Editorial

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The transition to a fossil-free future can be described as a transition from a hydrocarbon dependency to a metal dependency. Metals such as cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel and rare earths and also non-metals for example graphite will be crucial to harness renewable energy sources. This means that several countries with the potential to mine these elements will have a unique opportunity to benefit from the expected future growth in demand. It is clear that a number of low- and lower middle-income countries (LIC and LMIC) mainly in Africa are well endowed with such elements crucial to the transition to a low-carbon future (LCF). In a first attempt to assess which of them are best situated to take advantage of this surge in demand, 13 elements were studied and four indicators were used to create an aggregated measure of the potential for the emerging economies. By applying this methodology to all LICs and LMICs that have a resource/reserve of the elements, those that are most likely to benefit from the transition to an LCF were identified. The top 12 countries include 8 from Africa plus Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Kyrgyz Republic and Bolivia. Among the African countries with the highest score were the DRC, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Ericsson and Löf 2020). (See Map 1.)

Some of these countries, such as the DRC, Papua New Guinea, Zambia and Tanzania are also among the countries where mining contributes most to their economies according to the mining contribution index (Ericsson and Löf 2019). See Map 2.

It is obvious that minerals and mining will continue not only to be an important potential lever for economic and social development but also crucial to supply renewable energy and indirectly to combat global warming. Since our first issue in 1981, *Mineral Economics - Raw Materials Report* has contributed to improve the understanding of economic, social, environmental, legal and political implications of extraction of

natural resources. Given our history of more than 30 years of publishing in this vein, we are particularly well placed to continue to serve as a platform for academics, industry practitioners, decision makers and other interested to present research, share views and discuss all relevant aspects of the challenges, which are today facing countries, communities and companies involved in the world's supply of minerals.

Developments since our 30th anniversary clearly show our progress. The number of original papers published as well as the number of pages in the 33rd volume (2020) has quadrupled compared to the situation in 2016. The inflow of new papers continues to rise and the impact of the papers presented has increased. Our authors and researchers together with readers and supporters have all contributed to this success.

We continue to strengthen our internal organisation and have appointed Patrik Söderholm, who has been my co-Editor-in-Chief for many years, as vice chair of our Editorial Board. Linda Wårell will be his successor after having served as Managing Editor for 10 years. Anton Löf is our new Book review editor since 2018. I want to thank all three of them for their excellent work in the past and look forward to their continued support in the future.

During the past two years, we have welcomed three new members to our Editorial Advisory Board professor Mustafa Kumral, Canada, Paulo de Sa, USA, and Ian Satchwell, Australia. Two long-standing supporters have left, A.K. Ghose, India, passed away and Yang Zunqing, China, retired. We intend to rejuvenate and widen the Editorial Board to better represent our authors and readers in order to continue our successful expansion during the past four years into the 2020s.

We welcome and encourage you to send us your contributions whether full-length papers or shorter comments and viewpoints.

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Map 1 Mining projects (with a resource/reserve) for LCF elements in 12 LICs and LMICs. Source: WIDER Working Paper 2020/120

Map 2 Mining's contribution to national economies in LICs and LMICs. Source: WIDER Working Paper 2020/120. Note: Non-greyscale-coloured countries are not a LIC or LMIC and not ranked in this map

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