

AFRICAN UNION

Continental Framework for Equitable and Climate-Responsive Mineral Governance in Africa

Target Audience: African Union (AU)



01 / CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

The Equity in Extraction Conference underscored that Africa's expanding role in the global energy transition places the continent at the centre of critical mineral supply chains, while persistent governance failures continue to undermine equity, environmental protection, and community wellbeing. Rising demand for cobalt, lithium, nickel, manganese, and rare earth elements creates significant opportunities for industrialization and development, but also heightens risks of environmental degradation, social exclusion, conflict, and illicit financial flows (IFFs). Participants emphasized that without coordinated continental frameworks, Africa risks entrenching extractive dependency rather than advancing inclusive and climate-resilient development.

The conference called on the African Union to lead the development of continental governance frameworks that harmonize mineral sector standards, strengthen transparency and accountability, embed climate justice, and promote domestic value addition. Participants urged the AU to align extractive governance reforms with Agenda 2063, the African Mining Vision, and continental climate commitments while strengthening regional coordination, institutional capacity, and multi-stakeholder oversight mechanisms.

POLICY FOCUS

This policy brief presents priority actions for the African Union, drawn directly from the conference outcomes and communiqué, to advance equitable, transparent, and climate-responsive mineral governance across the continent.

The conference reaffirmed that Africa's mineral wealth must be governed in ways that advance equity, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

02 / EVIDENCE

Key Findings

The conference highlighted that:

- 01** Regional and continental cooperation is essential to manage shared resources, prevent IFFs, and maximize collective benefits.
- 02** Weak accountability mechanisms undermine trust in extractive governance institutions.
- 03** Climate vulnerability in extractive regions requires integrated, climate-smart governance frameworks.
- 04** Absence of harmonized standards enables regulatory arbitrage and environmental degradation.
- 05** Fragmented policy frameworks reduce Africa's leverage in global mineral markets.

03 / ACTION

Policy Recommendations

The African Union is urged to:

01 Lead the development of a continental minerals governance framework

02 Strengthen transparency, traceability, and accountability mechanisms

03 Embed climate justice, environmental protection, and community rights in mineral governance

04 Promote domestic value addition, skills development, and industrialization

05 Strengthen community rights, participation, and benefit-sharing in mineral extraction

06 Establish continental monitoring, coordination, and capacity-building mechanisms

Conclusion

The conference reaffirmed that Africa's mineral wealth must be governed in ways that advance equity, sustainability, and shared prosperity. The African Union is urged to exercise continental leadership to harmonize governance standards, embed climate justice, strengthen accountability, and promote value-added industrial transformation in Africa's extractive sectors.