

April 30, 2019

Kristalina Georgieva  
Chief Executive Officer  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
20433 USA

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. The World Bank and IFC's track record has proven otherwise but this can be changed.

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>

Jennifer Krill  
Executive Director  
Earthworks  
United States

Ugo Lapointe  
Canada Program Coordinator  
MiningWatch Canada  
Canada

Natalie Lowrey  
Coordinator  
AID/WATCH Inc.  
Australia

Astrid Puentes and Anna Cederstav  
Co-Executive Directors  
AIDA (Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense)  
Latin America

Jaybee Garganera  
National Coordinator  
Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM)  
Philippines

Alex Goff  
Development Manager  
Amazon Frontlines  
United States

Paul Paz y Mino  
Associate Director  
Amazon Watch  
United States

Paul Ménard  
Vice-président  
APLT (Association Pour la Protection du Lac Taureau)  
Canada

Roger Featherstone  
Director  
Arizona Mining Reform Coalition  
United States

Ismael López Pérez  
Asociación Ambiental e Cultural Petón do Lobo  
Spain

Carmen Varela  
Asociación Galega Cova Crea  
Spain

Elana Berger  
Executive Director  
Bank Information Center  
United States

Matthew Mehalik  
Executive Director  
Breathe Project  
United States

Eniko Horvath  
Senior Researcher  
Business & Human Rights Resource Centre  
Switzerland

Charlotte Christiaens  
General Coordinator  
CATAPA  
Belgium

Carla García Zendejas  
Director, People, Land and Resources Program  
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)  
International

Candyce Lynn Paul  
Outreach Coordinator  
Committee for Future Generations  
Canada

Isabelle Ménard  
Conseillère Environnement  
Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux  
Canada

Dieudonné Tshimpimbua  
Conseil Régional des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de Développement  
Democratic Republic of Congo

Matthew Gianni and Sian Owen  
Cofounder and Coordinator  
Deep Sea Conservation Coalition  
Netherlands

Helen Rosenbaum  
Coordinator  
Deep Sea Mining Campaign  
Australia

Richard Kamp  
Director  
E-Tech International  
United States

Pía Marchegiani  
Environmental Policy Director  
FARN  
Argentina

Brook Lenker  
Executive Director  
FracTracker Alliance  
United States

Lea Harper  
Managing Director  
FreshWater Accountability Project  
United States

Douglas Norlen  
Director, Economic Policy Program  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
USA

Hannibal Rhoades  
Communications and Advocacy Coordinator  
The Gaia Foundation  
United Kingdom

Allyson Siwik  
Executive Director  
Gila Resources Information Project  
United States

Sophia Pickles  
Team Leader, Conflict Resources  
Global Witness  
United Kingdom

Alejandro Gonzalez  
International Coordinator  
GoodElectronics Network  
International

Daniel Mittler  
Political Director  
Greenpeace  
International

Manuel Pérez-Rocha  
Associate Fellow  
Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Project  
United States

Ted Smith  
Coordinator  
International Campaign for Responsible Technology  
United States

Dina Rui  
Research and Communications Officer  
Jubilee Australia  
Australia

Gina Morris  
Spokesperson  
Kamloops Moms For Clean Air  
Canada

Christina Moreau  
Chair  
Kipawa Lake Preservation Society  
Canada

Joe Uehlein  
President  
Labor Network for Sustainability  
United States

Richard Solly  
Co-ordinator  
London Mining Network  
United Kingdom

Lance Morgan  
President  
Marine Conservation Institute  
United States

Chloe Noel  
Faith Economy Ecology Program Manager  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
United States

Laura Cassiani  
Executive Director  
Mission Blue / Sylvia Earle Alliance  
United States

Susan Gordon  
Coordinator  
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment  
United States

Silje Lundberg  
President  
Naturvernforbundet - Friends of the Earth Norway  
Norway

Carolyn Shafer  
Board Member  
Patagonia Area Resource Alliance  
United States

Laura Martin  
Executive Director  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
United States

Anneke Van Woudenberg  
Executive Director  
RAID (Rights and Accountability in Development)  
United Kingdom

Patrick McCully  
Climate & Energy Program Director  
Rainforest Action Network  
United States

Jill Weitz  
Director  
Salmon Beyond Borders  
United States

Guadalupe Rodríguez  
Campaigner Latin America  
Salva la Selva  
Spain

Monica Verbeek  
Executive Director  
Seas At Risk  
Belgium/Portugal

Michael Brune  
Executive Director  
Sierra Club  
United States

Joell Molina  
Americas Director  
Solidarity Center  
United States

Rhodante Ahlers  
Senior researcher  
SOMO  
Netherlands

Tis Peterman  
Coordinator  
Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission  
United States



Angus Wong  
Campaign Manager  
SumOfUs  
Canada

Rebekah Hayden  
Coordinator  
The Rainforest Action Group  
Australia

Horst Schmidt  
President  
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition  
United States

Keith Monroe  
Member  
Williams Lake Chapter- Council of Canadians  
Canada

Cecilia Tuico  
International Relations Officer  
Workers Assistance Center, Inc.  
Philippines