metals. In the resolution, UNEA requested UNEP to compile submissions and convene dialogues among Member States and relevant stakeholders on international cooperation, resource recovery from mining waste and tailings, best practices, and technological, technical, financial and scientific capabilities related to the environmental aspects of minerals and metals.

This work complements broader UN efforts on minerals, including the UN Task Force on Critical Energy Transition Minerals, co-chaired by UNEP, UNCTAD and UNDP. Relevant connections may be drawn to the Task Force's country support, work towards a Global Mining Legacy Fund, and efforts on material efficiency and circularity, while keeping the dialogue centered on UNEA resolution 7/3 and environmental law and governance.

Following a survey of Member States and stakeholders and an information session held on 29 July 2026, environmental law and governance was identified as the focus of the first dialogue under UNEA resolution 7/3. This special event will constitute that first dialogue.

The event will bring together voices from across the minerals and metals value chain, including businesses that are actively sourcing responsibly produced minerals and representatives of affected communities, and Indigenous Peoples.

Objective

The objective of the special event is to advance the first dialogue under UNEA resolution 7/3 by identifying practical priorities, experiences and cooperation needs related to environmental law and governance across mineral and metal value chains. The special event will:

- Provide an update on progress in implementing UNEA resolution 7/3 and the next steps in the run-up to UNEA-8;
- Provide an update on the process of the UN Task Force on Critical Energy Transition Minerals
- Exchange country and stakeholder experience in implementation and enforcement of environmental laws applicable to the minerals and metals lifecycle;
- Identify opportunities for international cooperation, finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and knowledge exchange;
- Discuss how the application of environmental standards in mining is enabling producing countries and companies to access specific markets and responsible supply chains; and
- Gather practical inputs for subsequent dialogues under UNEA resolution 7/3 and identify opportunities for engagement, including relevant synergies with the UN Task Force on Critical Energy Transition Minerals.

Expected outcome

The event should discuss how strong environmental laws and institutions, and adherence to higher environmental standards across the minerals and metals value chain enable market access, value addition, local benefit sharing and responsible supply chains.

Taking energy transition minerals as its entry point, the discussion will consider how environmental laws, institutions, and voluntary and industry standards are already shaping the energy transition, where the main gaps and challenges lie, and what forms of international cooperation are needed to address them. The framing draws on the Secretary-General's Panel principles on critical energy transition minerals, UNEP's recently launched report on just transition, and the UNEP/IGF Stocktake Report on Sustainability Standards & Initiatives.

Panel

Moderator:

- Patricia Kameri Mbote, Director, Law Division, UNEP

Panelists/Speakers:

- Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP
- Ms. Ilja Donkervoort, Policy Officer, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands
- Mr. Jerome Lugumira, UNEA focal point, Natural Resources Manager, National Environment Management Authority of Uganda (online)
- Mr. John Lindberg, Representative of the Business and Industry Major Group to UNEP
- Ms. Louisa April, Representative of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group to UNEP

Agenda

Moderator: Patricia Kameri Mbote, Director, Law Division, UNEP

Time	Agenda Item	Speaker
13.15-13.20 (5min)	Opening remarks	Patricia Kameri Mbote, Director, Law Division
13.20-13.25 (5min)	Scene-setting presentation	Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP
13.25-14.10 (45min)	The panel will reflect on challenges, good practices, and cooperation needs related to environmental law and governance for minerals and metals, taking a value chain and life cycle perspective from mining through to downstream manufacturing, and energy transition as an entry point.	• Ms. Ilja Donkervoort, Policy Officer, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands (with an online intervention from the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment) • Mr. Jerome Lugumira, Natural Resources Manager, National Environment Management Authority of Uganda (<i>online</i>) • Mr. John Lindberg, Representative of the Business and Industry Major Group to UNEP • Ms. Louisa April, Representative of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group to UNEP
14.10-14.40 (30min)	Interactive discussion with the audience: questions, country and stakeholder experience, priority needs and recommendations	Facilitated by the moderator
14.40-14.45 (5min)	Closing remarks and next steps	Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP