THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

BURUNDI

By George J. Coakley and Philip M. Mobbs

The landlocked, 27,830-square-kilometer Central African nation of Burundi is nestled between Rwanda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo [Congo (Kinshasa)]. The World Bank estimated the population to be 6.6 million people. Subsistence agriculture accounted for much of Burundi's gross domestic product, which was estimated to be \$950 million in 1998 (World Bank, September 3, 1999, Burundi at a glance, accessed November 26, 1999, at URL http://www.worldbank. org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html). Civil unrest and guerrilla war hampered much of the economic activity in the country and were disincentives to foreign investment. Additionally, economic sanctions imposed on Burundi in 1996 by Congo (Kinshasa), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia remained in effect during 1998.

The Ministry of Energy and Mines is charged with the development and management of the nation's energy, mineral, and water resources.

Recently, Burundi has produced small quantities of columbium (niobium)-tantalite, gold, kaolin, and tin ore for export and limestone, peat, sand and gravel, and construction stone for domestic consumption, however; production statistics are unavailable.

The Comptoirs Miniers du Burundi reportedly mined columbium-tantalite in northern Burundi (Ruffini, 1998). The Burundi Mining Co. was assembling a 120-kilogram-per-yearof-gold trial mining project in northeast Burundi (Africa Energy & Mining, 1999). Andover Resources NL of Australia signed a protocol agreement to develop the Musongati, Nyabikere, and Waga nickel-cobalt laterite deposits in Burundi. The remote location of the deposits and long transportation routes have been a constraint on development. The Musongati area nickel laterites were examined in detail by the United Nations in the late 1970's but warrant reexamination in light of the availability of newer, low-cost pressure acid leach hydrometallurgical technology. Peat was produced by the stateowned company Onatour as an institutional fuel and as a domestic cooking fuel substitute for firewood. The International Development Research Centre of Canada reported on a pilot project to produce a peat-based biomass charcoal in Burundi (International Development Research Centre, March 13, 1998, The partial carbonization of peat to make domestic fuel, accessed on May 5, 1998, at URL http://www.idrc.ca/ nayudamma/peatfuel 39e.html).

Past surveys also have identified a phosphate-bearing carbonatite deposit at Matongo, rare-earth mineralization south of Bujumbura, a silica deposit near Ngozi, vanadium mineralization at Mukanda, and wolframite in the north and northeast (Ministry of Energy and Mines, 1991).

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, poorly developed infrastructure, and long-standing ethnic hostilities were disadvantages.

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