

April 30, 2019

Kristalina Georgieva  
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Dear Dr. Georgieva,

The undersigned organizations support a just and rapid transition away from fossil fuels and towards a renewable energy economy. We recognize this essential shift is necessary in order to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees and avert the most disastrous impacts of climate change. And yet, even as new renewable energy infrastructure ramps up, we are concerned about the impacts of extracting minerals like copper, nickel, lithium and cobalt on communities, workers and ecosystems.

Metals mining is one of the world's dirtiest industries, responsible for at least 10% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions<sup>1</sup>. Mining is linked to severe human rights abuses, violent conflict and unsafe working conditions in some parts of the world. Most of the world's cobalt, used in rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles, is mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo, too often by children working in dangerous conditions. Mining for copper, silver and nickel threatens indigenous community rights and livelihoods in regions as diverse as Alaska's Bristol Bay, Sámi lands in Norway, in Papua New Guinea, and in many other areas around the world. Mine waste dams have collapsed in Brazil, killing hundreds of workers and local residents, and in Mexico and Canada, causing severe downstream pollution. Looming on the horizon is the threat of deep seabed mining for cobalt and manganese--with unknown, potentially disastrous consequences for marine species and deep-sea ecosystems.

Research from the University of Technology, Sydney's Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS), "[Responsible Minerals Sourcing for Renewable Energy](#)," shows that as demand for these scarce minerals skyrockets, the associated environmental and human impacts are likely to rise steeply as well. We have a timely opportunity to scale up our dependence on clean, renewable energy sources, while scaling back our dependence on dirty mining. Doing so will require a concerted commitment from businesses, financial institutions, and governments to:

- 1) **Boost Recycling and Minimize Toxicity:** Manufacturers of electric vehicles, renewable energy (RE) and battery technologies must dramatically scale up their use of recycled minerals. Policymakers must create incentives for minerals recycling and requirements for companies to take back their products at the end of their useful lives. R&D innovators must design batteries and RE technologies for disassembly and efficient recycling of all the minerals they contain. Materials used

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, *Global Resources Outlook 2019 factsheet*, <http://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook>

in manufacturing should avoid toxicity. Health, safety, and protection for workers and communities must be the top priority at recycling operations.

2) **Ensure Responsible Minerals Sourcing:** Utilities, purchasers and manufacturers of RE technologies, batteries, and electric vehicles must trace the minerals in their products back to the source. Where sourcing from mining operations is absolutely necessary, purchasers must insist that those operations adhere to stringent international environmental and human rights best-practices standards (such as those developed by the multi-stakeholder [Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance](#)) with independent, third-party assurance of compliance.

3) **Shift Consumption and Transportation:** The climate crisis offers an opportunity to rethink how societies (particularly wealthy ones) consume energy and products, and transport goods and people. It will take more than technological fixes to wean ourselves off fossil fuels and ensure equity in access to the benefits of clean energy. Policy makers should prioritize investments in electric-powered public transit, support bike and pedestrian-friendly policies, and expand access to public transit to those who are not currently gaining the benefits of today's fossil-fuel car-centric transportation system.

We share the World Bank's concern that "significant challenges will likely emerge if the climate-driven clean energy transition is not managed responsibly and sustainably."<sup>2</sup> Yet we are also concerned that the World Bank's new "Climate-Smart Mining" Facility is seeking to promote new mining before promoting these other important solutions that must precede it. We urge the World Bank Group to prioritize recycling, efficiency, circular economy, public transit, and other non-mining solutions as the primary components of its "Climate-Smart" agenda. In addition, current IFC performance standards -- and minimal oversight of their implementation -- do not, unfortunately, provide meaningful guarantees that new mining promoted by the World Bank's Climate-Smart Mining Facility will meet credible safeguards to ensure protection of air, water, climate, human rights, livelihoods, worker safety and community health. Without these safeguards in place, mining promoted as "Climate-Smart" risks exacerbating the very issues it seeks to fix.

We are alarmed to note that the World Bank has closely partnered with mining companies in developing and launching its new Climate-Smart Mining Facility, putting mining company agendas and interests before protections to safeguard and benefit workers, communities and the environment. As a public financial institution, the World Bank has the responsibility to provide oversight to mining operations and impetus for improvements in mining practices.

We urge you to ensure that the World Bank helps to build climate change solutions that puts communities, workers and the environment first.

Sincerely,

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank Brief, *Climate-Smart Mining: Minerals for Climate Action*, 2019  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/extractiveindustries/brief/climate-smart-mining-minerals-for-climate-action>

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