



: Programme

Dresden Forum for International Politics 2020

Resources for Climate Action: Conflict Potential and Prevention Strategies

Stadtmuseum Dresden

23-24 January 2020

Conference languages

German/English (simultaneous interpretation)

Partner



THE TOPIC

“There Is No Planet B”: this slogan often appears on placards at students’ Fridays For Future demonstrations. However, it does not only apply to climate change. Humankind is still consuming far more resources than our planet can supply. This excessive consumption – achieved at the expense of future generations – is highly inequitable and has major conflict potential. Climate change has a dual effect in this context: firstly, it impacts the natural resources that sustain life, with implications for agriculture, water availability and the capacity of the land to support human habitation, for example. And secondly, the development of new (supposedly) low-carbon technologies is driving up demand for metals, rare earths and other resources.

Granted, digital solutions and environmental technologies can help to reduce carbon emissions. However, they generally rely on specific resources whose extraction, in some cases, damages the environment and is associated with human rights abuses and conflict. E-mobility is a good example: it is still unclear to what extent the rising global demand for lithium for vehicle batteries can be met in a sustainable and resource-efficient manner.

In (developing) countries with extractive industries in particular, this raises a number of questions. How are these resources produced, and who profits from their extraction? What can be done, in terms of an early prevention strategy, to ensure that the extraction of resources for which there is a particularly high demand does not trigger or worsen conflicts in the producer countries? And who should be held accountable if this fails?

Besides the local conflict potential, the geopolitical perspective is also relevant. In the competition for new production sites, even seizure of other countries’ territories or regions outside the jurisdiction of any state (such as areas of the high seas or the Antarctic) in violation of international law for the purpose of resource extraction cannot be ruled out. What kind of strategies have countries and industries developed to protect themselves from international resource conflicts? Do we need more stringent international governance of the global resource trade? And how can we regulate access to resources on land, on the seabed or in space?

And lastly, there is the issue of alternative production methods, recycling and substitutes. Sustainable resource use can contribute significantly to the attainment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined in Agenda 2030. Every year, around 50 million tonnes of e-waste are thrown away, with only one appliance in five being correctly recycled. What can be done to improve recycling of substances that are already available within the market and thus avoid extracting new resources? What kind of incentives are needed for a more sustainable closed-loop system, both within the economy and in terms of individual behaviour, thereby supporting production and consumption patterns that make more sparing use of resources? What opportunities are created through the use of renewable rather than finite resources?

THE DRESDEN FORUM SERIES

The annual Dresden Forum for International Politics, launched in 2018, offers a high-level platform for discussion of current challenges in international politics. The purpose of the series is to add to the body of knowledge of global processes and to raise awareness and understanding of the diversity of standpoints. The series encourages open-ended, solution-oriented debate about the options available to national and regional governments, Members of Parliament, civil society and the business sector in fostering peaceful and sustainable development worldwide.

The Dresden Forum consists of an international symposium and a public evening event with distinguished speakers, offering the opportunity for an interested public to gain insights into current international debates and learn more about how issues are viewed in other regions of the world.

: Thursday, 23 January 2020

12.00 hrs Registration and refreshments

Chair

Ute Lange

Moderator and Communication Coach
i3kommunikation, Bonn

12.45 hrs Welcome addresses

Oliver Schenk

State Minister for Federal and European Affairs and
Chief of the State Chancellery of the Free State of Saxony, Dresden

Dr Gerd Harms

Deputy Head of the Executive Committee
Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

SESSION I – INTRODUCTION

The world's resource hunger is growing: new forms of communication, energy-saving technologies and alternative modes of transport such as e-mobility are absorbing large quantities of additional resources, examples being gold, lithium and rare earths. But where do these resources come from and under what conditions are they extracted? To what extent is there potential for conflict here?

13.00 hrs Interview

Professor Raimund Bleischwitz

Chair in Sustainable Global Resources
University College London

Followed by Q&As

14.00 hrs Short break for coffee

SESSION II – SHORT INTERVIEW + PRACTICE PANEL**RESOURCE WEALTH = A WEALTH OF CONFLICTS? PATHWAYS TOWARDS A FAIR EXTRACTIVES SECTOR**

The extraction of resources for modern technologies is often controlled by multinational corporations headquartered outside the producer countries. In many cases, it is the negative impacts – destruction of natural habitats, exploitation of local labour, social unrest and even violent conflicts – that seem to take centre stage. How does the world's resource hunger affect local communities? Which conditions need to be in place for people to benefit from sustainable and peaceful development based on extractives? And what can be done to prevent and mitigate local conflicts?

14.15 hrs Hands-on experience

Ramón Morales Balcázar

Member of the Plurinational Observatory of Andean Salt Flats – Tantí Foundation
PhD Student of Rural Development
Autonomous University of México, México City

14.45 hrs Practical session

Professor Jan C. Bongaerts

Project partner at CEMEREM Kenyan-German „Centre of Excellence for Mining, Environmental Engineering and Resource Management“
Freiberg University of Mining and Technology, Freiberg

Tafadzwa Kuvheya

Independent Consultant on Extractives and Human Rights
Member of the Board
Women in Mining (WoMin), Cape Town

Dr Jutta Matreux

Factory manager
WACKER Chemie, Nünchritz

Followed by Q&As

16.00 hrs Coffee break

SESSION III - HEAD - TO - HEAD**TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION - A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?**

How do digitalisation and technological development as a whole affect sustainable resource management? How can the associated savings and other positive impacts on our society be reconciled with very high levels of power consumption?

16.30 hrs	Head-to-head
	Johanna Pohl Digitalization and Social Transformation Research Group Technical University Berlin
	Maija Tenhunen Manager, Sustainability and Climate Change PwC, Helsinki
17.00 hrs	End of Session III

EVENING PROGRAMME

17.15 hrs	Early evening refreshments in a restaurant
18.30 hrs	Start of admission to Frauenkirche Dresden
19.00 hrs	Public evening event in the Frauenkirche Dresden
21.00 hrs	Reception hosted by the Prime Minister of Saxony
	- see separate Evening Programme -

: Friday, 24 January 2020

09.00 hrs	Registration
	Chair
	Ute Lange Moderator, trainer, communication coach i3kommunikation, Bonn
09.10 hrs	Welcome address
	Anita Reddy Head of Division 'Education programmes' Engagement Global – Service for Development Initiatives, Bonn

SESSION IV: DISCUSSION

COMPETITION OVER RESOURCES - FROM „MIGHT IS RIGHT“ TO EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION?

Global distribution of the resources required as inputs for low-carbon technologies is far from equal. Most of the world's rare earths, for example, are currently supplied by China. In response to global demand, alternative production sites are increasingly being explored and previously decommissioned sites reopened#. But it is not only the resource deposits found on land that are awakening interest. There are ambitions to exploit new deposits on the seabed or even in space as well. A great many countries are keen to secure rights to these resources in order to bypass possible raw materials shortages or reduce their dependence on other states. But is developing new deposits the right solution in the long term? What form of governance regime needs to be put in place to ensure that access rights are shared equitably and to avoid conflicts and negative impacts on ecosystems? Or is an entirely new global access regime for resources required?

09.15 hrs	Discussion
	Dr Elias T. Ayuk Member of the International Resource Panel Former Director of the UN University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, Accra
	Professor Bernhard Cramer Supreme Mining Officer Saxon Mining Agency, Freiberg
	Professor Ayman Elshkaki Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing
	Pradeep A. Singh Research Associate Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Potsdam

10.15 hrs	Q&As
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10.45 hrs	Coffee break
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SESSION V: DISCUSSION**NEW APPROACHES TO RECYCLING - THE WAY OUT OF RESOURCE CONFLICTS?**

One solution to the growing demand for resources is simply to keep on developing new production sites. Ultimately, however, this does not contribute to the sustainable use of raw materials. For the sake of a sustainable economy, it is essential to establish alternative production pathways that make recycling easier. What kind of incentives should policy-makers offer in order to increase recycling rates and make products more recyclable? Is waste mining a way out of the resource trap? And what can each and every one of us, as individuals, do to reduce resource consumption?

11.15 hrs

Discussion

Professor Jens Gutzmer

Founding Director

Helmholtz Institute Freiberg for Resource Technology, Dresden-Rossendorf

Dr Deepali Sinha Khetriwal

Head of the India Office

Sofies, Bangalore

Professor Urs Peuker

Professor for mechanical process engineering and processing technology

Vice-Rector for Structural Development

Technical University Bergakademie Freiberg

12.15 hrs

Q&As

SESSION VI: INTERVIEW**SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES FOR FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES?**

If the 2050 climate targets are to be achieved, demand for rare earths, lithium etc. will continue to rise if production processes and storage options (e.g. batteries) remain unchanged. Are new production sites and resource recycling the only solutions to meet demand for raw materials? Or are there already some promising approaches for the use of alternative and sustainable inputs? What kind of innovations are currently being researched?

12.45 hrs

Interview

Professor Maximilian Fichtner

Deputy Director

Helmholtz Institute Ulm (HIU)

Professor for Solid State Chemistry

Ulm University

CLOSING SESSION

13.15 hrs

Wrap-Up

Dr Michèle Roth

Executive Director

Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

Followed by

Lunch and networking

14.00 hrs

Conference ends