

**Remarks of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Climate Action and Assistant Secretary-General for Climate Action, Selwin Hart, at the Launch of the UN Task Force on Critical Energy Transition Minerals**

**Nairobi, Kenya, 10 December 2025**

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, Inger, Pedro, friends,

It is a pleasure to be back in Nairobi, the place where the Secretary-General's Panel finalized its landmark report on Critical Energy Transition Minerals. And today, we take the next decisive step: launching the UN Task Force that will turn those ideas into action.

We are standing at the dawn of a new energy era. The way we power our economies is undergoing the fastest transformation in human history. Renewables are now the cheapest source of new electricity in almost every country. Renewables are driving prosperity, empowering communities long left behind, and cleaning the air our children breathe.

At the heart of this transformation lie the minerals that make it possible—copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, rare earth elements. They are the building blocks of the clean-energy age.

For resource-rich developing countries, these minerals represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity: to diversify economies, create decent jobs, boost revenues, and accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. With global demand for transition minerals expected to more than double by 2040, these resource rich developing countries should be at the centre of the clean energy economy—not at its margins.

But today's reality tells another story. Too many developing countries are trapped at the bottom of the value chain—exporting raw materials while importing inequality. Too many communities bear the scars of pollution, unsafe labour, and environmental devastation. Too many children are paying the price for minerals that should be powering a brighter future for them.

As demand rises, so does exploitation. This is one of the greatest injustices of the transition: those who have contributed least to the climate crisis are again at risk of gaining the least from the solutions.

That is why the Secretary-General created his Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals - to ensure this transition is not only fast, but fair. Chaired by Ambassador Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko of South Africa and Director-General Ditte Juul Jørgensen of the European Union, the Panel brought together governments, industry, civil society, Indigenous People, youth and the UN system to deliver a blueprint for action.

Its report is not a theoretical document. It is a practical, principled roadmap - a guide to anchor the renewables revolution in justice, transparency and shared prosperity. Its seven Guiding Principles and five Actionable Recommendations show how to strengthen investment, protect

human rights, enforce environmental safeguards, and ensure value is created - and retained at source - in developing countries.

Today, we shift from recommendations to results.

The Secretary-General has endorsed the creation of this UN Task Force to coordinate system-wide support and help countries implement the Panel's vision. UNEP, UNCTAD and UNDP will lead and coordinate the UN system, including the Regional Economic Commissions, UNIDO, and the UN Development Coordination Office.

Our first priority is simple and urgent: targeted, tailored, country-level support. UNDP and the Development Coordination Office will operationalize a Country Support Mechanism, and the Task Force will identify initial pilot countries where assistance will be rapidly deployed.

The work ahead is both complex and urgent. But the cost of inaction is far greater. We cannot allow the clean energy economy to be built on old injustices. We cannot repeat history. And we will not. The UN, working as one, has the responsibility to support the empowerment of people, communities and countries.

Together—with governments, industry, workers, communities and the UN family—we can ensure that the minerals powering the energy transition also power opportunity, dignity and sustainable development.

To our civil society partners, including those who supported the work of the Panel, rest assured your expertise, networks and support will be vital as we move this work forward. And we will make sure you are involved in every step.

Let us make this new energy era not only cleaner—but fairer, more just, and more prosperous for all.