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Fostering Sustainable Development—Opportunities for the Extractive Industry

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The extractive industry has a historical reputation of destruction, loss, and exploitation. What often goes unnoticed is that behind that legacy lies advancement of humankind and opportunities to do right for humans and the planet.

The global south, particularly Africa, has borne the brunt of the legacy with countries well endowed with minerals not being able to change the lived realities of their citizens and protect them from the negative impacts of the industry. Responsible stewardship of minerals and a sustainable approach provides for a new reality of resource blessing and a positive legacy of exploration to extraction.

Imagining that new legacy and the opportunities of the industry of the future provides for a responsible reality of co-created sustainable solutions, shared value, and protection of the ecosystems in which the industry operates, with the primary objective of leaving them in an equal or better position at end of life of the operations.

The divide between the source of minerals and the industry is unsustainable. Africa remains on the backfoot in a context where global sustainability depends on the social, ecological, political, and economic development of those impacted by and those who benefit from the value created by a responsible extractive industry.

Ultimately, it is about creating capacity for responsible harvesting of minerals and processing them into commodities that benefit the rest of the world. Therein lies the opportunity to explore the possibility of turning the curse into a blessing in the interest of people and the planet, thereby leaving a positive legacy for generations to come.