

## — Conference Report —

---

### AFRICAN MINING '95 6-9 JUNE 1995, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

After two successful "African Mining" conferences held in 1987 and 1991 in Harare, Zimbabwe, the British Institution of Mining and Metallurgy decided to organize the third event in Windhoek, Namibia.

Namibia seems to be a popular destination for international conferences — two other international meetings took place concurrently in the newly-built Safari Court Hotel convention centre which was also the venue of African Mining '95. Namibia is one of the more advanced countries on the African continent and offers the right synergy of an exotic venue and modern infrastructure needed to attract an international audience for a major conference.

The conference was preceded and followed by technical visits to several Namibian mines (Otjihase, Navachab, Rossing). The most interesting were tours to the Rosh Pinah and Auchas mines and the Namdeb Diamond Corporation, which included sightseeing of the scenic Fish River Canyon, and to the Tsumeb and Kombat mines, including game viewing in the Etosha National Park.

The conference was attended by more than 200 delegates with a strong participation from African countries. The opening address was delivered by the Hon. Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, the Namibian Minister of Mines and Energy. The keynote lecture by J.M. Otto from the University of Dundee, UK, dealt with the topic of *International competition for mineral investment: implications for Africa*.

The programme included 43 papers addressing policy issues and technical matters, and was divided into sessions on geology (11 papers), mining (10 papers), processing (8 papers), environment (3 papers) and policy and investment (8 papers).

The papers on exploration geology covered both mineral resources in different African countries and specific mineral deposits. Some exploration techniques were also discussed. The mining and processing papers included a number of case studies on current technology. Environmental papers dealt with the problems associated generally with the impact of mining, water management and closure of mines.

Magnetic separation was discussed in a paper by S. Holzhausen and P.C. Engelbrecht (Black Mountain Mineral development Comp., South Africa), entitled *Magnetic separation as a means of increasing the treatment rate of a sulphide flotation plant*, which was one of the best prepared and presented contributions.

The following presentations also attracted considerable attention of the audience: *Creating a conducive investment climate for the mineral sector* by C. Chipato and S.T. Matema (ZMDC, Zimbabwe), *Investment decisions by an African gold miner*

by P.N. Cowley (Cluff Resources, UK), *Mineral potential of Central Africa* by C. Premoli (International Mineral Research, Australia), *Use of a global positioning system for production monitoring and reporting at NAMDEB* by M.J. Brooks (NAMDEB, Namibia), *Some financial aspects of the design of South African gold mines* by V.O. Steed (VS Energy Systems, South Africa) and E.A. Bunt, *NAMDAT – a mineral information system for Namibia* by B.G. Hoal and H. Roesener (Geological Survey, Namibia), and *A productivity accounting information system* by C.L. Workman–Davies (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa).

The overall impression is that the conference was ably organised, with well-prepared presentations using high-quality visuals. Speakers who still underestimate the value of sufficient preparation and good visual presentation, in spite of modern computer technology that makes it all easy, were the exception.

The keynote lecture set the scene for the whole conference by clearly spelling out the leading message: investment is needed in Africa not only to boost mineral production, but also to kick-start the deteriorating economies in many countries. The continent is rich in minerals and has the potential to supply a significant portion of the world's mineral needs, but it does not receive the same levels of investment as other regions. The World Bank estimated that in the early 1990s Africa, excluding South Africa, attracted less than 5% of global mineral exploration and capital investment, but the required investment will only come if the governments adopt pragmatic and competitive fiscal and regulatory policies.

Olga Svoboda  
Mintek, Randburg  
South Africa