

**Twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention  
(Geneva, 26 - 28 June 2023)**

**Statement by Switzerland**

**Regarding agenda item 6 (Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums):**

“We would like to draw your attention, to the developments happening in the extractive sector for minerals and metals. On a global level, a process was launched in 2022 within the UNEA. The resolution requests UNEP to convene intergovernmental consultations with the objective, that Member States develop proposals to strengthen the environmental sustainability of minerals. Together with Pakistan, Switzerland is co-chairing the consultations. So far, we held 4 consultations (EEG, WEOG, GRULAC, APG). The next one will be in Dakar early July. A global consultation meeting on minerals will take place in Geneva on 7th – 8th September.

From an environmental point of view, the energy transition will have a big impact. During the discussions so far, numerous Member States raised the issue of public participation, transparency and access to justice with respect to the mining sector. As you know, minerals are key to developing the low-carbon technologies needed for the energy transition and the achievement of the SDG in general (e.g. infrastructure). The demand for metals and minerals is expected to increase exponentially in the coming decades. At the same time, the sector faces strong local opposition, notably for environmental reasons. Concerning this matter, it is deemed important to strengthen public participation and the Aarhus Convention, as well as the Escazu Agreement, were cited as important MEAs in that regard.

We invite parties and observers such as NGOs to engage in proposals as to how to move forward with public participation in extraction projects. While we commend the move on sustainable energy, we must ensure that a shift in crisis from one area to another (energy saving to mining pollution) is avoided.”