

Mining – still Zambia’s backbone

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The southern African region has a lot of mining potential. Mining and Technical Exhibitions (MTE) travelled to Zambia for week-long tour, writes Dineo Phoshoko.

Although Zambia’s mining industry is facing a lot of challenges lately, there is still immense potential for success in the industry. According to the 9th Zambia EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) Report, mine companies accounted for more than a quarter of government’s income. Published in December 2018, the reported revealed how the mining industry contributed approximately more than USD1-billion in 2016.

Of the mine companies operating in Zambia. First Quantum Minerals paid the

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grading 0.51% copper.

Lumwana is another mine located in what is considered to be one of the most prospective copper regions in the world. **Lumwana** ore is treated through a conventional sulphide flotation plant producing copper concentrate for smelting. The mine has about 207.6 million tonnes of remaining ore reserves.

Solwezi is the capital of the Zambia's North-West province, home to about 65 000 inhabitants, many of whom work in Solwezi's main industry – copper mining. Kansanshi Mine, one of Solwezi's biggest mines, exploits copper-gold ore from Kansanshi Anticlinal and has been running since the 19th century. **Lumwana**, Solwezi's other big mine, was discovered in 1961, but serious work wasn't carried out there until Equinox Minerals became involved in 1999. Uranium is also mined in Solwezi at the **Lumwana** Mine north of Solwezi town.

Kitwe is the second-largest city in terms of size and population in Zambia. It is also one of the most commercially and industrially developed areas in the nation, alongside Ndola and Lusaka. It has a complex of mines on its north-western and western edges.

Mopani copper minerals has invested about

USD1.3-billion in mining operations in Zambia. The operations see the mine expanding by sinking and equipping three new shafts in Kitwe. The shafts are expected to increase the mine's output from 3.8 million tonnes of copper to 9 million tonnes by 2020.

These and other mines in the country reflect Zambia's massive mining potential. Like many African countries, the Zambia mining industry is facing a lot of challenges – some of which are policy related. To overcome such challenges, it is essential that key stakeholders including government, industry and labour work together, for the industry to meet its potential.

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