

# Concept Note for High-Level West Africa Conference:

Equity in Extraction: Addressing Inequalities in Natural Resource Governance  
in West Africa Amidst Climate change

14-16 October 2025  
Alisa Hotel, Accra, Ghana

## Background:

West Africa is rich in natural resources, including critical minerals essential for global technological advancement and energy transition. However, the governance of these resources often reinforces existing inequalities within communities, exacerbating social, economic, and environmental disparities. The interplay between resource extraction, climate change, and systemic inequalities raises urgent questions about sustainable development in the region.

Despite significant policy frameworks aimed at equitable resource distribution, the benefits of natural resource wealth frequently do not reach the most vulnerable populations. During the 2022 high-level Conference organized in Accra with support from Ford Foundation, the issues and complexities within the nexus between natural resource governance and inequalities was broadly discussed in all presentations and, the issue of climate change came out strongly in all presentations and conclusions. Climate change poses additional challenges, threatening livelihoods and intensifying existing vulnerabilities.

With increasing demand for electric vehicles, solar panels, and other clean energy technologies, global demand for critical minerals is projected to surge—nickel demand is expected to double, cobalt to triple, and lithium to increase tenfold by 2050. This creates an enormous opportunity as well as a threat for Sub-Saharan Africa, which could see significant economic benefits from rising mineral revenues and increasing inequalities and negative impacts on the climate in an already fragile climate that has implications for sustaining livelihoods into the future.

This conference builds on the 2022 High-Level Conference which focused on the nexus between natural resource governance and inequalities. The proposed conference aims to critically examine these issues and **collaborate on actionable climate-change oriented solutions that promote equity in resource management**. The two-day conference will bring about researchers, activists, as well as policy makers and civil society leaders, as well as trade unionists or labour groups, to discuss some of the following topics.

## Objectives:

1. To analyze current inequalities associated with natural resource governance in West Africa, particularly in relation to critical mineral resources and climate change (identify inequalities)
2. To develop and recommend policies that promote equity, environmental sustainability, and effective governance of natural resources (Policy Development)
3. To facilitate knowledge-sharing among academics and policy makers, and CSOs, regarding best practices in resource management and climate resilience (knowledge Exchange)
4. To specifically discuss the implications of critical mineral resources on local communities, the environment, biodiversity and the economy (Critical Mineral Focus).
5. Foster dialogue between government representatives, industry leaders, civil society, and international stakeholders to find solutions to the question of addressing inequalities and climate change within the context of natural resource management



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## Target Audience:

- Policymakers at national and Regional Levels
- Academics and researchers in Environmental Science, Economics and social justice
- Civil Society Representatives at national and regional level
- Community Leaders and Grassroots Organizations
- International Development Partners
- Private Sector players in Extraction.

## Conference Structure:

The conference will be organized around thematic sessions, panel discussions, and interactive workshops, each focusing on specific aspects of resource governance, inequalities, and climate challenges:

1. Opening addresses from esteemed thought leaders in the field of natural resource governance and climate change [Keynote Speeches]
2. Presentations of successful initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities in the context of natural resource governance and climate resilience (Case Studies)
3. Multi-Stakeholder panels discussing the intersectionality of inequalities, resource management, and climate change (panel Discussions)
4. Collaborative workshops to develop policy recommendations and action plans for equitable resource governance in the region (Breakout Cohort Workshops)- Communique
5. Opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate, share experiences, and form partnerships (Networking Sessions)

