THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

BURUNDI

By George J. Coakley

The landlocked, 27,830 square kilometer Central African nation of Burundi is located between Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1997, the population was 5.5 million and the gross domestic product per capita, based on purchasing power parity, was estimated to be \$660. The population was primarily dependent on subsistence agriculture. The civil unrest and violence of the mid-1990's were a disincentive to foreign investment. Historically, Burundi produced small quantities of gold, kaolin, and tin ore for export and limestone, peat, sand and gravel, and construction stone for domestic consumption. Recent production statistics are unavailable. The United Nations outlined a major nickel laterite deposit in the Musongati area in the late 1970's. Although the Musongati area has been looked at by several private companies

since then, its remote location and long export transportation routes remain a constraint on development. Past surveys have identified a phosphate-bearing carbonatite deposit at Matongo and vanadium deposits at Mukanda. An investment brochure outlining Burundi mineral resources, prepared by the Ministry of Energy and Mines in April 1991, highlighted these and other minerals with development potential. The outlook for the minerals industry was for little change, pending resolution of the political situation. Hydropower potential and abundance of water were advantages. Long export transportation corridors and a poorly developed infrastructure were disadvantages. For moreextensive coverage of the minerals industry of Burundi, see Other Countries of Africa chapter in the 1996 Minerals Yearbook, Volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.