

# AFRICA'S CRITICAL MINERALS FORUM

27 APRIL 2026  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

STATEMENT OF THE FORUM

HARNESSING AFRICA'S CRITICAL MINERALS FOR GREEN  
INDUSTRIALISATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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# UONGOZI INSTITUTE

The Institute of African Leadership for Sustainable Development, commonly known as UONGOZI Institute, is a regional leadership development hub operating under the Office of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. Established in 2010 by the governments of Tanzania and Finland, the Institute is dedicated to inspiring and equipping African leaders to deliver inclusive and sustainable solutions for their nations and the wider continent.

It applies a holistic and mutually reinforcing approach to capacity development which recognises that leadership competencies are developed through a continuous, lifelong learning process. Its two strategic pillars – leadership and sustainable development – are addressed through four main areas: executive education, policy dialogues, action-oriented research, and technical support. Its clientele includes organisations as well as individuals from the public sector, private sector, and civil society.



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# STATEMENT OF THE FORUM

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## Africa's Critical Minerals Forum

Harnessing Africa's critical  
minerals for green industrialisation  
and sustainable development

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The regional forum on “*Harnessing Africa’s critical minerals for green industrialisation and sustainable development*” was held on 27 April 2026 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was organised by UONGOZI Institute in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as a high-level event preceding the 12th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

The forum sought to provide a space to discuss effective ways of leveraging Africa’s critical minerals to drive green industrialisation and sustainable development. It combined an opening session, expert presentations, panel discussions, and a spotlight session to amplify the perspectives of youth, women, and local communities on the topic. The key objectives were to:

- 1 Deepen participants’ knowledge of the African Green Mineral Strategy<sup>1</sup> as a regional framework for harnessing Africa’s critical minerals resources drawing lessons from past experiences and current geopolitical context;
- 2 Explore practical pathways and actions for local beneficiation and regional supply chain to support green industrialisation and inclusive growth; and
- 3 Build consensus on guiding principles that balance mineral exploitation with environmental safeguards, community rights, and intergenerational equity<sup>2</sup>.

1 [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44539-doc-AGMS\\_Final\\_doc.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44539-doc-AGMS_Final_doc.pdf)

2 [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/report\\_sg\\_panel\\_on\\_critical\\_energy\\_transition\\_minerals\\_11\\_sept\\_2024.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/report_sg_panel_on_critical_energy_transition_minerals_11_sept_2024.pdf)

Remarks at the opening session were delivered by Mr. Kadari Singo, Chief Executive Officer of UONGOZI Institute; Mr. Claver Gatete, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECA; and Mr. Msafiri Mbibo, Deputy Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Minerals in Tanzania

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H.E. Hailemariam Dessalegn Boshe, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, officiated the event.

The keynote presentation on “*Africa’s critical minerals in the global green transition: From extraction to green development*” was delivered by Dr. Paul Jourdan, an Independent Mineral Policy Analyst. The expert presentations covered: (i) Africa’s Green Mineral Strategy: Implementation and development outcomes, (ii) Pathways to beneficiation and regional value chains in critical minerals, and (iii) Global geopolitical dynamics of critical minerals. The presenters were, respectively, Dr. Marit Kitaw, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECA; Mr. Vusi Mabena, Executive Secretary, Mining Association of Southern Africa; and Dr. Kojo Busia, Director, Green Africa Minerals Ltd.

### The forum recognised:

That critical minerals are not entirely new, but they have gained renewed global attention because of the changing structure of the global economy, the green transition, climate change aspects and demand for renewable energy technologies.

That the term 'critical minerals' requires clear conceptualisation, including clarity on definitions, strategic importance, economic potential and application across green technologies, to empower countries to design coherent strategies rather than reacting only to external market demand.

That Africa's critical minerals need to be understood as a development issue, not only a mining issue, because their effective use depends on a wider ecosystem of other sectors, including education, water, infrastructure, energy, finance, and technology.

That mining is not only about extracting minerals, but also about creating optimal opportunities for people, including women and youth.

That Africa continues to occupy mainly the relatively low-value extraction node in the global value chains (GVCs), while higher-value activities such as processing, manufacturing, technology development, trading and financing are largely undertaken elsewhere.

That critical mineral endowment creates opportunity, but does not by itself create leverage, and advanced manufacturing. These require deliberate policy choices, capable institutions, competitive infrastructure, technology, finance and skills.

That regional integration is essential because no single country can efficiently build full value chains (VCs) for complex products such as batteries. The regional value chains (RVCs), such as emerging cooperation between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo in lithium battery VCs, provide lessons on how Africa can leverage regional cooperation as a platform for entry into GVCs.

That critical minerals are a second chance for Africa—the continent should avoid the historical raw-material export model.

**To harness Africa's green minerals for inclusive and sustainable development, the forum adopted the following recommendations:**

*Governance and policy*

To invest in geological knowledge and data systems that provide credible information on the size, quality and value of mineral reserves.

To establish a new partnership paradigm among African countries by harmonising standards, regulations, strengthening coordinated regional diplomacy, and developing clear rules for sharing direct and indirect benefits from shared facilities such as refineries.

To review existing regional treaties to identify what has worked, what has not worked, and what needs to be improved to support critical mineral value chains. To build skills, knowledge and negotiation capacity in specialised areas relevant to mineral industrialisation, such as metrology, automated systems, and industrial management.

To strengthen regional institutions, allowing them to facilitate skills development, evidence-based decisions, and strategic partnerships.

To invest in leadership development that strengthens long-term visioning, reform implementation capacity and the ability to translate known solutions into actions.

*Value addition and beneficiation*

To invest in the fundamentals required for beneficiation, such as reliable energy, logistics, infrastructure, and supportive policies.

To simplify the process of accrediting local refining plants, enabling multinational mining companies to refine minerals locally.

To domesticate the African Green Mineral Strategy and the African Mining Vision as practical guides for moving African countries from raw mineral export dependence to higher-value processing.

To re-orient infrastructure planning from export corridors, primarily to move raw minerals out of Africa, to developmental, multi-sectoral corridors that support processing, industrial clusters, and wider economic transformation.

To earmark a defined share of mineral royalties and related revenues to finance geological capacity, mineral data systems, research, innovation and technical skills, rather than relying only on annual budget allocations.

To establish dedicated local capital funds and strengthen local investments in critical minerals with support from pension funds, and venture funds.

To facilitate investments in both precursor and downstream VCs.

To strengthen RVCs as a platform for building scale, sharing infrastructure and entering GVCs from a stronger position.

To strengthen project planning capacity across the full project cycle, including bankability assessment, de-risking, ecosystem analysis and sector facilitation, so that countries do not embark on strategic projects before they are ready to implement them.

To harness Africa's vast energy resources, including renewable energy, to power mineral processing, industrialisation, logistics and industrial corridors.

### *Sustainability and inclusion*

To build the capacity of artisanal and small-scale miners, including women and youth, through access to knowledge, finance, technology, formalisation support, and environmental, social and governance compliance.

To strengthen local content policy through phased requirements that increase gradually over time.

To facilitate linkages between local exploration capacity, local suppliers, research institutions and African capital markets to allow domestic actors to participate more meaningfully across the mineral VCs.

To enforce post-mining closure regulations and livelihood restoration obligations in line with global best practice.

To ensure that critical minerals strategies include traceability systems that capture responsible sourcing, environmental performance, local participation and gender-disaggregated data.

To ensure that policy dialogue on critical minerals explicitly balances economic benefits with environmental and social costs.

To strategically invest mineral income in knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and productive sectors, therefore converting rare natural resources into long-term development capabilities.

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