

Session 1 – Unlocking Central Asia’s Critical Raw Materials Potential: Challenges and Opportunities



7 November 2023

10:00 – 11:45 (UTC/GMT +6 hours)

BACKGROUND

Critical minerals as resources are essential to the economy and whose supply may be disrupted. Today, many critical minerals are metals central to high-tech sectors defining, thus, global energy transition and meeting the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Critical raw materials (CRMs) include rare earth metals (REMs) and other metals such as lithium, indium, tellurium, gallium, and platinum group elements.

These CRMs are all essential for global development, and the demand for them has increased in recent years with the spread of high-tech devices for personal and commercial use, such as wind turbines, solar panels and electronics such as smartphones and tablets. Furthermore, future high technology depends on other ‘magical’ qualities of the REMs, defining the development of superconductivity, cryogenics, non-silicon electronics, etc.

Among the UNECE member States, the current geopolitical tensions, environmental impacts, market distortions, and technological changes make Central Asia more prominent on the world’s agenda and turn this previously ‘invisible’ region into a global promise. However, the following pivotal questions will be addressed in this session:

- providing sustainable development for Central Asia
- securing access to the region’s CRMs via creating value-added technology chains, developing basic research and human capital, and
- adopting the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS) with a particular emphasis on the importance of social value added in the regional perspective.

For more information about the event please visit

<https://unece.org/>

AGENDA

10:00

Presentation 1

10:10

Harnessing the Potential of Critical Raw Materials for Low Carbon Energy in Central Asia with UNFC and UNRMS

Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Energy Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

10:10

Presentation 2

10:20

Diagnosing the Vital Signs: A Health Checklist for Sustainability of Critical Raw Material Development

Matthew Wittenstein, Chief of Section, Energy Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) tbc

10:20

Presentation 3

10:30

'De'-Granding Challenges and Enabling Development Pathways

Dr. Siddharth S Saxena, Cambridge Central Asia Forum & Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, UK. and British Management University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

10:30

Presentation 4

10:40

Sustainable Resource Management: The situation in Central Asia

Viktor Babashev, Vice-Chair (Kazakhstan), UNECE Expert Group on Resource Management

10:40

Panel discussion

11:30

How to unlock Central Asia's critical raw materials potential?

Moderator: Chokan Laumulin, Professor, KBTU and Vice Chair, UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy

Panelists

- Yerlan Akbarov, Chairman, Geology Committee, Ministry of Industry and Construction, Kazakhstan tbc
- Al-Farabi Ydyryshev, Director General, National Center for Technology Foresight, Kazakhstan tbc
- Yerlan Galiyev, Chairman, National Geology Service, Kazakhstan tbc
- Arkady Rogalsky, Counselor, State Enterprise Kyrgyzgeology, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Safety tbc
- Sharifa Khudobakhsh, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Tajikistan tbc
- Yerlik Karazhan, CEO, ESGQ Rating Agency

11:30

Wrap up