Critical Materials and Life Cycle Management: The Example of Rare Earths – curse or blessing?



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Why we need a raw material transition –the case of cobalt mining in the DRC

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Germany is the 5th largest consumer of raw materials worldwide with more than 99% of all metals being imported. The presentation explores the societal and environmental impacts of mining of focusing on the case of cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It argues that in order to tackle problems like human rights violations, environmental destruction and climate crisis we need a paradigm shift in how we handle our planet's natural resources (raw material transition/Rohstoffwende).

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Session Classification: Contemplation of Rare Earth Elements in the context of sustainability