

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

MALAWI

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The Republic of Malawi is a landlocked country surrounded by Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia. It has an area of 119,140 square kilometers, of which 20% is Lake Malawi. In 1998, Malawi had a population of about 10.5 million and a gross domestic product (GDP) estimated by the World Bank to be \$1.7 billion, down from an estimated \$2.5 billion in 1997 (World Bank, September 20, 1999, Malawi at a glance, accessed November 26, 1999, at URL <http://www.worldbank.org/data/country/countrydata.html>). The mineral sector contributed modestly to the agriculture-based economy.

Cement, coal, crushed stone for aggregates, dolomite, limestone, and some salt (artisanal) were produced and consumed locally. (See table 1.) Malawi also produced small amounts of lime. Production of semiprecious gemstones, included, in order of volume, rubies, sapphires, aquamarine, amethyst, garnet, and agate. Coal from the Mchenga Mine and limestone produced in Malawi were essential components of the country's cement and lime industries. The production of stone for aggregate and cement was the largest component, by value, of Malawi's mineral production.

The country has known mineral deposits of apatite, aquamarine, bauxite, corundum, glass sand, granite, graphite, kaolin, kyanite, monzanite, phosphate, pyrite, salt, tourmaline, uranium, and vermiculite. Resources of oil or natural gas are not known (Ministry of Energy and Mining, 1997).

In 1998, Anglo American Corp. of South Africa obtained an option to earn 70% equity interest in the eight gold exploration properties of Castle Exploration Inc. of the United States. At yearend, Castle was merging with Santa Cruz Gold Inc. of Canada. Industrix Co. was reported to be examining the Chimutu graphite deposit (L.S.N. Kalindekafe, Ministry of Energy and Mining, written commun., 1998). Caledonia Mining Corp. of Canada maintained its prospecting license for the Kangankunde rare-earths deposit. Paladin Energy Minerals NL of Australia, a subsidiary of Paladin Resources NL, acquired 80% equity interest in the Kayelekera uranium prospecting license from Balmain Resources Pty. Ltd. of

Australia. Paladin was reevaluating the prospect, 40 kilometers west of Karonga, which had been the subject of a feasibility study by the Central Electricity Generating Board of Great Britain in 1990. Other companies exploring in Malawi included Zambezi Exploration Pvt. Ltd. and Consolidated Diamonds Mining Co.

Reference Cited

Ministry of Energy and Mining, 1997, Mineral potential of Malawi: Ministry of Energy and Mining, 13 p.

Major Sources of Information

Ministry of Energy and Mining

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TABLE 1
MALAWI: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/ 2/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 3/	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998 e/	
Cement, hydraulic	121,954	138,675	91,000 r/	175,800	175,000	
Coal	34,630	14,635	69,930	63,210	65,000	
Dolomite	1,321	876	700 e/	700 e/	700	
Gemstones, ruby and sapphire	kilograms	21,454	75,588	100,000 e/	351	350
Lime	3,544	1,119	3,150	1,940	2,000	
Stone:						
Crushed for aggregate	cubic meters	65,039	65,601	58,700	162,538	160,000
Limestone, for cement		173,758	175,578	133,648	258,000	260,000

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised.

1/ Estimated data are rounded to three significant digits.

2/ Table includes data available through December 7, 1999.

3/ In addition to commodities listed, modest quantities of unlisted varieties of crude construction materials (clays, sand and gravel, and other stone) may also be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.