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RESOURCING FUTURE GENERATIONS

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In 2013 the International Union of Geological Sciences established a new initiative called Resourcing Future Generations. Rapid technological developments particularly over the last forty years, burgeoning human population, improved living standards and increasing urbanisation have contributed variously to a vast increase in the demand for metals and raw materials. That, coupled with the first international agreement in December 2015 to move towards a global low carbon economy with the concomitant implications for the development of new energy generation and transmission technologies, calls into question the continuity of supply over the next half century.

The initial focus of RFG is on metals and raw materials though the connection to energy and water is recognised as are the implications for land use.

I will discuss recent work done on modelling the future supply and demand of key commodities, and the conclusions resulting from a workshop of international experts held in Namibia in July 2015. We identify the need for concerted international action to forestall unpredictable yet inevitable supply shortages in decades to come while meeting development goals, poverty alleviation and nation building.

