

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF

MALAWI

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Malawi has produced cement, coal, crushed stone for aggregates, dolomite, limestone, and some artisanal salt for domestic consumption in recent years (table 1). The country also has produced small amounts of lime. Malawi has been known to produce various gemstones, such as agate, amethyst, aquamarine, garnet, rubies, and sapphires. The severe decline in gemstone production in 1997 was partially attributable to a combination of the Asian economic crisis (Balazik, 2000, p. 31.3), the overvaluation of Malawi's currency, and a slowdown in domestic economic growth. In particular, the country's industrial sector averaged an annual growth rate of 0.9% from 1990 through 1997 (Newafrica.com, December 30, 1999, Malawi economic development and indicators, accessed March 1, 2001, at URL <http://www.newafrica.com/economy/malawi.asp>). Other possible causes include reliance on sale of stockpiles and resource depletion.

Coal from the Mchenga Mine and limestone were essential components of the country's cement and lime industries. The production of stone for aggregate and cement was a major component of Malawi's mineral industry.

The country also has known deposits of apatite, bauxite, corundum, glass sand, granite, graphite, kaolin, kyanite, monzanite, phosphate, pyrite, tourmaline, uranium, and vermiculite. Bauxite deposits on Mulanje Mountain were estimated to have a resource of nearly 29 million metric tons (Mt) grading 43.3% Al_2O_3 . The high-calcium marble deposit on Malowa Hill has an estimated resource of 22 Mt grading nearly 8 Mt of limestone. Kangankunde Hill has an estimated resource of 11 Mt of monazite and strontianite at a grade of 2.0% rare-earth oxides, especially oxides of cerium, lanthanum, neodymium, and praseodymium, and 8% strontium. The Kayerekera uranium deposit in the North Rukuru Basin has a resource of more than 11,000 metric tons of U_3O_8 from ore grading 0.17%. Phosphate deposits at Thundulu have an estimated resource of 2 Mt grading 17% P_2O_5 (Ministry of Energy and Mining, 1997).

In 1999, Malawi's gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to about \$9.4 billion at purchasing power parity; this was an increase of 4.2% compared with that of 1998. Per capita income was \$940 at purchasing power parity in 1999. Industry accounted for about 29% of GDP and at most 15% of export earnings (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, p. 305).

Malawi consumed 857 million kilowatt hours of electricity in 1998. Hydroelectric power sources provided 97.61% of the country's electricity and fossil fuel sources accounted for the remaining 2.39%. Malawi had about 28,400 kilometers (km) of roads, of which approximately 5,300 km were paved; the rail

network covered nearly 800 km. Waterways included Lake Malawi and the Shire River (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, p. 305). In December 1999, the Mozambican railway company CFM/SDCN (in which the U.S. concern Railroad Development Corporation had a majority stake) took over the management of Malawi Railways from the Government.

The outlook for Malawi's mineral industry is tied to the Government's ability to face strong challenges, such as spurring exports, improving educational and health facilities, facing up to environmental problems of deforestation and erosion, and dealing with the rapidly growing problem of HIV/AIDS.

References Cited

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Ministry of Energy and Mining, 1997, *Mineral potential of Malawi: opportunities for investment*: Lilongwe, Ministry of Energy and Mining, 14 p.
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2000, *Malawi: World Factbook 2000*, p. 304-305.

Major Sources of Information

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

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity 3/		1995	1996	1997	1998 e/	1999 e/
Cement, hydraulic		138,675	91,000	175,800	175,000	175,000
Coal		14,635	69,930	63,210	54,000	54,000
Dolomite		876	700 e/	700 e/	700	700
Gemstones, ruby and sapphire	kilograms	75,588	100,000 e/	351	350	350
Lime		1,119	3,150	1,940	2,000	2,000
Stone:						
Crushed for aggregate	cubic meters	65,601	58,700	162,538	160,000	160,000
Limestone, for cement		175,578	133,648	258,000	260,000	260,000

e/ Estimated.

1/ Estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

2/ Table includes data available through February 2000.

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.