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Mining & Business News that Matter

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Kayelekera reopening

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Fibre backbone project to benefit business sector
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- Reserves enough for six more years mine life
- Company spending US\$10-M annually for care and maintenance

By Chiku Jere

Paladin Africa, a subsidiary of ASX and TSX-listed Paladin Energy, says it expects the reserves at its Kayelekera Mine in Karonga to sustain operations for six more years when extractive operations resume at the mine, which is currently on care and maintenance.

The Mine's General Manager, Alec Sharland, assured a delegation from the Malawi Chamber of Mines that toured the facility that the company is ready to open the mine when the price of the yellow cake on the world market improves to profitable levels. **cont. on page 3**



Team from Chamber of Mines and Energy being taken through Kayelekera plant operations

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Coal demand picks for Mchenga

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Chamber of Mines officials Chrispin Ngwena and Dean Lungu (L) posing all important questions to Mchenga mine officials (R)

By Chiku Jere

After years of uncertainty for Malawi's ailing coal industry, a rare glimmer of hope has emerged as Mchenga Coal Mine is reportedly registering a pick in business since last year, with soaring demand for its coal mainly coming from the tobacco industry.

This was learnt last month when a team from Malawi Chamber of Mines and Energy toured the mine as part of a fact-finding visit to Northern Region-based mining sites.

Malawi's coal industry, used to be one of the largest employers until it was brought to its knees by the uncontrolled influx of coal imports from Mozambique's Moatize coalfield, which choked the market for local producers resulting in closure of over three quarters of the mines located in the northern coal fields.

What could well be described as the country's coal industry crisis saw the folding up of operations by five once thriving mines such as Mwaulambo, Nkhachira, Jalawe, Lisikwa, Njati and DDY Trading, a situation which compelled some quarters to conclude that this was the demise of the industry.

The situation got even worse when Tanzania imposed affirmative coal import restrictions that blocked Malawi miners from exporting coal to the East African neighbouring country.

However, last month's visit to Mchenga Coal Mine located in Chiweta escarpment in Rumphi presented reassuring news that there was still hope for the industry which was almost written off.

Mchenga Coal Mine Manager Johnson Dandadzi acknowledged that the mine was not spared from the problems that led to the closure of the other mines, particularly market challenges, to the extent that they also were toying with the idea of closing shop until late last year when things took a positive turn.

"The situation was dire during year 2015 through to mid 2016. Things were really bad for us until August 2016 when there was a sudden upsurge in demand and orders for our coal, which is of high quality," he said.

The manager said the demand has been encouraging since then, with major orders coming from the tobacco industry, especially during peak tobacco harvesting period which falls between the months of May and October.



Geologist James Chatupa: Initiated Mchenga Coal Mine establishment when he was Director of Mines



Mchenga Coa; Mine Manager Dandadzi (in blue) explaining to visiting Chamber of Mines officials about mine's operations



Mine worker at the outlet of the mine

"With the current trend, this is going to be a better year for business and we expect much better years to come," said Dandadzi.

He also said that they are looking for funding to invest in a new mine by next year as the current mine reserve is almost depleted.

Mchenga, which is one of the oldest coal mines, boasts of customers spread throughout Malawi in various industries such as tobacco processing, poultry, beverage, steel and textile.

Coal at Mchenga Mine is extracted using Room and Pillar method, which involves the application of underground working variation of Bord and Pillar configurations, a competitive method in ground control measures for stability and safety.

Mchenga Coal Mine is situated in Livingstonia Coalfields, 120km from Mzuzu City off M1 Road.

The mine concession area stretches through Rumphi Valley covering 17km in length by 5km width and hosts sub-bituminous coal measures in Karoo sedimentary rocks of Permian age.

The sediments constitute many types and hues of layers of beds of grits, mudstones, siltstones, bones, arkoses and sandstones laid down in varying thicknesses which have undergone intense faulting due to proximity to the Malawi Rift System.

To date, exploration has identified sixteen coal seams of varying thicknesses with varying Ash Content Range of 14-24%, Moisture Content Range of 1-3.5%, Volatile Matter Range of 20-36%; Fixed Carbon Range of 50-62% and Calorific Content Range from 50000-74000k/cal/kg.

Coal mining at the mine started in 1987 through a Cooperation Protocol between Malawi and French Government and a state mining company, Mining Investment and Development Corporation (MIDCOR), operated the mine from 1988 to 1995 before the Malawi Development Corporation (MDC)/Indebank Consortium bought it.

Coal Products Limited (CPL) currently owns the mine after it took over from (MDC)/Indebank Consortium in 1999 through a bidding process conducted as part of Government's privatisation exercise.

Currently, the company has 250 employees plus 30 casual labours who work in shifts, and its production fluctuates between 2000 and 3500 tons per month ■

...from front page “Let me stress here, we have only mined 40% of the deposit. The mine is currently on care and maintenance following uranium price slump on the world market. Once the price reaches levels that make business sense, it will only take six months to resume full capacity production and we expect six more years of mine life,” he said.

Production at Kayelekera was suspended in 2014 as a result of the crash in uranium prices caused by the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, coupled with high operating costs related to energy, staff and transportation.

While on care and maintenance, the mine operates using energy from diesel generators at a daily consumption of 5000 litres while 60,000 litres are required during mine’s normal operation.

He said such is the status quo because the mine has been unable to connect to Malawi’s national electricity grid due to the country’s power generation challenges.

Sharland said unlike Kayelekera, the due listed resources multinational has maintained operations at its other African mine, Langer Heinrich in Namibia, where operation costs are lower because the mine has been able to source power from that country’s national grid.

“We spend far less in Namibia compared to Malawi that is why we are still operational there. If we can only manage to lower energy and transport costs and experience an upward trend in uranium prices on the market then we can resume production here,” he said.

After production, the Kayelekera yellow cake is transported to Walvis Bay port in Namibia, the only port in Africa certified to handle radioactive materials. This also results in higher transportation costs as it could have been cheaper if the nearby Nacala Port in Mozambique was used.

Despite all the economic problems, Sharland said the company continues to pump in an annual capital investment of US\$10million for care and maintenance.

He said apart from contributing to the country’s economy through buying of diesel and cars, the company also supports more than 30 indigenous contractors, who supply goods and services to the mine and its workers.

Paladin has also maintained 165 employees, among them, experts in different fields whose livelihoods and that of their families and relatives depend on the mine.

Encouraging news is that the uranium price seems to have taken a positive turn on the markets, away from US\$18 per pound which forced Kayelekera production suspension to between US\$20-26 since October 2016, to \$23.25 todote.

The Kayelekera mine was opened in 2009 and the average uranium spot price for three preceding years was at \$70 per pound. This saw the mine contributing 2.6% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) five years down the line in 2013.

Head of the visiting team and President of Malawi Chamber of Mines and Energy, Dean Lungu, said the tour of Kayelekera, which is so far the biggest mining investment in Malawi, has assisted the Chamber to appreciate challenges mining investors are facing in order to devise ways of improving the operating environment for firms in mining and energy sectors.

“This visit has helped us to get first hand information with regards to challenges you are facing as an investor and overall progress and success of the investment. The facts obtained will go a long way in assisting the Chamber to come up with interventions to address the challenges,” he said.

Paladin Energy acquired exploration rights for Kayelekera in 1998 although initial exploration at the site commenced as early as 1982 by the Central Electricity Generating Board of Great Britain.

Between 2010 and 2014, the mine produced 10.9 million pounds of uranium oxide, which represents 40 percent of the tapped deposit.

Kayelekera plant, which is said to have the best ever modern technology to be used outside Europe, has the capacity to produce 3.3 million pounds per year, but peak production to date has been 2.96 million pounds achieved



Sandstone Ore where Uranium is extracted



Projects Geologist John Mwenelupembe (L) and Environmental Suptendant James Mtolika (R) explaining Kayelekera activities

in 2013 and it was closed at consistent production of 2.30 million pounds per year in 2014.

Paladin Energy has spent \$15 million on exploration to date which includes the initial acquisition of data from previous exploration.

The company’s Technical Report for 2009 projected a development costs outlay of \$254 million.

An assumed further \$195 million was expended on development capital, including a sulphuric acid plant for processing, in 2011 and 2012.

To date, Paladin Africa is said to have lost \$387million because of the uranium price slump and high operating costs related to energy access.

The team that visited the mine included Lungu, Coordinator for the Chamber Grain Malunga, Managing Director for Nyala Mines Abdul Mahommed, revered geologist James Chatupa, Bwanje Valley Cement representative Dina Longwe and Country Manager for Globe Metals Chrispin Ngwenya.

In his speech, Sharland also bemoaned the tendency of some individuals including, chiefs and civil society leaders who have deliberately chosen to twist facts about the Kayelekera Uranium Project operations just to achieve self-serving motives.

“This is not good for a country that needs investment so badly. As investors, we are here to partner government and contribute towards the country’s economic growth,” he said.

Sharland said due to misrepresentation of facts, fired-up officials from government agencies, such as the Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) and other departments, have ended up storming the mine unannounced, expecting to stumble on something sinister, only to discover the opposite.

“They have come here without notice, we have allowed them to inspect our operations, and they have gone back with a different perception contrary to what they were made to believe,” he said.

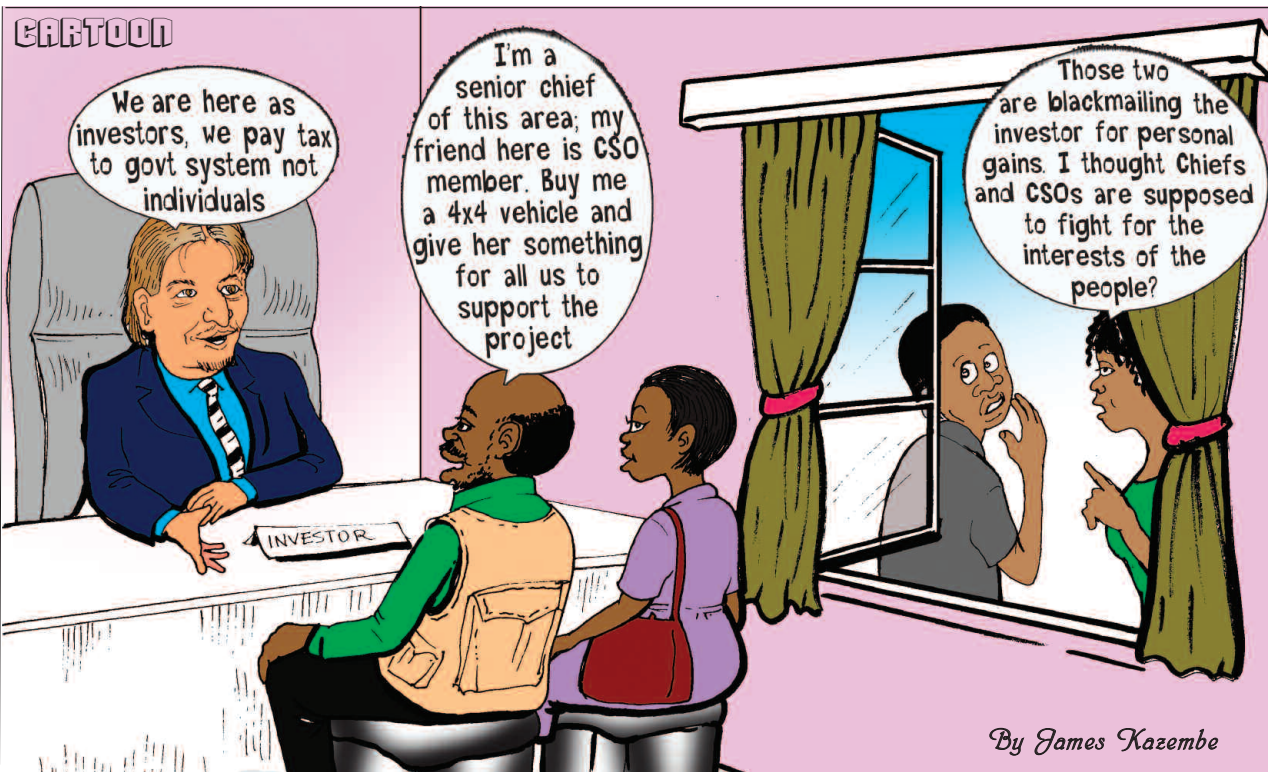
Sharland, therefore, challenged anyone to visit the mine at one’s chosen time to appreciate the ‘remarkable efforts’ his local team is putting into the project to make it a success.

He then urged change of attitude by local stakeholders towards foreign investors if Malawi is to attract more meaningful investments in the extractives sector.

Sharland said: “As an entity, Paladin values its internationally recognised reputation attained through a strong record of strict adherence to global standards of operation and the law of their investments’ host countries.”

“From protecting the environment, corporate social responsibility, employee welfare to safety issues, we do not compromise on standards.”

“Kayelekera mine’s achievement of five star-rating on safety through an assessment by an independent South Africa-based consultant testifies.”■



By James Kazembe



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Shayona donates drugs to KCH

- Cement producer has earmarked K31-M for CSR
- Investor needs protection from cement imports



Shayona and KCH officials: Close up L-R: M'baka, Padmanabhan, Nyasulu and Mwalweni. Behind table middle in white shirt is Dr. Msosa and in blue is Mrs. Kabambe

By Chiku Jere

Malawi's fastest growing cement manufacturer Shayona Cement Corporation elevated its corporate social responsibility initiatives, which have mainly concentrated on its factory location Kasungu, to national level when it responded to a request from the Eye Department at Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH) to donate assorted drugs worth close to K1million.

During a function held at KCH premises, Shayona representatives; Operations Manager Prajeesh Padmanabhan, Administrator Spencer M'baka and Public Relations Officer Rowland Mwalweni made a symbolic presentation of the drugs to Chief Hospital Administrator Siphon Nyasulu, who was in the company of Head of Eye Department a Dr. Msosa, Chief Nursing Officer a Mrs. Kabambe and were all thanks for the gesture.

Nyasulu expressed gratitude to Shayona for complementing government's effort by responding to the department's request for help as they were in dire need of the drugs especially antibiotics.

"Government has several competing priority areas that need financial attention and cannot promptly satisfy the needs of all departments. That is why we thought of seeking a helping-hand from Shayona, and we are really glad that the response was positive and prompt, we do not take this gesture for granted," he said.

Nyasulu used an adage 'a friend indeed is a friend in need' to describe Shayona's gesture and pleaded with the company to be there for the hospital whenever need arises.

He said the donated drugs are essential for the daily operations of the Eye Department and promised to use them for the intended purpose for the benefit of the patients.

He revealed that the eye department, as well as the

hospital as a whole, has been running on a serious drug shortage for the past seven months exacerbated due to unavailability of special drugs at Central Medical Stores.

"This is the problem in many central hospitals. The money is available but the Central Medical Stores are failing to supply our orders. For instance, our financial year ends in two months in June, but we still have 40 percent of our financial allocation unused," he said.

On his part, Mwalweni said the company responded positively to the request as one way of upholding its compassionate policy which compels it to render a helping hand to Malawians in times of need.

He said despite facing difficulties on the market due to the flooding of cement imports Shayona's management felt the urge to assist as the 'building of a health nation' is one of the company's aspirations.

He said: "When we received this request, we felt that it was in tandem with our policy, which gives great value to health and education. Our Managing Director Jitendra Patel believes that a health and educated nation is the only way to attain prosperity, hence he made these two essential needs as part of our areas of focus as a company in terms of CSR."

Mwalweni explained that the company has this year allocated MK31million for CSR activities mainly planned for Kasungu East, which hosts its cement plant and limestone mines.

"Though our CSR activities are focused on Kasungu, we realised that Shayona is a Malawian company which has its customers spread across the country, so we felt that by making this donation to KCH, we will be reaching out to other people who use our products," said Mwalweni.

In his remarks, Padmanabhan told the hospital officials that the company's door remains open, ready to render assistance if need arises, but he pleaded with government

to address the issue of uncontrolled importation of cement which he said is saturating the market and threatening the survival of the local industry.

"We are happy to complement government efforts in health and education but we would like authorities to help us as well by tackling the influx of cement imports, which remains a big threat to the survival of our company as a business," he said.

Shayona produces three product brands namely: Akshar, Buildplast and its new ultimate 42.5R Thanthwe Cement.

Akshar cement brand caters for over 25% of the market share in the country and is meant for low income customers, while Buildplast, which displays a high level of workability and coverage can be used for plastering, block work, brickwork and tilt slab substrates.

Shayona opened its operations in Malawi 20 years ago and it has grown into one of the leading local producers of cement with a rapid rise from a rated production capacity of 100 tons per day with less than 100 employees back in 1997 to a present rated production capacity of 650 tons per day with 1,200 personnel.

The company contributes substantially to the Government's coffers with an annual remittance of MK2.5billion in both royalties and taxes.

Meanwhile, Shayona is undertaking an expansion project at its factory which will see a monumental rise of production to more than 30,000 pockets of cement per day.

This is not the first time the company has extended its philanthropic footprint outside Kasungu as in 2014 it sponsored an eye operation for an unnamed patient which took place at the same KCH Eye Department.

Shayona also sponsors the running of a clinic at its premises in Kasungu, and its activities include donating drugs and topping up salaries for the health facility's personnel ■



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EDITORIAL



BY MARCEL CHIMWALA, PUBLISHING EDITOR

Government needs to protect investors from public ridicule

It is great news that Paladin Africa, the owner of the Kayelekera Uranium Mine, continues to take care of the mine, currently on care and maintenance so that it is ready to resume production when the price of the yellow cake rises to profitable levels.

As reported in our main article, the company is pumping US\$10-million annually for care and maintenance of the mine which still has more than 60% of the reserves.

We are grateful to Paladin for continuing to invest in the mine at this time when some unruly investors have abandoned mines due to low commodity prices on the world market.

However, as the General Manager for the Kayelekera Mine, Alec Sharland, says in our main article, there are some Malawians who do not appreciate the company's continued investment in the unproductive mine and keep insulting the company as if its intention to hoodwink Malawians and steal the uranium from their land.

We join Sharland in condemning this act by such misguided individuals who include politicians and members of the civil society who ridicule the miner to fulfill selfish agendas.

We have heard stories that some chiefs and members of the civil society have gone to the miner to ask for favours including that the miner should buy them cars.

We feel this is ridiculous and does not portray a good image of Malawi as an investment destination.

It is, therefore, important for the government to conduct more awareness campaign on investments such as Kayelekera so that people appreciate them.

A look at the history of mining in Malawi will reveal that many junior miners exploring for different minerals in the country flocked into the country after the Malawi government gave a go-ahead to Paladin to start mining at Kayelekera.

In so doing, it is Kayelekera, which put Malawi on the map as a country that supports mining investment.

It is, therefore, absurd for some blackmailers to keep tarnishing the image of the investor to fulfill selfish gains.

We have heard some civil society groups saying the investor should build huge infrastructure such as hospitals as part of corporate social responsibility.

We find it unrealistic because mining is business not charity work so it does not make any sense to force an entity which is making losses to overspend on corporate social responsibility. After all, corporate social responsibility is executed by an entity voluntarily ■

EYE ON MALAWI'S EXTRACTIVES

With Rachel Etter Phoya



10 Important Insights from Malawi's First EITI Report

At the end of April, Moore Stephens submitted the final version of Malawi's first Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative report to the Multi-Stakeholder Group. This means I have had a chance to already read through the first report and decided to dedicate this space over the next three months to share 10 things I learned, 10 recommendations made and 10 questions I have about Malawi's extractive industries governance, which covers forestry, mining, oil and gas. A shout out to Moore Stephen's Ben Toorabally and Rached Maalej for their input.

To kick it off, here are ten things I think are most important to know for the many people who do not have time to read the 100-page report, and perhaps these will encourage a few more to browse through the first report. I intentionally leave out most recommendations and queries I have that will follow in subsequent articles.

- 1. The reporting period:** The reporting period covers 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, which may seem a little behind, and definitely points to the importance of having EITI mainstreamed. This means revenue payments and subsequent allocation of funds from the sector should be processed through an electronic system and these records then can be verified and available online periodically or in real time – useful for both the public and government departments. Right now, a paper-based system is used and the report indicates that receipts were found without information detailing the type of payment and mistakes/different spellings for the same company, and sometimes no name was written down on a receipt making it hard to track revenue. More about areas to improve next time.
- 2. Revenue:** The total revenue for the extractives was MWK 5,935 million (equivalent to USD 13.6 million). 49% from forestry, 40% from solid minerals, and 11% from oil and gas. This is 0.9% of GDP, 1.1% of government revenues, and 0.6% of exports. The top five companies in terms of revenue were: Raiply Malawi, Paladin Africa, Shayona Cement, RAK Gas MB45, and Vizara Plantations. And the largest revenue stream was Value Added Tax.
- 3. Employment:** 13,131 people were working in the mining sector making up 0.2% of Malawi's workforce. The companies that reported indicated that they employ around 1,526 Malawians and 54 foreign employees.
- 4. Mineral production and exports:** Rock aggregate, coal, and agricultural lime were the top three minerals in volumes produced and value. Most exports were in the region apart from Thailand which was the country of destination for Nyala Mines' corundum, and some samples were sent further afield to laboratories for testing.
- 5. Mining and petroleum prospects:** During the period, 10 mining licences were awarded and 38 exclusive prospecting licences for solid minerals. The report highlights some prospects for mining, including: the government negotiated an agreement, yet to be signed, with Globe Metals & Mining for Kanyika Niobium Project and the company is exploring for graphite, as is Sovereign Metal. Mkango is at feasibility stage for its rare earths project in Phalombe, while there is another potential rare earth site at Kangankunde, Balaka, but a legal dispute is preventing further development. Another rare earth project has also been at standstill over disagreements with citizens in Mulanje. Cement Products Ltd is to start producing clinker from limestone in Mangochi for cement and Shayona Cement Corporation is doing the same in Kasungu, while Bwanje Cement is looking for financiers for its project in Ntcheu. A couple of coal mining projects in the north face challenges because of cheaper coal imported from Mozambique. During the reporting period, oil exploration was put on hold as government investigated the licences, contracts, and licence holders. The suspension was lifted in 2016. Petroleum exploration in Lake Malawi National Park, a World Heritage Site, remains highly contested and government has been asked by UNESCO not to explore in the area or a buffer zone.
- 6. Forestry:** Malawi used to have the largest man-made forestry in Southern Africa (Chikangawa), but today most of the twenty fuelwood/poles and timber plantations managed by the Department of Forestry (about 90,000 hectares) are degraded. Forestry resources across the country are depleting rapidly (2.6% per year) given the reliance on fuel wood and the expansion of agricultural land. Raiply Malawi has had a 60-year concession since 2009 to manage 20,000 hectares of Viphya Plantations, the largest of five agreements.
- 7. Non-compliant companies:** Eight companies from the 23 chose not to report (or possibly were too late?) – mining companies Shayona Cement, Kaziwiziwi Coal Mine, Intra Energy Trading, Malcoal Mining, and Premier Construction Equipment, along with Hamra Oil, Pacific oil and SacOil Holdings which all hold oil exploration rights did not comply with MWEITI. Artisanal and small-scale mining has not been included at this stage.
- 8. Differences in payments:** The main work of the Independent Administrator was to reconcile payment information to government that was submitted by companies with government receipts submitted by the MRA, Department of Mines, and Department of Forestry. There was a difference of 34% between the amount government declared as having received and the amount companies reported. Most of the difference was because of the aforementioned non-compliant companies.
- 9. Open contracting:** Contracts for the extractive sector are in the public domain, but the contract awarding process faces some challenges in terms of transparency and procedure. The government has signed two agreements for mining (one with Paladin for Kayelekera uranium mine in Karonga and another with Nyala for a Chimwadzulu ruby mine in Ntcheu), three for petroleum (two productions sharing agreements with RAK Gas MB45 and one with Pacific Oil) and five in forestry and over 120 co-management agreements with communities near forest reserves. However, there is no model agreement for mining, petroleum or forestry contracts which means the terms vary from one contract to another and are not always aligned with rates defined in legislation. This often lead to non-relevant terms being negotiated and could encourage corruption. Some companies reported their legal owners, but beneficial ownership will be fully implemented as part of the initiative by 2020.
- 10. Government progress and reforms:** It's important to note steps the government is taking to reform the sector for investors and to improve returns for Malawi through the domestication of the Africa Mining Vision and the Malawi Mining Governance and Growth Support Project, financed largely with a World Bank loan. This includes reviewing mining legislation with a provision for community development agreements and developing an artisanal and small-scale mining policy, upgrading the mineral licencing systems with a cadastre, strengthening monitoring of mineral operations, reforming the tax regime, building the capacity for tertiary education, and establishing a modern geo-data centre. The recent airborne geophysical survey is being followed up by exploration activities to improve knowledge about our resources ■

Take a look at Malawi's first EITI report here: <https://eiti.org/document/malawi-eiti-report-20142015>

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Malawi commences field surveys

- GEMMAP to maximize contribution of mining to socio-economic growth
- Project in tandem with French policy to support mineral resource development in Africa



Hon. Msaka



French ambassador, Delahousse



Matanda: Principle secretary

By Marcel Chimwala

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining has kick-started field surveys for the geological mapping and mineral assessment project (GEMMAP), which will, among other things, produce new maps depicting the mineral potential of the country.

The Ministry, which is implementing the project through the Geological Survey Department (GSD) and Department of Mines, contracted a consortium of the Geological Survey of France (BRGM), Geological Survey of Finland (GTK) and Council for Geosciences South Africa (CGS) of South Africa to provide technical assistance to the 10.8-million Euro project, which is being financed by the French Government.

Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining Honourable Bright Msaka SC, who officially launched the project on June 15 last year, says the implementation of GEMMAP is consistent with the Government of Malawi's development blueprint, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II and Mines and Minerals Policy document of February 2013, the main aim of which is to maximize the mining sector's contribution to the country's sustainable socio-economic growth.

"The investigations under GEMMAP will identify the type of rocks, the minerals hosted by the rocks, the quality and the quantities of the minerals in the ground. This type of data will assist to guide investors in making informed decisions in the selection of exploration targets," says Msaka.

French Ambassador to Zimbabwe and Malawi, Laurent Delahousse, says the move by the French government to finance GEMMAP is consistent with French cooperation policy in the mining sector in Africa aimed at helping African countries to acquire and manage geological information by updating and refreshing national geological data.

"The policy is set out in the strategic guidance document entitled 'Resources minerales et Development en Afrique (Mineral Resources and Development in Africa),' he says.

The main objective of GEMMAP is to support the Geological Survey Department and the mining sector by

advancing geological knowledge and capacity building.

The project has six components which are geological mapping, mineral resource potential mapping, natural risks (geo-hazards) mapping, support to small scale mining, procurement of laboratory equipment, and construction of a documentation centre at GSD, and capacity building.

ministry to have prior knowledge of the mineral resources of the country instead of just depending on what the investors are reporting.

Secretary for Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, Patrick Matanda, says a team of geoscientists from the GSD and the technical consortium commenced the surveys on



Minister Hon. Msaka and officials from the ministry during the GEMMAP launch

"The project will also conduct ground truthing of the anomalies that were identified by the recent countrywide high resolution airborne geophysical survey code-named KAUNIUNI," says Msaka.

He says the knowledge of the mineral potential of Malawi to be acquired through GEMMAP is very relevant for his ministry when awarding exploration and mining licenses and when negotiating mining development agreements with investors because it will assist the

April 24, 2017 with Nsanje and Chikwawa in the Southern Region as starting points.

The field investigations involve mapping of geological units, collection of soil, sediment and rock samples for laboratory analysis, collection of data on mining activities in the areas visited and mapping of geo-hazards.

"The Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining is, therefore, appealing to the general public to take note of the commencement of the field mapping and render

s for geological mapping project



Group photo after GEMMAP launch



Msaka, Delahousse and the consultants after the launch

their support for the success of the project," says Matanda.

Director for GSD, Jalf Salima, says the project has come at an opportune time for Malawi as systematic geological mapping of Malawi was done in the 1950s to 1960s, which is a long time ago.

Salima says he is optimistic that the survey will yield positive results because there are many known mineral occurrences in neighboring countries whose geological environments extend into Malawi but little is known in Malawi.

He explains that the project will apply advanced geosciences technologies which will lead to better understanding of earth forming processes and mineralization.

Salima says: "Such advanced technologies to be used in the project such as remote sensing, geographic information systems and analytical equipment will help us acquire and archive high quality data in formats compatible with current data exchange systems."

"We need up to date quality data to attract investors and develop the mineral sector as a tool for socio-economic

transformation."

The geological mapping component of GEMMAP will involve systematic mapping of the geology of Malawi, doing field observations and collecting samples for petrographic, geo-chemical and geo-chronological studies.

"Deliverables shall include updated geological maps at scales of 1:1,000,000(1 map); 1:250,000 (10 maps) and 1:100,000(40 maps) and accompanying reports," says Salima.

Under the mineral resources potential mapping component, the project will undertake an inventory of the mineral resources of the country to produce updated mineral resources and occurrence maps.

"Data will be derived from geological observations, geophysical data, geochemical data, mineral indicators and visits to old mines and operating mines," he says.

As part of the third component dubbed natural risks mapping, the project will involve the mapping of geo-hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, flood zones and rockfalls to produce documents and maps showing



Salima

geo-hazard prone areas.

"The data produced will support the implementation of the country development plans and natural risk prevention policies," says Salima.

The support to artisanal and small scale mining component of the project will make an assessment of the minerals and mining methods currently in use by small-scale miners and make appropriate recommendations.

Previous surveys indicated that Malawi is host to deposits of various minerals including rare earth elements, graphite, uranium, niobium, heavy mineral sands, bauxite, coal, limestone, dimension stones, iron sulphide, vermiculite, nickel, gold, gemstones, platinum group metals and copper.

The country has also high prospects for the discovery of oil and gas in its portion of the African Great Rift System which encompasses Lake Malawi and the Shire Valley area.

"GEMMAP shall provide geo-scientific data that shall add to a new understanding of the geology and mineral occurrences of Malawi," says Salima.

Salima explains that the geoscientific data from GEMMAP will also be useful in designing of infrastructure, natural risk mapping and mitigation, ground water exploration, land use planning and general research in various fields ■

Fibre backbone project to benefit business sector

• “Soon we will have E-learning, E-commerce and E-economy”

By Jameson Salima

Business captains in Malawi have always complained of loss of working hours due to delays in obtaining important documents from government departments which include business permits, immigration and road traffic documents.

“I believe that this project will bring more business to Malawi and offer numerous benefits. Soon we should be able to see the introduction of E-learning, E-commerce and E-economy.

“Malawi will have improved access to the internet, increased speed of internet and an enhanced connection between Malawi and the outside world,” says Wang.

The project involves laying of a fibre cable from Chitipa

various government offices will now be connected to an information super highway. With the fibre backbone project, we expect transformation in sectors such as national identity programme, education, health and the finance.”

He says the project will also strengthen the Integrated Financial Management Systems (IFMIS) which was a loophole for massive looting of public funds dubbed cash-gate.

Mutharika says no country can develop without ICT because in the modern world every sector relies on Internet.

“Talk of distance learning to support education, tele-medicine to support health care in rural areas and provide weather focus and new farming techniques, all depend on internet,” says Mutharika.

Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Nicholas Dausi, comments that his ministry’s role in the project will be to conduct awareness programmes on the usage of the Internet and significance of the project.

The National Fibre Backbone Project will be implemented in Malawi by Chinese firm, Huawei Technologies, which is one of the leading ICT firms in the world boasting of 30 years of experience.

Director for Huawei Malawi, Wan Wei, says the company has been operating in Malawi for the past 11 years and has been with the people of Malawi even at the worst economic depression time.

Wan explains that the company’s localized operations are the key to Huawei’s fast growth in overseas markets. Currently Huawei has more than 50 employees in Malawi, and over 50 per cent of them are locally recruited.

“As a collaborative industry contributor, we have been prioritizing partnership to local suppliers to create more job opportunities downstream and have extensively



Pres. Mutharika (L) and Chinese Ambassador Shi Ting (R) unveiling a plaque



Huawei Malawi Director Wan Wei explaining to Chinese Ambassador and the President

But such delays will soon be history thanks to the launch of the national fibre backbone project which will overcome the so-called network hitches by providing fast and reliable Internet services and will also integrate government operating systems to improve quality of service delivery.

The Malawi Government is implementing the project using proceeds of a US\$23-million concessional loan from the People’s Republic of China.

Chinese Ambassador to Malawi, Wang Shi Ting, says in implementing the project, Malawi is joining the advanced world in as far as information connectivity is concerned.

He says once completed, Malawi will have fast speed internet at a lower cost and there will be vibrant information access by all Malawians.

to Nsanje, a development which will see more Malawians have a wider access to information, communication and technology (ICT) both in the rural and urban set-up.

State President, Arthur Peter Mutharika, says the project will improve the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), enhance operations of the Malawi Traffic Information System and improve government procurement system.

Mutharika says the project will also assist his administration to clear out ghost workers, who have been a drain to public funds, from the civil service.

He says: “The project will, among other things, connect the country’s human resource systems which will keep up to date data for genuine government employees.”

“Malawi will also have improved delivery of services as

co-operated with more than 50 local suppliers to seek win-win development,” says Wan.

He says the company aims at creating an open, collaborative, win-win industry ecosystem that promotes shared success, and provide end users with an experience that is Real-time, On-demand, All-online, Do It Yourself (DIY), and social.

Malawi has a total of six fibre gateways to the SEACOM and EASSy cable landings, three each through MTL and the Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi Limited (ESCOM).

The state-owned Malawi Sustainable Development Network Program (SDNP), a licensed Internet Service Provider (ISP), oversees the local traffic hub that connects the country’s ISPs ■



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Mutharika alola makampani kuyamba kufufuza mafuta

Mtsogoleri wa dziko lino Arthur Peter Mutharika wati dziko lino ndi lokonzeka kuyamba ntchito yofufuza mafuta kuchokera pansu pa Nyanja ya Malawi ndi madera ena kuphatikizapo kusi kwa mtsinje wa Shire.

Kupezeka kwa mafuta mmaiko ena amuAfirika monga Uganda ndi Mozambique kwapangitsa kuti makampani



Chatupa: Kadaulo pa za mtapo

akunja omwe ali ndi ukadaulo ofufuza and kukumba zitsime zamafuta aonetse chidwi choyamba kafukufuku wa mafuta m'dziko lino.

A Mutharika atsimikizira a Malawi kuti asade nkhwana ndi zomwe mabungwe ena omwe siaboma akukamba kuti ntchito yidzasokoneza chilengedwe, kuphatikizapo kupha nsomba zomwe zimapezeka mnyanja ya Malawi.

“Munthu aliyense asadandaule ntchito yikayamba chifukwa akatswiri adzagwiritsa ntchito njira zamakono kuti mafuta asasefukire nkuononga chilengedwe mnyanjayi.

“Pamene mayiko ena muno muAfirika akugwira ntchito yofufuza mafuta, ifenso aMalawi sityenera kubwela m'mbuyo koma kupita patsogolo,” adatero a Mutharika ku Mangochi komwe kunali mwambo wokumbukira kufunikira kwa madzi, (World Water Day).

Nkhaniyi yakondweretsa akuluakulu okhudzidwa ndi nkhani zamigodi. Iwo ati zomwe walankhula Mutharika zikupereka chikhulupiliro kwa a Malawi kuti mtsogoleriyu



Chiwambo: Malamulo alipo

ali ndi masomphenya komanso chidwi chofuna kutukula chuma chadziko lino.

A James chatupa omwe ndi mkulu wa kampani yomwe ili ndi ukadaulo ofufuza mafuta, yotchedwa Craton Resources, anawuzwa mtolankhani wa *Mining and Trade Review* kuti sizoonza kuti dziko la Malawi litsalire mmbuyo pankhani zamigodi pamene maiko ena akupindula kuchokera ku ntchito zomwezo.

Iwo anati chofunika nkusankha njira yofufuza mafuta yomwe ingapereke zotsatira zenizeni ndiponso zomwe zingateteze miyoyo ya nsomba panyanja ya Malawi.

Bungwe lamakampani a migodi la Malawi Chamber of mines nalonso lati ndi lokondwa ndi mawu a mtsogoleri wadziko linoyu.

Mmodzi mwa akuluakulu woyendetsa bungweli a Grain Malunga ati ntchito yiyenera kudzagwiridwa pogwiritsa njira zotsika mtengo kuti makampani amafutawa asazawononge ndalama zambiri koma adzatulitse zotsatira zenizeni.

Boma linapereka ziphaso zopanga kafukufukuyu kumakampani ammaiko osiyanasiyana. Madera omwe kafukufukuyu akuchitika anagawidwa mzigawo zisanu ndi mphambu imodzi.

Gawo loyamba (Block 1) limayambira ku Chitipa kumalizira ku Karonga, ndipo idaperekedwa ku kampani ya ku South Africa yotchedwa Sac Oil Holdings. Kumpoto komweko kulonso magawo ena awiri (Block 2 and 3) omwe ali panyanja ya Malawi ndipo adaperekedwa ku kampani ya Hamra Oil.

Magawo ena adagawidwa motere (Block 4 and 5) omwe akupezeka m'maboma a Nkhotakota, Salima, Dedza, Machinga, Blantyre and Mulanje adaperekedwa ku kampani ya Rak Gas MB45.

Gawo lomaliza (Block 6) lili pansu pa kampani ya Pacific Oil. Gawoli lili m'maboma a Chikwawa ndi Nsanje komwe ndi kusi kwa chigwa cha mtsinje wa Shire.

Mabungwe ena omwe siaboma motsogoleredwa ndi bungwe laku Britain la Oxfam akhala akunena kuti dziko lino silingayambe ntchito yofufuza mafuta chifukwa lilibe ndondomeko ya malamulo okhudza ntchito.

Koma mkulu woyanganira ntchito zamafuta mu unduna wa zamigodi, a Cassius Chiwambo watsutsa za nkhaniyi. Iye wati malamulo alipo kale okhudza magwiridwe a ntchito.

“Malamulo analipo kale makampani asanapatsidwe zitupa zogwilira ntchito yidzasokoneza chilengedwe mnyanjayi,” adatero a Chiwambo.

Koma iwo adavomereza kuti nkofunikirabe kukonzanso ena mwa malamulo ogwilira ntchito za migodi ndi mafuta kuti ntchito zikhale zamphindu lokwanira kwa aMalawi.

Mchaka cha 2014, atatenga boma, a Mutharika adaimitsa kaye kupereka zitupa kwa makampani ofufuza mafuta ponena kuti dziko lino silili paliwiro pankhani zoyenga mafuta.

Makampani khumi ndi omwe adaonetsa chidwi chofuna kugwira ntchito yofufuza mafuta mchaka cha 2011 pomwe boma lidayamba kulandira makalata opempha kuyambitsa ntchito. ■

Pulojekiti ya Tonse Tipindule ipereka mphamvu kwa aMalawi pankhani zamigodi

Kwa nthawi yaitali, anthu osauka a kumidzi yozungulira malo omwe kukuchitika ntchito za migodi akhala asakupindula nawo pa ntchito. Izi zili choncho chifukwa anthuwo sazindikira ndondomeko zina zoyendetsera migodi, komanso udindo omwe makampaniwo ali nawo pa anthuwo.

Anthuwo, mwachitsanzo, sazindikira kuti ali ndi udindo woonetsetsa kuti makampani a migodi akuteteza chilengedwe ndiponso kupereka gawo lina la chuma kuntchito zothandiza kutukulira miyoyo ya anthu m'madera ozungulira migodiyo (corporate social responsibility).

Koma vutoli tsopano lasanduka mbiri yakale m'madera chifukwa chakubwera kwa pulojekiti yotchedwa Tonse Tipindule.

Pulojekitiyi ikugwiridwa ndi mgwirizano wamabungwe osiyanasiyana motsogoleredwa ndi a Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), ndi chithandizo cha ndalama chochokera ku Tilitonse Fund.

Cholinga cha ntchito yidzasokoneza kuti pali mgwirizano pakati pa anthu ozungulidwa ndi ntchito za migodi, makampani a migodi ndiponso nthambi za boma zokhudzidwa ndi za migodi.

Mkulu oyanganira ntchito yidzasokoneza kuti NCA, a Thokozani Mapemba, ati ndi ndondomekoyi anthu akutha kuzindikira

udindo wawo ndipo apatsidwa mphamvu zokamba ndi nthambi za boma komanso makampani pamomwe angapindulire ndi ntchito zamigodi.

Maboma asanu ndi anayi (nine) ndi komwe kukuchitika ntchito yidzasokoneza kuti ali ndi udindo woonetsetsa kuti makampani a migodi akuteteza chilengedwe ndiponso kupereka gawo lina la chuma kuntchito zothandiza kutukulira miyoyo ya anthu m'madera ozungulira migodiyo (corporate social responsibility).

Mabungwe ena omwe akugwira nawo ntchito yidzasokoneza kuti ali ndi udindo woonetsetsa kuti makampani a migodi akuteteza chilengedwe ndiponso kupereka gawo lina la chuma kuntchito zothandiza kutukulira miyoyo ya anthu m'madera ozungulira migodiyo (corporate social responsibility).

Zochitikachitika zokhudza ntchito yidzasokoneza kuti ali ndi udindo woonetsetsa kuti makampani a migodi akuteteza chilengedwe ndiponso kupereka gawo lina la chuma kuntchito zothandiza kutukulira miyoyo ya anthu m'madera ozungulira migodiyo (corporate social responsibility).

Mkulu woyendetsa ntchito yidzasokoneza kuti ali ndi udindo woonetsetsa kuti makampani a migodi akuteteza chilengedwe ndiponso kupereka gawo lina la chuma kuntchito zothandiza kutukulira miyoyo ya anthu m'madera ozungulira migodiyo (corporate social responsibility).



Mapemba: anthu akutha kuzindikira udindo wawo

“Pa misonkhanoyi aphungu nawonso akumaonetsa chidwi chofuna kukonzanso ena mwa malamulo ogwilira ntchito za migodi ndi mafuta kuti ntchito zikhale zamphindu lokwanira kwa aMalawi.” adatero a Sikwese. ■



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TECHNICAL FILE

by Grain Wyson Phillip Malunga FIMMM
Mining and Environmental Management Expert

Mining community engagement as a tool for social economic transformation in mining areas

Abstract

Mining projects have become a point of focus due to social economic opportunities they can offer to local communities. Poverty in the vicinity of wealth is a source of insecurity and is a sign of immoral way of doing business. Benefit sharing and environmental protection bring project acceptance and hope to economic transformation of local communities.

Corporate Social Responsibility is not obligatory but is a good way of doing business. Community Development Agreements protect mining companies from delivering goods and services that would have been the responsibility of government. These agreements should be a product of Free Prior Informed Consent so that a lasting Social Contract with the community is obtained.

The paper highlights also a consultative process that should be undertaken in order to have community participation and acceptance to mining projects.

Introduction

There has been an outcry from the civil society claiming that mining in Malawi has not benefited communities around mines. This, they claim, has arisen from lack of broader consultation with mining communities during mineral resource development cycle. Decentralised structure of local government has not been effective in promoting popular participation in the governance and development of project areas. This has resulted in the civil society coming up with Area or Village Action Groups to oversee issues of benefit sharing from mining activities.

The paper tries to put into perspective the need to develop smart partnership between mining communities and mining companies in promoting positive cohabitation through benefit shearing and promoting environmental sustainability.

Introducing Mineral Rights to Communities

Government introduced The National Decentralisation Policy in October 1998 and a new Local Government Act was passed in 1998 to enshrine Decentralisation Policy. This eventually led to integration of “governmental agencies at the district and local levels into one administrative unit, through the process of institutional integration, manpower absorption, composite budgeting.....” and promotion of “popular participation in the governance and development of districts.”

Four committees were set through formation of

1. District Executive Committee (DEC)
2. District Consultative Forum (DCF)
3. Area Development Committee (ADC) and
4. Village Development Committee (VDC)

These committees form levels through which governance and development issues are supposed to be conveyed. DEC is composed of departmental heads under the control of the District Commissioner (DC). DCF is a committee that is composed of DEC, civil society, political leaders and Traditional Authorities (TAs). All stakeholders are represented here. The ADC comprises of Group Village Headmen, government operatives, operating civil society and appointed stakeholders by the TA. The ADC receives project proposals from VDCs and approves projects that are supposed to be implemented by the DEC after DCF and DEC have endorsed them for implementation by a subcommittee called District Development Committee (DDC). The VDC is a committee operating at Group Village Level and is the most relevant in planning, management and coordination of development programs at community level.

In terms of collaborating mineral development issues the following structure is recommended:

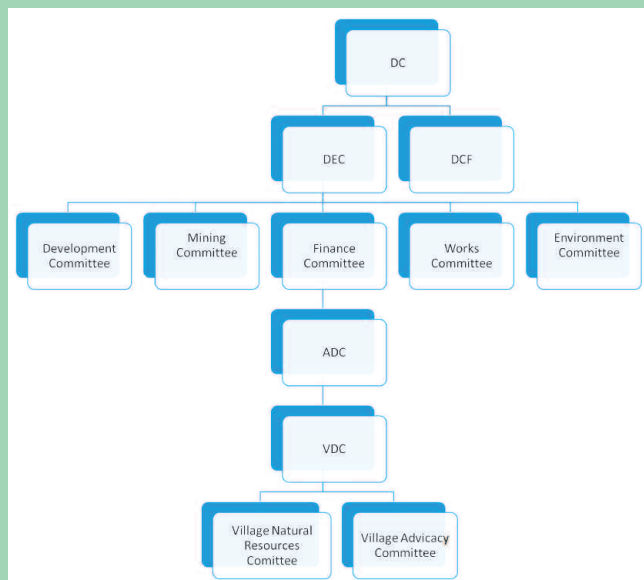


Figure 1: Mining Stakeholder Engagement Chart

Following the above chart mining projects falling under Exclusive Prospecting Licences and Mining Licences, issued by the Minister responsible for Mines, should first be introduced to the DC and his DEC after which the Mining Committee will take it to the ADC who later introduce the project to the VDC. Once the project has been introduced at these levels a final introduction should be made at DCF level where all relevant stakeholders are briefed.

The process of consultation with mining communities can then be kick started where relevant advocacy groups are introduced by VDCs and the process of

Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) starts. This is a process that respects ownership, self-determination and consent to a project that will benefit affected local communities.

Mineral permits are issued at District Council level. This enables the Council to generate local revenue through Property rates; Ground rent; Fees and licences; Commercial undertakings; and Service charges. Therefore, a Mining Committee is necessary to be established to oversee issues concerning minerals permits and compliance. This committee can be headed by a District Mineral Resources Officer (DIMRO) who has mining or geological qualification.

Community Development Programmes

Mining companies improve their relationship with communities through benefit sharing and working together on programs that sustain good environmental practices. This is done through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Community Development Agreement (CDA). Further programs can go through Mining Development Agreement (MDA).

CSR programs are done by companies voluntarily through moral obligation and fostering good community relations. CSR can be through sharing social development programs, such as, in education and health; and in economic programs such as enhancing agricultural productivity to supply farm products to the mine and prioritise local employment and skills development.

In the absence or inadequacy of MDA, CDA plays a very important role in obtaining “social licence” for a mining project to be accepted by local communities. This is where FPIC or community engagement becomes more relevant and helps Government and Mining Companies to understand community development needs. The process helps identify what Government can do and what mining companies can offer. The main component of CDA is to identify processes and development programmes under which stakeholders collaborate in fostering benefit sharing. This is obligatory and legally binding to the extent of suspending or terminating project operations. VDCs, ADCs and DCF draws leadership to help develop CDA for the good of the local communities. Enlightened leadership and those with entrepreneurship leadership about natural resource extraction become a useful tool for development of a successful CDA.

In case of MDA, this is entered upon between Government and Mining Company when fiscal and environment laws and regulations do not adequately offer security of tenure and fiscal stability to Mining Companies. What is in the agreement is consistent with the needs of the countries citizens, with more emphasis on mining communities, protection of the environment and appropriate return on investment of mining companies. A party to development of this MDA can be relevant Central Government institutions, DCF and ADC. Central Government key players are those institutions that deal with administration of Justice, Government Finance, Mineral Resource Development, Land, Water resources and Agriculture. The process needs to give update to mining communities to seek their consent.

Social Economic transformation of areas within the vicinity of the mine can be evident if development programmes are undertaken within mining clusters with radius of intervention of 20 kilometres for mining communities.

Basic Needs for Mining Communities

Mineral discoveries are usually found in remote areas where local communities lack basic needs such as education, health, employment, safe and clean water, electricity, food security and nutrition. These needs have formed the basis for negotiation in terms of social economic transformation of the local communities. Education and skills development if properly negotiated can reap benefit for the mine in reducing expensive expatriate packages and promotion of local content for goods and services. Provision of health service infrastructure can go a long way in promoting standard of living and preventing communicable diseases such as TB, HIV and Aids. Life expectancy can increase too. Health services delivery are essential to creating a health population that contributes to economic development. Mining activities can provide both skilled and non-skilled employment. The mine should be able to prioritise employment of local communities before sourcing elsewhere. This employment opportunity contributes to sense of ownership and acceptance to projects. Safe and clean water can be shared with the local community. This reduces health service delivery as water borne diseases are reduced and women are assisted in avoiding long distances to fetch potable water for domestic use. Electricity supply to local communities triggers economic activities within the mining community. Services such as maize milling, welding and opening of barber shops offer economic opportunities to the youth and reduces theft of mine properties.

Food security and nutrition is an important aspect of wellbeing and contribution to local content where communities supply food provisions to the mine strengthens collaboration between the mine and local communities. The mine should be able to employ a community engagement officer to identify the needs of the community that can equally benefit the mine.

Conclusion

Mining companies have the responsibility to develop lines of communication and engagement that make them welcome by local communities. Getting a government contract to undertake mining activities is not enough since the community offer “social contract” through addressing their basic needs and protecting the environment in which they survive upon.

Designing of CDAs and CSRs should be a participatory approach in which local communities are involved. If this is not adhered to, most projects are delayed and abandoned as they will not promote smart partnership and benefit sharing ■



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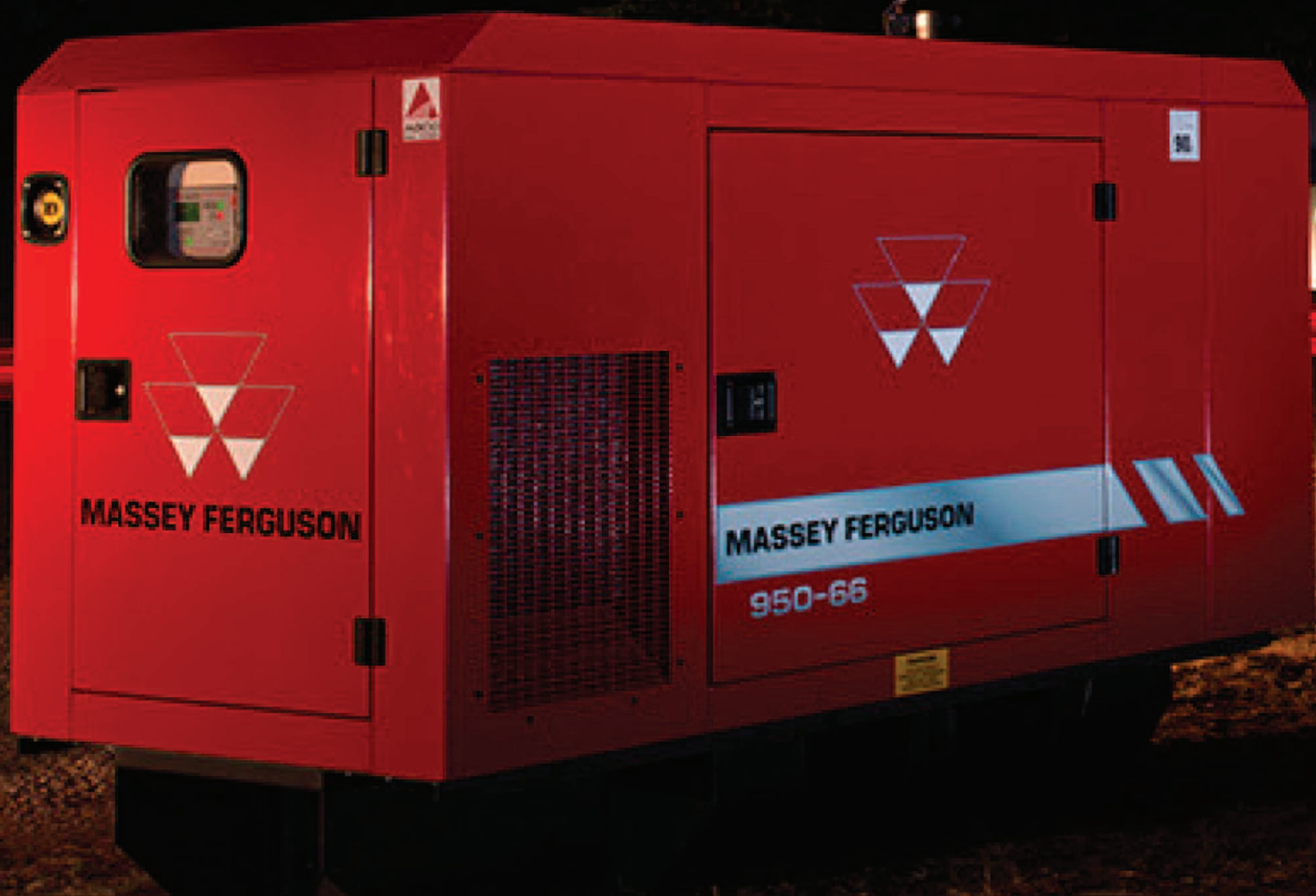
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Tourism sector set for robust growth

Patronage to rise to 1.2 billion by 2021

By Jameson Salima

Government has targeted to grow tourism from 804 thousand visitors in 2015 to 1.2-billion in 2021, a development which will spur economic growth and up the sector's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) from the current 7.2% to between 10 and 15%.

Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Joseph Mwanamveka, told delegates at the first national tourism conference that was held at Capital Hotel in Lilongwe recently that over the years Malawi's tourism sector has been steadily growing in terms of its contribution to GDP, employment and general social and economic development.

Malawi is seeking to diversify from its overreliance on agriculture to potential sectors such as mining and tourism as the future of the major cash crop, tobacco, is threatened by the global anti-smoking campaign.

Mwanamveka said as part of its efforts to diversify the economy to tourism, the government is pursuing the Tourism Development Strategic Plan which will see the country maximizing the contribution of the sector to the economy.

"Yes, the National Export Strategy recommends the growing and value addition of agricultural products like oil seeds, tea, coffee, legumes, agro-processing, manufacturing and others, but tourism continues to present low hanging fruits since our country is also endowed with natural and cultural resources for tourism development," said Mwanamveka.

Currently the tourism industry's contribution to GDP stands at K221billion, with visitor exports alone generating K17 billion, according to the national statistics office (NSO) report for 2015.

The sector growth is also supported by the mushrooming of new hotels and other hospitality units which in 2015 jointly raised K15.9billion, says the NSO report.

Mwanamveka, therefore, touted tourism as the "next big thing" that could propel socio-economic development of the country.

He said: "Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy both globally and locally. For instance, in 2015, travel and tourism accounted for US\$7.2 trillion, translating to about 2.8% of the global economy."

"Globally, the sector also outpaced other major sectors such as manufacturing and retail and continues to be recognized as a key catalyst for global transformation. As



Mwanamveka visiting a pavilion during the conference

such, the United Nations in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognizes tourism as a viable means to promote a sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."

He said consequently the Malawi government has taken on board tourism as one of the strategic sectors in the Malawi Growth Development Strategy and NES.

However, the tourism minister expressed disappointment over limited skills among some staff in the hospitality sector. Mwanamveka attributed the challenge to outdated curricula and lack of appropriate facilities for training of tourism students.

"There are numerous complaints that even students from recognized training institutions...do not have the requisite skills for the work place," the minister said.

He therefore disclosed that his ministry has proposed the reintroduction of the tourism training levy which, if approved by the Ministry of Finance, will finance skills training needs at the government tourism training institutions.

The minister also noted with concern reports that some private players do not support the Malawi Tourism Council, (MTC) activities, and shun its membership,

in so doing weakening the regulatory institution.

He said: "I have, therefore, directed the Tourism and Hotels Board to include in the tourism regulations, mandatory licensing requirement.

"It is my hope that this mandatory licensing will give 'wings' to the Malawi Tourism Council to secure wider membership and resources to carry out its mandate."

In 2014, a well-known guidebook company Lonely Planet ranked Malawi on fifth position among the trendiest and most interesting places to visit thus after Brazil, Antarctica, Scotland and Sweden.

Lonely Planet said the presence of the so called Big Five wild animals, less crowded natural parks than elsewhere in Africa and also beach life without the crowds makes Malawi a perfect destination for tourists.

"Whilst Lake Malawi dominates the country, this is not a country of a singular attraction. It is the mixture of beautiful landscapes, fascinating wildlife and rich culture that combine to make this small country such a wonderful place to visit. Malawi has a national tourism policy which clarifies assets and shortcomings and need for development," it said ■

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