

Summary of the Global Intergovernmental Meeting on the Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals Management: 7-8 September 2023

The mining industry has a crucial role to play in supplying the minerals and metals that are essential for the ongoing global clean energy transition. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), a concerted effort to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change would require a quadrupling of critical mineral needs for clean energy technologies by 2040. An even faster transition, to hit net-zero globally by 2050, would require six times more mineral inputs in 2040 than today. For its part, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) cites projections suggesting a twentyfold increase in mineral production by 2035.

Recognizing the enormous environmental implications of such increased mining, the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5) mandated a process to generate “non-prescriptive proposals” (NPPs) for actionable solutions across the entire life cycle. These proposals will be considered at UNEA 6 in February 2024.

“It’s been a long journey to get here, but it’s brought us many valuable inputs,” declared Co-Chairs Martine Rohn-Brossard (Switzerland) and Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan) during the closing plenary of the Global Intergovernmental Meeting on the Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals Management (GIMM). Capping the process mandated by UNEA, delegates expressed appreciation for the inclusive approach, which comprised five regional consultations and culminated in broad-ranging discussions at the GIMM on 24 draft NPPs.

Among issues deliberated on at the Meeting, delegates explored whether, and how, to: have UNEP do a global assessment of existing instruments and standards; create international metal certification schemes; promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP), including through circular economy and extended producer responsibility (EPR); develop technical guidelines and standards for tailings management; adopt guidelines for mine closure; create a new intergovernmental working group to follow up on any proposals made by the GIMM; a possible global minerals programme; or embark on an international agreement on environmental aspects of mining.

While the concept of exploring an international agreement at this time was widely regarded as premature, support for other proposals varied, with the most interest expressed in: a global



“Family photo” of the delegates to the Global Intergovernmental Meeting

assessment; the establishment of a possible working group; greater efforts at capacity building and technical assistance, with respect to, for example, tailings management and mine closures; and the creation of a global sand observatory.

In This Issue

A Brief History of the GIMM	2
Global Intergovernmental Meeting on the Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals Management Report	2
Outcomes from the Intergovernmental Regional Consultations	2
Technical Panel Discussion	3
Discussion on Non-prescriptive Proposals	4
Report Back from Breakout Group Discussions on Non-prescriptive Proposals	6
Consideration of a Draft Co-Chairs’ Summary of the Meeting	8
Closing	9
Upcoming Meetings	9
Glossary	9

The GIMM was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 7-8 September 2023, with some participants joining online. The Meeting included delegates representing 120 governments and 60 observer organizations, including UN agencies and other intergovernmental bodies, secretariats of multilateral environment agreements (MEAs), industry, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

A Brief History of the GIMM

In 2019 the International Resource Panel (IRP) released a report, [Mineral Resource Governance in the 21st Century: Gearing extractive industries towards sustainable development](#), mapping more than 80 existing international governance frameworks and initiatives covering mineral resources. The report revealed that while these frameworks and initiatives dealt with overlapping subsets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they lacked a coordinated and integrated governance structure.

In response, UNEA 4 in 2019 adopted resolution 4/19 on mineral resource governance, requesting UNEP to collect information on sustainable practices, identify knowledge gaps and options for implementation strategies, and undertake an overview of existing assessments of different governance initiatives and approaches on the sustainable management of metal and mineral resources. UNEP organized sub-regional, regional, and global consultations on extractive industry governance during July-September 2020, and reported back to UNEA 5 in March 2022.

UNEA 5 adopted [resolution 5/12](#) requesting UNEP to convene intergovernmental regional consultations, intended to feed into a global intergovernmental meeting to develop NPPs to enhance the environmental sustainability of minerals and metals along their full life cycle, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

The regional consultations were mandated to:

- take stock of existing activities and actions to enhance the environmental sustainability of minerals and metals;
- identify best practices, responsible business practices, standards, guidelines, technical tools, environmentally sustainable technologies, and renewable energy uses in mining;
- identify opportunities for enhanced international cooperation; and
- identify possible ways forward for consideration at UNEA 6.

In addition, the consultations discussed two other mining topics which the resolution mandates the UNEP Executive Director to report on at UNEA 6, namely: the environmentally sound extraction and use of sand; and environmental aspects of tailings management.

Global Intergovernmental Meeting on the Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals Management Report

On Thursday, 7 September 2023, Co-Chair Martine Rohn-Brossard (Switzerland) opened the GIMM. Noting that the clean energy transition is projected to increase demand for minerals



Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director, Industry and Economy Division, UNEP

twentyfold by 2035, Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, UNEP, stressed the need to consider and address the environmental impacts of increased mining. She also underscored the necessity of engaging in discussions related to issues such as social conflicts over mining and how sustainable management of the minerals and metals value chain can reduce the need for extracting ore.

Delegates adopted the provisional agenda ([UNEP/5/12/1](#)) without amendment.

Outcomes from the Intergovernmental Regional Consultations

Djaheezah Subratty, UNEP, noted the outcomes of the five regional consultations were provided in the GIMM's [background document](#), and the 38 NPPs generated by the consultations were consolidated into 24 and analyzed therein.

Subratty summarized the outcomes of regional consultations for the Eastern Europe Group (EEG), Asia-Pacific, and Western Europe and Others (WEOG). She reported that the EEG consultation expressed concern about abandoned mine sites and tailings dams, legislative gaps, and illegal mining. She said they recommended establishing a global sand observatory, taking inventory of abandoned mine sites, and establishing environmental safeguards for deep sea mining.

Subratty reported that the Asia-Pacific consultation emphasized: sand mining; challenges in monitoring and enforcement; tailings management; building capacity in deep sea mining; knowledge exchange; and financial assistance. She stated the region proposed requesting UNEP to compile best practices, lessons learned, and gaps, and to use the compendium to explore capacity building, technical assistance, and know-how transfer needs.

Subratty reported the WEOG consultation noted multiple existing international cooperation efforts leading to fragmented and confusing mining governance. She said the region supported: a global sands observatory; a global assessment of gaps in existing instruments on environmental aspects of minerals



Djaheezah Subratty, UNEP

and metals management; research on financing and regulatory frameworks needed to effectively manage mine closure and reclamation; and the creation of an open-ended working group (OEWG) to follow up on implementation of proposals resulting from the GIMM.

CHILE summarized the regional consultation for the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), which Chile hosted, noting the consultations identified the need to bridge the trust gap between the mining sector and the public. She highlighted GRULAC support for: a global sand observatory; a regional network of experts on mining and sustainability; a global assessment of instruments on tailings and monitoring of the [Global Industry Standard for Tailings Management](#) (GISTM); and work on a circular economy, sustainable design, and reprocessing of tailings from old mining operations.

SENEGAL summarized the regional consultation for the African Group, which Senegal hosted. She said the region's priority concerns included: artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM); sand extraction and use; rehabilitation of closed or abandoned mine sites; and legislative gaps regarding tailings management. She further noted African Group support for: a global sand observatory; a global assessment of instruments on tailings; classification of tailings and their toxicity; standards and guidance for rational tailings management; guidelines on sustainable mining; and the creation of an open-ended technical working group to continue work in this area.

Rohn-Brossard explained that the dialogue at the GIMM will be captured in a Co-Chairs' summary. She stressed that the Co-Chairs summary report will not be a negotiated document nor require consensus, but rather will reflect views expressed during the discussions. Rohn-Brossard noted the summary report may include concrete recommendations including options, such as tabling a resolution at UNEA 6 calling for the establishment of a working group of experts, should GIMM delegates express this need.

Technical Panel Discussion

On Thursday, Bruno Oberle, President, World Resources Forum, moderated a panel exploring the necessary steps and

priorities for advancing the shift towards more sustainable and responsible management of minerals and metals, across their entire lifecycle.

Oberle asked panelists to identify opportunities for the sector in the context of the green energy transition. Stephen Barrie, Church of England Pensions Board, discussed efforts by pension funds and other investors to get industry to adhere to global standards on transparency, accountability, and tailings management.

Jan Morill, Earthworks, emphasized that mining sustainability must address human rights issues, including meaningful community engagement. Morill also cautioned against exponential growth projections, advocating instead for reducing raw materials demand in favor of a circular economy approach that emphasizes recycling and reusing resources.

George Georgiadis, Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, offered insights from the Convention's work, including its tools, guidelines, and methodologies to strengthen mine tailings safety.

Richard Gutierrez, Minamata Convention Secretariat, highlighted progress under the Convention towards regulating mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) and on work on mercury mining wastes.

Oberle asked the panel to reflect on pathways to a more sustainable and equitable mining sector. Barrie highlighted the process to develop the GISTM as an example of how to reframe the vision of mining as an important contributor to the global economy.

Morill linked the principles of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and Indigenous People's rights to self-determination. Referring to the Earthworks report [Safety First: Guidelines for Responsible Mine Tailings Management](#), she highlighted calls for, *inter alia*: full disclosure; independent evaluations of facilities; factoring in the impact on vital ecosystems; and taking accountability for risks and the consequences of failure.



Moderator Bruno Oberle, President, World Resources Forum



John Lindberg, International Council on Mining and Metals

Outlining the role of governments and regulators, Georgiadis suggested: learning from best practices; planning future risks, including transboundary impacts; and engaging civil society. Discussing the role of science, Gutierrez highlighted the [UNEP Global Mercury Partnership](#) and the Global Environment Facility-funded [planetGOLD](#) initiatives as examples of how to promote sustainable ASGM, but noted more work is needed on ways to support small-scale miners to transition.

In an intervention from the floor, John Lindberg, International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), remarked that while industry “is often ahead of regulatory frameworks,” the standards landscape does not serve the needs of all stakeholders. He discussed industry efforts to consolidate diverse voluntary guidelines into a global standard that could be adopted by more than 700 of the largest mining sites.

During the subsequent discussion, delegates from NIGERIA, ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, MALI, SIERRA LEONE, CAMEROON, SENEGAL, and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC highlighted, among other issues, how to:

- incentivize sustainable practices among the poorest and most vulnerable mining communities, which often intersect with biodiversity hotspots;
- improve governance of the ASM sector in the absence of organized platforms;
- maintain open dialogue in contexts where some stakeholders are wholly opposed to mining;
- derive more value for source communities and countries and enhance the competitiveness of local enterprises; and
- increase funding for existing capacity-building mechanisms such as the Specific International Programme under the Minamata Convention.

Discussion on Non-prescriptive Proposals

On Thursday afternoon, participants met in three parallel informal breakout groups to discuss the NPPs clustered into two areas: policies and tools; and value chain aspects. The NPPs clustered under “platforms for international cooperation” were addressed by breakout groups on Friday morning.

Policies and Tools: Group 1 was co-facilitated by Oumar Cisse (Mali) and Zixi Fu (China). Group 2 was co-facilitated by Eli Guihinimi Souleyman (Chad) and Cynthia Ebinger (US). Group 3 was co-facilitated by Alejandro Montero (Chile) and Laura Platchkov (Switzerland).

Delegates generally supported the NPP for a global assessment of existing instruments and standards, with some suggesting it should encompass all relevant instruments, including legally binding regional and international frameworks, and address the entire lifecycle of minerals. There was discussion about scope, criteria, and objective of the proposed assessment, with some suggesting it include economic and social aspects and a few stressing that it not focus just on industry standards. Some delegates emphasized the need for uniform parameters and standards as the foundation for the assessment. Others, however, questioned the feasibility of exploring “a global action plan” as suggested in the NPP.

On the NPP for international metal certifications, some delegates emphasized the need for a more profound understanding of the proposal. Caution was raised, as this initiative would be a massive undertaking. Many stressed that if undertaken it should be with a view to providing international benchmarks for national certification schemes. Several speakers cautioned against greenwashing. Others noted this might be beyond the scope of a UNEA resolution.

Many delegates expressed their support for the NPP on the establishment of the global sand observatory, although they differed on the scope of such an observatory’s work and some expressed concerns about how it would be funded. Several raised questions about how data would be gathered and verified, while others questioned who would sit on the observatory’s bureau and steering committee.

Several delegates expressed the need for more information and clarity regarding the NPP on environmental peer reviews, with some stressing that any peer reviews should be voluntary. African Group delegates explained the Group’s NPP, and strongly supported undertaking such reviews at the regional level. Some suggested building on the experience of the Organisation for



Co-Facilitators of Group 3 on Policies and Tools: **Alejandro Montero**, Chile, and **Laura Platchkov**, Switzerland



Co-Facilitators of Group 2 for Value Chain Aspects: **Timon Lepold**, Germany, and **Jean Marie Bope Bope Lapwong**, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in conducting environmental performance reviews for their member states, while others suggested peer reviews could be conducted bilaterally. Some delegates called for a pilot project to assess the modalities for providing feedback from diverse stakeholders and ensuring reviews of strategies for the ASM sector.

Many delegates stressed the importance of the NPP for supporting the application of best practices through capacity building, technical assistance, and transfer of know-how, with many countries calling for increased technical support to regulators and technical experts. Some delegates suggested reformulating the NPP to emphasize sharing of best practice rather than its application.

Some countries suggested exploring additional topics in the policy and instruments NPP cluster, such as mechanisms to strengthen public participation, engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), and protect environmental defenders.

Value Chain Aspects: Group 1 was co-facilitated by Galina Bitsadze (Georgia) and Khadidiatou Drame (Senegal). Group 2 was co-facilitated by Jean Marie Bope Bope Lapwong (Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC) and Timon Lepold (Germany). Group 3 was co-facilitated by Vera Klok (the Netherlands) and Phuntsho Namgyal (Bhutan).

The NPP on work towards promoting a circular economy, sustainable design, and EPR received broad support, particularly regarding the recovery of minerals and metals from wastes. Other delegates emphasized the need for safe practices when reusing materials, especially tailings, to prevent further environmental impacts. Some highlighted the shortage of a skilled workforce as a key barrier to recycle, reuse, and reduce metals and minerals. However, others expressed concern about any emphasis on EPR. Some delegates urged linking any proposal on circular economy in the minerals and metal sector with [UNEA resolution 5/11](#) on enhancing circular economy as a contribution to achieving SCP.

The three groups clustered consideration of the NPPs regarding tailings, and some delegates suggested merging the relevant NPPs. Proposals for global mapping and toxicity classification of tailings facilities met with mixed reactions, with some welcoming the proposal but others questioning financing

and implementation, seeking alignment with existing efforts. Others stressed that classifying tailings as toxic or non-toxic was the wrong approach that might impede efforts at re-mining or reuse of tailings and suggested instead emphasizing the need for risk assessment. Some endorsed proposals for harmonized guidance encompassing mapping and classification, design and construction, and environmentally sound management of tailings, including their transboundary impacts. Several speakers stressed the importance of adapting guidance to national circumstances.

There were calls for improved coordination and harmonization with existing initiatives, such as those undertaken by the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF), ICMM, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and learning from regional frameworks such as the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention and European Union guidance on tailings management.

The three groups clustered consideration of the NPPs regarding mine closures, and some delegates suggested merging the relevant NPPs. Several delegates supported creating an inventory of abandoned mine sites, with some proposing combining it with tailing facility mapping. An observer emphasized the importance of focusing on rehabilitation rather than mapping. Many speakers called for explicit provisions in the mining project design and approval phase to consider safety issues for local communities and workers, including compensation of local communities from companies claiming bankruptcy. Others stressed the need for some sort of insurance or financial provision to cover potential liabilities from abandoned or unrehabilitated mine sites.

Platforms for International Cooperation: For this discussion: Group 1, was co-facilitated by Juan Bautista Martínez Amiguetti (Spain) and Shanti Persaud (Jamaica); Group 2 was co-facilitated by Teodorico Sandoval (Philippines) and Narine Hakobyan (Armenia); and Group 3 was co-facilitated by Leonardo Pflüger (Argentina) and Ylber Mirta (North Macedonia).

While there was general support for the NPP on creating an OEWG to follow up on proposals made, several delegates



Co-Facilitators of Group 2 on Platforms for International Cooperation: **Teodorico Sandoval**, the Philippines, and **Narine Hakobyan**, Armenia

asked for clarification on the scope of its remit and how it would be funded. Some delegates in one group suggested it might be premature to create an OEWG. Delegates also expressed divergent views over whether any OEWG should be strictly intergovernmental or “technical,” and what role NGOs and other Major Groups should play. Some suggested their countries would need capacity-building and financial support to effectively participate in an OEWG. One delegate suggested the OEWG could have regional subcommittees to address each region’s characteristics, while other suggested it could have thematic subgroups.

On the NPP for multi-stakeholder policy dialogues, one delegate pointed out that the IGF already provided this function. Some delegates questioned the value added of a new dialogue, especially if an OEWG is created.

Several delegates suggested the possible merger of three NPPs on general cooperation between international organizations, specific cooperation with the Minamata Convention on ASGM, and cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding deep sea mining environmental safeguards.

Several requested further clarification of which international organizations and processes would be involved in a cooperation NPP, others suggested more emphasis on coordination than cooperation, and some suggested the NPP specifically include regional MEAs with lessons for global application.

Many delegates supported collaboration with the CBD, stressing the significance of deep-sea mining and the need for enhanced governance in this area grounded in science and the precautionary principle. Several delegates cautioned about including the International Seabed Authority (ISA) in any work on deep-sea mining.

Several delegates suggested broadening the NPP on creating a network of experts on mining and sustainability for Latin America and the Caribbean to also advocate for several regional networks, not just one serving GRULAC. An observer advocated for an NPP on ASM, not one restricted to ASGM.

The NPP on the GRULAC region’s Escazú Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters was considered too narrowly regional for a UNEA resolution, so it was suggested to either drop it or include other relevant agreements, such as the UNECE’s Aarhus Convention.

Most delegates also concurred that it was too early to explore the possibility of an international agreement on environmental aspects of mining.

Many developing country delegates agreed with the NPP for creating an international mineral programme to support member state alignment of mining policies with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Some delegates asked for further clarification of what the scope of a new programme would be, while others suggested it may duplicate existing efforts. A few suggested strengthening the work of the IGF instead.

Report Back from Breakout Group Discussions on Non-prescriptive Proposals

On Friday morning, the plenary heard reports from the Co-Facilitators on the discussions on NPPs helped in the informal breakout groups.

Policies and Tools: Group 1 Co-Facilitator Fu said most speakers in her group favored the NPP on a global assessment of existing instruments but questioned what the scope and aim of any action plan would be in the follow-up. On certification, she said most delegates suggested it should occur at the national level but take into account international benchmarks. Regarding the environmental peer reviews NPP, she reported that the African Group explained the background for its proposal, while others sought clarification and some suggested that such reviews could be undertaken bilaterally. Fu said the group found the global sand observatory NPP “generally acceptable,” but noted controversy about its mandate, funding, and how data would be collected and validated. She reported the NPP on capacity building, technical assistance, and transfer of know-how about best practice in environmental sustainability of mining was “highly supported,” with some noting the need for more training opportunities for young people and government officials.

Group 2 Co-Facilitator Souleyman said his group stressed that any global assessment of existing instruments should: address issues across the entire life cycle; be inclusive and transparent; not only consider industry standards; and involve other secretariats and regional bodies working in related areas, such as the UNECE. On the certification NPP, he reported his group considered the proposal must be better defined and should have a broader focus to bring in social, human rights, security, conflict, and money laundering issues. On environmental peer reviews, Souleyman said the group stressed that any reviews must be voluntarily requested, and suggested a pilot project could test parameters for conducting such reviews. He reported his group “highly recommended” the establishment of a global sand observatory, but stressed it required a clear mandate and work with existing bodies.

On capacity building, technical assistance, and know-how transfer, Souleyman said the group stressed it should support implementation of all relevant instruments and standards, including technology transfer, and was particularly recommended for tailings management. He noted the group also highlighted the need for community engagement and respect of the FPIC principle.

Group 3 Co-Facilitator Montero noted support for undertaking a global assessment of existing instruments, albeit with clear



Eli Guihinimi Souleyman, Chad, Co-Facilitator for Group 2 on Policies and Tools

parameters for what it would cover and identifying the ultimate objective of the exercise. He said delegates suggested any work on certification should focus on traceability. Montero also reported broad support for the global sand observatory, but with questions about its mandate, how it would be funded, and who would sit on its bureau and steering committee. He said the group had many questions about the scope and mechanics of the NPP for environmental peer review, with some suggesting it could build on the environmental performance reviews conducted by the OECD for its member states. Montero also noted a suggestion that NPPs address the role of renewable energy in mining and the value chain and engage IPLCs on mining regulation and projects.

Value Chain Aspects: Group 1 Co-Facilitator Bitsadze reported wide support in her group for work on SCP and circular economy but stressed that such work should respect national contexts and approaches. She said the group suggested combining the NPPs on tailings and on mine closure. Bitsadze noted broad agreement for an inventory of abandoned mine sites. She said the group underscored the need for capacity building, technical assistance, and financing mine closure.

Group 2 Co-Facilitator Lepold observed “crosscutting aspects that kept reappearing during our discussions,” namely the importance of technical assistance, financial support, technology transfer, knowledge exchange, and capacity building. He said the group suggested work on circular economy, tailings, and mine closure could be organized at the regional level, should always consider national context and capacities, and should avoid duplication with existing efforts. Lepold said UNECE’s expertise was repeatedly mentioned. He further noted his group underscored the need to take mine closure and tailings management issues into account from the project design and approval stage, with the involvement of IPLCs near the site. Lepold said the group stressed the importance of international guidelines and standards for both mine closure and tailings, which also considering human health issues. On SCP and circular economy, he said the group stressed work should not only focus on recycling but also on ecodesign in the value chain to move away from planned obsolescence.

Group 3 Co-Facilitator Klok said while her group supported mapping tailings sites, questions were raised about how to finance such an effort. On circular economy, she reported the group’s focus mostly on reuse of tailings, asked for clarification about what circular economy work would encompass, and urged synergies with implementation work on UNEA resolution 5/11. Klok further noted support for an inventory of abandoned mine sites, and questions about which institutions would be responsible for trust funds for mine closures. She noted that many delegates felt the various NPPs on tailings could be merged, as could those on mine closures, while some suggested underscoring linkages between the two issues.

Platforms for International Cooperation: Group 1 Co-Facilitator Martínez reported his group generally supported creating an OEWG, but requested clarification on what role NGOs would play and expressed concerns about the capacity of many countries to participate meaningfully. He noted several delegates suggested merging the NPPs on cooperation with those



Co-Facilitators of Group 3 on Value Chain Aspects: **Vera Klok**, the Netherlands, and **Phuntsho Namgyal**, Bhutan

on international organizations and collaboration with MEAs, and that the merged NPP should specifically mention the Minamata Convention, the CBD, the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, and any other relevant MEAs at the regional or global levels. Martínez said many delegates expressed concern about the NPP on deep-sea mining recognizing the roles of both the CBD and ISA. He reported most delegates did not support the NPP on exploring an international agreement, suggesting it was premature. Martínez said most supported the NPP on creating a new international mineral programme.

Group 2 Co-Facilitator Sandoval reported that his group felt the proposals for an OEWG and for dialogue could prove useful. He noted many called for creating a mechanism for consulting communities living around mines. Sandoval noted general support for the NPP on greater cooperation between international organizations and process, with many delegates mentioning the need to specifically include the IGF, the Extractive Industries Initiative, the Basel Convention on Hazardous Wastes, the Minamata Convention, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the planetGOLD programme. He said some in the group suggested compiling a list of all relevant organizations and processes. Sandoval further highlighted that one objective of greater cooperation identified by the group could be to assist developing countries in preparing national action plans for the elimination of mercury in ASGM.

Group 2 Co-Facilitator Hakobyan added that the group expressed concern about overlap between the CBD and ISA on deep sea mining, and some expressed support for a seabed mining moratorium. She reported the group rejected the NPP for exploring an international agreement, deeming it premature, and stressed instead focusing on improving and coordinating existing initiatives. Hakobyan further noted the suggestion that consideration of an international agreement should only come after the global assessment of existing instruments is completed. She reported general support for the NPP on a new international minerals programme and agreement on the need to respect the FPIC principle regarding IPLCs around mining projects.

Group 3 Co-Facilitator Pflüger reported mixed views on the proposal for an OEWG, with several delegates expressing doubts about its remit. He said the group felt the NPP on dialogue



Leonardo Pflüger, Argentina, Co-Facilitator for Group 3 on Platforms for International Cooperation

was not well defined and required more clarification about scope and mechanisms. Pflüger added that several delegates suggested merging the NPPs on cooperation and changing the focus to coordination. On the issue of deep-sea mining, he said delegates suggested greater emphasis on improving governance. He reported near unanimous rejection of the NPP for exploring an international agreement on sustainable mining at this time. Pflüger said many delegates felt the NPP for a new international minerals programme would risk duplicating work underway elsewhere, and instead suggested strengthening the role of the IGF. Finally, he noted much support for greater participation of IPLCs in regulation and decisions regarding mining projects.

General Discussion: On Friday afternoon, Co-Chair Rohn-Brossard invited further views and responses to summaries of breakout sessions as summarized by the co-facilitators. Many speakers expressed appreciation for the open and inclusive nature of the discussions and the opportunity to understand each other's regional contexts and priorities.

SAUDI ARABIA, with INDONESIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, and others, reiterated that capacity building and technical support emerged as a core priority and shared concern among most delegations, which also contributes to progress on many of the other NPPs.

Several countries reiterated concerns about calls for global assessments, peer review, and other proposals, noting there can be no one-size-fits-all approach. Referencing UNEA resolution 5/12's narrow focus on environmental aspects, BRAZIL further highlighted concerns with using the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as a model for other work on certification, suggesting that UNEA revisit the concept of mining sustainability from a broader perspective. Clarifying the African Group's proposals on international certification, CAMEROON and NIGERIA said the intention was to provide global standards and benchmarks to support countries in updating their legal frameworks and to strengthen country ownership.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE highlighted the role of peer reviews in fostering regional knowledge sharing and learning. COLOMBIA

favoured prioritizing ASM aspects of capacity building in international cooperation.

On the intersection between mining and biodiversity protection, the DRC underscored the importance of addressing social conflicts that result, often with transboundary impacts.

The US reiterated its support for a new NPP for the meaningful engagement of IPLCs living in the vicinity of mining operations, noting this should include protection of environmental defenders and providing safe spaces to raise concerns.

On next steps, PAKISTAN noted the technical nature of the discussions and proposed that UNEA consider convening a meeting of technical experts to develop modalities for the global assessment and benchmarking criteria. SAUDI ARABIA and several other countries asked for further clarification on how proposals and priorities highlighted at this meeting would be taken up at UNEA 6 and beyond. INDONESIA and SWITZERLAND favored a structured approach to refining the NPPs by prioritizing "low hanging fruit" where there is broad consensus.

Consideration of a Draft Co-Chairs' Summary of the Meeting

On Friday afternoon, Co-Chair Syedah presented the [draft Co-Chairs' Summary](#), stressing that it was not a negotiating text nor official meeting report, and only provided details about the process for implementing UNEA resolution 5/12 and the NPPs discussed at the GIMM. She read through the completed parts of the report addressing the NPPs, highlighting those that they perceived as enjoying "broad support" – such as the global assessment, the global sand observatory, capacity-building and technical assistance efforts to improve environmental sustainability of mining, and the proposal for a new working group – or those with "moderate support," such as the NPP on environmental peer reviews. Co-Chair Syedah also highlighted areas involving disagreement or the need for further elaboration and clarification. As for crosscutting issues, the Co-Chairs report notes the need to:

- provide technical assistance, financial support, and technology transfer for developing countries;
- avoid duplication of existing efforts and instead seek opportunities to leverage existing instruments;
- ensure transparency and access to information across the minerals and metals life cycle;
- provide for meaningful community engagement and FPIC in all mining processes;
- focus on enhancing renewable energy in mining and along the entire value chain;
- consider the intersection of environmental aspects of mining with human rights, social issues, and climate change; and
- address the "legitimacy crisis" confronting the mining sector.

Most delegations expressed their overall satisfaction with the draft summary. Nevertheless, numerous delegates underscored the imperative to better acknowledge the diversity of perspectives debated during the breakout groups. Some called for more clarity, especially on topics like the establishment of an OEWG,



Co-Chairs **Martine Rohn-Brossard**, Switzerland, and **Saqlain Syedah**, Pakistan

the global sand observatory, the certification of metals, and the execution of a global assessment of existing instruments and standards.

Several countries, including SENEGAL, BURKINA FASO, MALI, SIERRA LEONE, the EUROPEAN UNION, and SWITZERLAND, among others, expressed support for the establishment of an OEWG. Some delegates raised additional questions concerning environmental peer reviews.

SAUDI ARABIA sought clarifications of the summary's phrases "broad support," "moderate support," and "support from several delegations." Co-Chair Syedah clarified that "broad" indicated substantial support from numerous countries, and "moderate" implied support from a smaller but still significant number of countries.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for changes to the draft summary, emphasizing that it may not have accurately mirrored government perspectives. He called for a clear differentiation between views expressed by government delegates and those by observers. Others sought clarification about the way forward post-GIMM toward the UNEA.

Closing

Closing the meeting, the Co-Chairs thanked participants for the fruitful discussions and UNEP for organizing the regional and global consultations in just six months, as well as the Switzerland, Finland, Germany, and the European Commission for their financial support for implementation of UNEA Resolution 5/12. Aggarwal-Khan urged member states to work toward translating the Meeting's ideas into concrete language for a UNEA 6 resolution. The Co-Chairs brought the meeting to a close at 6:15 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

IGF AGM 19: The theme for the 19th AGM is "Sharing Mining Benefits in the Energy Transition." **dates:** 7-9 November 2023 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** igfmining.org/event/19th-annual-general-meeting/

2023 Mining and Sustainability Forum of the Americas: Co-hosted by the IGF, Inter-American Development Bank,

and the Conference of Mining Ministries of the Americas (CAMMA), this Forum will discuss the emerging challenges and opportunities in the Americas related to the increasing demand for critical minerals for a low-carbon energy transition. It will be followed by the 13th CAMMA. **date:** 3 October 2023 **location:** Santiago, Chile **www:** igfmining.org/event/2023-mining-and-sustainability-forum-of-the-americas/

Minamata Convention COP-5: COP-5 of the Minamata Convention on Mercury will discuss, *inter alia*, ASGM and thresholds for mercury waste. **dates:** 30 October - 3 November 2023 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** mercuryconvention.org/en/meetings/cop5

Future Minerals Forum: The Forum will bring together senior government and industry representatives dedicated to creating resilient and responsible mineral value chains in the mineral-rich regions of Africa, and Western and Central Asia. The event will include a ministerial roundtable, strategic conference, and international exhibition and marketplace. **dates:** 9-11 January 2024 **location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **www:** futuremineralsforum.com/

UNEA 6: The overall theme for UNEA 6 is 'Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.' **dates:** 26 February – 1 March 2024 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

2030 Agenda	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
ASGM	artisanal and small-scale gold mining
ASM	artisanal and small-scale mining
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
FPIC	free, prior and informed consent
GISTM	Global Industry Standard for Tailings Management
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
ICMM	International Council on Mining and Metals
IGF	Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
ISA	International Seabed Authority
MEA	multilateral environment agreement
NGOs	nongovernmental organizations
NPP	non-prescriptive proposal
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEWG	open-ended working group
SCP	sustainable consumption and production
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
WEOG	Western Europe and Other States Group