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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fifth session**

Nairobi (hybrid), 22 and 23 February 2021
and 28 February–2 March 2022

**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment
Assembly on 2 March 2022**

5/12. Environmental aspects of minerals and metals management

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 4/19 on mineral resource governance and taking note of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme entitled “Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/19 on mineral resource governance”¹ and the report entitled *Mineral Resource Governance and the Global Goals: An Agenda for International Collaboration*,²

Recalling also its resolution 4/1 on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production and the progress report thereon and its resolution 4/5 on sustainable infrastructure and the progress report thereon, and taking account of developments in resource efficiency, the circular economy and secondary resources,

Acknowledging that minerals and metals considered under the present resolution exclude mineral fuels, and that the scope of the present resolution includes the full life cycle of minerals and metals, including extraction, on-site and off-site processing, refining, management of mining waste and tailings, rehabilitation of sites and closed or abandoned mines, manufacturing, and recycling,

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and all its principles,

Welcoming the launch of the Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management as an important milestone towards the ambition of zero tailings dam failures and the protection of human health and the environment from tailings facilities, and encouraging the effective implementation of the global standard,

Underlining the specific environmental challenges related to artisanal and small-scale mining and their related health risks,

Stressing the need for enhanced action to support the environmental sustainability management of minerals and metals, and recognizing the regulatory and administrative capacity challenges faced by countries,

Acknowledging that clean technologies, highly dependent on minerals and metals, are important for combating climate change, and stressing the important contribution that the

¹ UNEP/EA.5/14.

² United Nations Environment Programme and University of Queensland, *Mineral Resource Governance and the Global Goals: An Agenda for International Collaboration* (Nairobi, 2021).

environmentally sustainable management of minerals and metals makes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including towards sustainable consumption and production patterns,

1. *Encourages* Member States, and invites relevant stakeholders along the full life cycle of minerals and metals, from both the public and private sectors, to align their mining practices and their investments in mining with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with their obligations and decisions under multilateral environmental agreements, as appropriate;
2. *Requests* the Executive Director, subject to available resources, to convene transparent and inclusive intergovernmental regional consultations, including with relevant international organizations, with regional and multilateral environmental agreements, and with relevant stakeholders acting as observers, to feed into a global intergovernmental meeting, with the aim of developing non-prescriptive proposals to enhance the environmental sustainability of minerals and metals along their full life cycle, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
3. *Decides* that the intergovernmental regional consultations will:
 - (a) Take stock of existing activities and actions in the public and private sectors and by other relevant stakeholders to enhance the environmental sustainability of minerals and metals and identify, among other things, best practices, responsible business practices, standards, guidelines, technical tools, environmentally sustainable technologies and the use of renewable energy in mining;
 - (b) Identify opportunities for enhanced international cooperation, including with a view to fostering capacity-building and technological, technical and scientific cooperation in the mining sector, in particular with developing countries;
 - (c) Identify possible ways forward for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its sixth session, as appropriate;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director, through the Global Resource Information Database (GRID-Geneva), to strengthen scientific, technical and policy knowledge with regard to sand, and to support global policies and action regarding the environmentally sound extraction and use thereof;
5. *Also requests* the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, with the engagement of the secretariats of relevant multilateral environmental agreements, organizations and stakeholders, as appropriate, and bearing in mind the launch of the Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management, to compile a report on knowledge gaps in relation to the environmental aspects of tailings management;
6. *Further requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its sixth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution, including through a summary report on the consultations for consideration by the Environment Assembly at that session.