

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

BOTSWANA

By Philip M. Mobbs

In 1999, most of Botswana's diamond production came from the Jwaneng, the Letlhakane, and the Orapa Mines. Nickel and copper production also played significant though smaller roles in the national economy. The battering the national economy took from the 1998 decline in international commodity prices

added impetus to the Government's drive to diversify its economy and to reduce its reliance on the diamond industry.

For more extensive coverage of Botswana, see the 1998 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

TABLE 1
BOTSWANA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 2/	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 e/	
Coal, bituminous	898,383	763,240	776,920	928,100 r/	900,000	
Cobalt, smelter output, Co content of matte 3/ 4/	271 r/	408	334 r/	352 r/	329 5/	
Copper:						
Mine output, Cu content of ore milled	24,700 e/	25,275	22,840	25,043	22,000	
Smelter output, Cu content of matte 3/ 4/	20,500	20,980	19,820 r/	22,124	18,239 5/	
Diamond 6/	thousand carats	16,802	17,388	20,111	19,772	21,348 5/
Gemstones, semiprecious 7/	kilograms	20,000	35,000	54,000	54,000 e/	54,000
Gold 8/	do.	86	5	28	1	1
Nickel:						
Mine output, Ni content of ore milled	18,088 r/ 5/	21,910	19,860	21,700 e/	16,000	
Smelter output, matte, gross weight 3/	49,931	58,910	50,570	56,732	50,000	
Smelter output, Ni content of matte 4/	18,100	17,460	20,157 r/	22,851	15,820 5/	
Salt 9/	208,126	93,886	184,530	214,700	200,000	
Sand, construction 10/	cubic meters	112,000	100,000	110,000 r/	90,000 e/	90,000
Soda ash, natural	201,657	119,137	199,990	195,500	196,000	
Stone, crushed	cubic meters	860,737	845,526	1,091,880	997,244 r/	1,000,000

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised.

1/ Table includes data available through December 26, 2000.

2/ In addition to commodities listed, clay for brick and tile, and silver were produced, but information was inadequate to estimate output.

3/ Smelter product was granulated nickel-copper-cobalt matte.

4/ Included some product from direct smelting ore; that is, ore not reported as milled.

5/ Reported figure.

6/ Assumed to contain about 70% gem and near gem.

7/ Presumably, principally agate. Reported as sales.

8/ Reported as bullion; historically included silver estimated to be about 2%.

9/ From natural soda ash production.

10/ Additional production of sand and gravel from small local operations was periodically reported, but information was inadequate to estimate output.