

CHAD

By David Knopf, Consultant Geologist

Assisted by Ahmat M SALEH, Deputy Director of DMG, N'Djamena

Chad has approximately 9.3 million inhabitants and covers an area of 1.3 million km². Since coming to power in late 1990, after decades of political instability and civil war, President Idriss Deby has successfully managed a difficult transition to political reconciliation and democracy. The Chadian economy is heavily reliant on the cotton sector, and agriculture generates 40% of GDP and provides a livelihood for 85% of the population, but oil production should change this picture drastically.

The mining sector is still poorly developed. The resources mined in Chad are quite limited. Small-scale alluvial mining produced an officially recorded amount of 420 oz of gold in 2003, though the actual yearly production is assumed to be much larger. Occasional artisan diamond production is reported from a few locations (Baibokoum and Guera) but no figures are available. Exploitation of natron gives occupation and revenue to a large part of the population of Kanem, north of Lake Chad, which produces an estimated 25,000 t/y.

As Chad is a landlocked country, high value commodities such as gold and diamonds appear to have the most development potential, although many other mineral occurrences, both metallic and industrial minerals, are known in the country. Exploration carried out in the late 1980s and early 1990s by UNDP/DRGM confirmed that the greenstone belts of the Mayo Kebbi and Ouaddaï regions, in the southwest and northeast of Chad, respectively, are similar to, and have the same gold potential as the Birimian greenstone belts of West Africa. Gold exploration permits in both regions held by Afko Korea Co were cancelled as no work had been carried out; three mining lease were granted to another Korean company, Global Resource Inc, on the Gamboke gold prospect, in the southwest region; this company performed some work and was due to produce a feasibility study. A Lebanese company, Société Alliance Libanaise, was granted a diamond exploration permit in the Baibokoum area, south of Chad.

Chad is endowed with petroleum deposits, which are being brought into production following completion of a 1,070 km long pipeline to Kribi, Cameroon. The Doba crude oil project comprises three oilfields, which are reported to contain close to 1,000 Mbbl of oil. In 2003, a total of 115 wells had been drilled in the Doba oilfields and construction of the central facility near Kome was almost finished; oil exports began and full production is expected by mid-2004.