

Melissa “Mel” Sanderson to Champion Critical Minerals Sustainability at Future Minerals Forum 2026

written by Raj Shah | January 6, 2026

TORONTO, ONTARIO – January 6, 2026 – [Melissa “Mel” Sanderson](#), Co-Chair of the [Critical Minerals Institute](#) (CMI), will be a featured panelist at the [Future Minerals Forum \(FMF\) 2026](#), taking place January 13–15, 2026, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Sanderson will participate in high-level discussions with global policymakers, investors, and industry leaders on strategies to secure critical mineral supply chains and drive sustainable development.

Sanderson is slated to speak on January 15th on the panel **“Increase funding and focus on rare earth mineral exploration,”** where she will address critical mineral supply gaps, investment approaches, and national security implications for the United States. In her own words: “I’m going to address the implications for the United States of being so far behind in this rush to secure these resources, and what that means for both U.S. national security and economic development.”

She also emphasized the value of this forum’s format, noting: “Unlike many other events, it’s one that connects the private sector directly with the policymakers that are determining future investments in the companies trying to develop resources in those countries in a responsible way.”



13-15 January 2026
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Future Minerals Forum 2026: A Global Platform for Responsible Minerals Development

The FMF is a premier global forum convened by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources under the theme "Dawn of a Global Cause." It unites leaders from governments, industry, and civil society to accelerate action on sustainable mineral supply chains. With a broad program covering exploration, investment, ESG integration, and international cooperation, [FMF 2026](#) aims to shape policy and investment frameworks for the minerals that underpin the energy transition and technological innovation.

Sanderson's contributions will draw on her deep experience in ESG and sustainable development to advocate for frameworks that ensure long-term industrial capacity is built responsibly.

Global Expertise and Sector Leadership

Sanderson brings decades of experience in diplomacy, mining, and ESG leadership to FMF 2026. Her career includes strengthening U.S.–DRC relations during a critical phase in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – experience that informs her perspective

on responsible development in resource-rich regions.

In the mining sector, Sanderson has held senior international roles – including Director of International Affairs at Freeport-McMoRan Inc. (NYSE: FCX), one of the world’s largest copper and molybdenum producers, where she led corporate responsibility and stakeholder engagement efforts. She currently serves on the boards of American Rare Earths Limited (ASX: ARR | OTCQX: ARRNF | ADR: AMRRY), a critical minerals developer advancing rare earth supply projects in the United States, and [CVMR Corporation](#) (CVMR Inc.), a diversified technology metals producer focused on rare earths and related materials.

Sanderson also serves as Professor of Practice at the Thunderbird School of Global Management (Arizona State University) and is a contributing [columnist](#) for InvestorNews.

Conclusion

As [FMF 2026](#) convenes global leaders and policymakers, Sanderson’s role – **as Co-Chair of CMI** – will bring a strategic focus on sustainable sourcing, supply chain resilience, and industrial development. Her participation underscores the importance of aligning public policy and private sector action to foster responsible, resilient critical minerals ecosystems worldwide.

About the Critical Minerals Institute (CMI)

The Critical Minerals Institute (CMI) is a global brain trust for the critical minerals economy, serving as a hub that connects companies, capital markets, and policymakers. Through CMI Masterclasses, the weekly Critical Minerals Report (CMR),

bespoke research, and board-level advisory services, CMI delivers actionable intelligence spanning exploration finance, supply chains, and geopolitics.

CMI also convenes the flagship [Annual Critical Minerals Institute Summit](#), a global gathering of government leaders, institutional investors, and industry executives. The next event, [CMI Summit V](#), themed **“The New Critical Minerals Economy,”** will take place May 13–14, 2026, in Toronto, Canada. For more information, visit CriticalMineralsInstitute.com or contact CMI Executive Director Tracy Hughes at +1 647-289-7714 or tracy@criticalmineralsinstitute.com.