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African Forum on Mining Calls for Bold Action to Transform the Continent's Mineral Sector

The 3rd African Forum on Mining (AFM), held from March 19 to 21, 2025, at the African Union Commission's Headquarters, concluded with a strong call to action for African nations to harness their vast mineral wealth for sustainable development, industrialization, and economic transformation. Organized by the African Union (AU)'s African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC), the forum brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, private sector representatives, development partners, civil society, academia, artisanal and small-scale miners, and women and youth leaders in mining.



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A key takeaway from the forum was the reaffirmation of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV) as the guiding framework for the continent's mineral resource governance. Sixteen years after its adoption, the AMV's achievements were highlighted, particularly in policy development, geological and mineral information systems, support for artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), and promoting minerals-based industrialization. The forum also emphasized the importance of reliable geological data for informed decision-making, with the African Green Minerals Observatory and the African Mineral

Resource Classification and Management System (AMREC-PARC) identified as critical tools for harmonizing geological information and improving mineral governance. Participants stressed the need for a unified digital platform for geological data sharing and increased investment in geological mapping to support these efforts.

The forum recognized the significant role of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in Africa's economy and emphasized the need for formalization, improved access to financing, and value addition. Successful initiatives such as mercury-free gold extraction and the African Gemstone Jewellery Exhibition and Conference (AGJEC) were highlighted as models for inclusive mining development, particularly benefiting women and youth. The forum also noted with concern the slow progress in ratifying AMDC's legal framework, with only four AU member states having completed the process. Participants called for accelerated political engagement to strengthen AMDC's mandate and enhance its implementation capacity.

A major milestone at the forum was the launch of the African Green Minerals Strategy (AGMS), a fundamental step in advancing Africa's industrialization and electrification through green minerals. AGMS seeks to position Africa not just as a supplier of raw materials but as a hub for green industrialization and value addition.

Another key outcome of the forum was a call for the African Union to launch a High-Level African Critical Minerals Diplomacy to ensure that the continent benefits from the surging global demand for critical green minerals. The proposed diplomacy aims to strengthen continental coordination, enhance Africa's bargaining power, and ensure that mineral agreements prioritize local value addition over raw material exports. It also seeks to promote responsible investment, transparency, and sustainability, safeguard environmental integrity and community rights, and establish strategic global partnerships that align with Africa's development goals.

Speaking at the forum, Mrs. Ron Osman, Director of Industry, Minerals, Entrepreneurship, and Tourism (IMET) at the African Union Commission, pointed to the need for Africa to take control of its mineral wealth. *"Africa holds the key to the world's ambitions for a just energy transition. Our continent is endowed with an unparalleled abundance of critical green minerals. However, the challenge lies in transforming this potential into equitable, sustainable growth for Africa while contributing to global progress. The African Green Minerals Strategy presents a unique opportunity for us to take control of our resources, move up the value chain, and drive industrialization for our people's prosperity."*

Highlighting Africa-Europe cooperation in the mining sector, Mr. Gianluca Azzoni, Head of Policy & Cooperation at the EU Delegation to the AU, remarked, *"Africa and Europe stand at a defining moment in history—one where sustainable raw material partnerships can drive industrialization, value creation, and economic transformation. The EU is not just investing in Africa; we are investing with Africa—to ensure that critical minerals fuel Africa's development first while securing a resilient and responsible global supply chain for the future."*

In her closing remarks, Dr. Marit Kitaw, Interim Director of AU-AMDC, emphasized the urgency of translating discussions into action. She urged African governments to implement the forum's recommendations, strengthen institutional frameworks, and invest in mining sector industrialization. *"This is not just a matter of economics. It is about sovereignty, justice, and the future of African youth. The African Mining Vision is our compass. The African Green Minerals Strategy is our roadmap. Now we need unified, high-level diplomacy to turn Africa's resource wealth into real, lasting development."*

The forum concluded with a commitment to developing a strategic roadmap for the next decade to guide AMV implementation, strengthen regional collaboration, and ensure that Africa's mineral wealth drives economic transformation for the benefit of all Africans.

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