

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

SWAZILAND

By George J. Coakley

Mining was a small but important factor in Swaziland's economy, accounting for about 2% of the gross domestic product and generating about \$20.5 million in sales revenues in 1997.¹ Mining activities employed fewer than 1,000 workers; an additional 10,000 to 15,000 Swazis, however, were employed in South African mines, which contributed to the country's economy by wage repatriation.

Mineral production was limited to three commodities—asbestos from the Bulembu Mine, anthracite coal from the Maloma Mine, and crushed stone from two aggregate quarries at Kwalini and Tonkwane. (*See table 1.*) Diamond production had ceased at the end of 1996 with the closure of Trans Hex Limited's Dvokolwako Mine. Rights to the remainder of the Dvokolwako diamond deposit reverted to the joint-venture partner, the Swaziland National Trust Organization, Tibiyu Taka Ngwane. Some

exploration for gold was underway in 1997, but declining gold prices were a disincentive. For more extensive coverage of the minerals industry of Swaziland, see the 1996 Minerals Yearbook, Volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

Major Sources of Information

Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy

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¹Where necessary, values have been converted from Swazi emalangen (E) to U.S. dollars at the rate of E4.61=US\$1.00 for 1997.

TABLE 1
SWAZILAND: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

Commodity 2/		1993	1994	1995	1996 r/	1997
Asbestos, chrysotile fiber	metric tons	33,900	26,720	28,570	26,014	25,888
Coal, anthracite	thousand metric tons	50	228	172	129	203
Diamond	carats	61,700	76,100	75,000	75,000	--
Stone, quarry products	thousand cubic meters	163	185	114	221	456

r/ Revised.

1/ Includes data available through June 23, 1999.

2/ In addition to the commodities listed, modest quantities of crude construction materials (brick clay, sand and gravel) and pyrophyllite are produced, but output is not reported quantitatively, and information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.