

Key takeaways Roundtable

“Ensuring High Standards Without Fragmenting Markets: A Global Dialogue beyond The G7”

Organized by

The Paris Peace Forum, the Global Council for Responsible Transition Minerals and Sustainable Energy for All

On the margins of African Mining Indaba 2026, Cape Town, South Africa



The roundtable focused on how to design “standards-based markets” for transition minerals while avoiding unintended consequences such as market fragmentation, the exclusion of producing countries, and the weakening of social and environmental safeguards.

The roundtable gathered nearly 40 participants, including Global Council members, representatives of G7 governments, producing countries, industries and civil society organizations.

Under its 2026 G7 presidency, France aims to make critical minerals a top-level priority, building on Canada’s leadership. The French approach is structured around four pillars:

- Securing supply and mobilizing greater financing,
- Improving market organization and addressing pricing,
- Advancing traceability and transparency,
- Accelerating innovation and circularity.

The Canadian approach was presented as flexible and non-prescriptive, compatible with multiple existing standards while anchored in shared principles to reduce risk and attract investment.

Representatives from producing countries, notably Botswana, warned against the emergence of a two-tier system. They highlighted the risk that standards designed without their involvement could marginalize Africa and fragment global markets. They called for mutually beneficial cooperation, stronger local value creation, and beneficiation, alongside improved environmental and social outcomes and tangible benefits for local communities.

Civil society organizations and trade unions stressed implementation challenges and the blind spots of the current debate. Several interventions emphasized that the urgency of securing supply must not come at the expense of social protection. Participants warned of a potential “race to the bottom” in the context of growing demand and noted that overly stringent standards could effectively exclude some producers if institutional and regulatory capacities do not keep pace. The discussion also highlighted the risks of accelerated permitting - particularly through bilateral agreements - which may weaken safeguards, trigger local opposition, and ultimately delay production.

Industry representatives called for a pragmatic, implementation-focused approach. Key priorities included: strengthening enforcement of mining codes and regulatory oversight, recognizing progress rather than aiming for unattainable perfection, distinguishing between substantive good practices and voluntary labels. They also stressed the importance of creating a stable and predictable investment environment. Concerns were raised about the geopolitical instrumentalization of standards and perceived inconsistencies in their application, particularly in sectors such as defense.

A broad consensus emerged on the need to strengthen institutional capacity and governance in producing countries. Participants called for:

- Increased technical assistance,
- Legal and regulatory reforms,
- Better integration of standards into national frameworks,
- Credible validation and verification mechanisms.

The proliferation of standards was widely criticized for encouraging “standard shopping.” Many called for benchmarking, improved comparability, stronger oversight, and enhanced data transparency. Participants also stressed that combating corruption and improving governance remain prerequisites for effective implementation.

The discussion highlighted two major risks:

- **Tick-box compliance**, where weak oversight reduces standards to reputational tools,
- **Exclusion**, where overly costly or poorly adapted requirements marginalize artisanal and small-scale miners and producing countries.

Several speakers emphasized the importance of viewing standards as pathways of continuous improvement, grounded in local dialogue and capable of delivering visible benefits for communities and local economies.

