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COVID-19 VACCINATION PHASE

WILL THE SLOW VACCINATION CAMPAIGN ISOLATE AFRICA IN THE FUTURE?

Spring is the season of new beginnings and a year since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global economies. There is hope that with the vaccine roll out we will enter the phase of a new normal in 2021.

Challenges remain including the new COVID-19 variants, the efficacy of vaccines against them and the supply and uptake of the vaccines on the African continent. The vaccine rollout is carrying on at a pace in Europe, North America, Asia, and Oceania, but the African continent is lagging behind. At the same time, testing is extremely limited in many African countries, and reports of coronavirus positive cases and deaths are underreported. Does this mean in the future that travel to the African continent will be sanctioned by the other regions with stringent travel rules which could block personnel and the supply chains thereby isolating the continent economically? African governments and their partners, need to think of rapid solutions to these matters to avoid economic problems which could cause local social unrest in the future.



DEATH, DISEASE, DEFIANCE & DEMOCRACY – A TURBULENT START TO 2021

On the positive side, the pandemic has made many mining companies realign their procurement strategies. With traditional supply chains cut off, expat personnel unable to travel and delayed shipments, mining companies were and will be forced to look at local solutions.

In a recent article from the [IGF](#) there is the paradox that mining companies in order to mitigate the risks of mine shutdown, could automate their operations, which would have a significant effect on recruiting locally or developing a local supply chain. The IGF report mentions that there needs to be data concerning what types of goods are being imported and risk being disrupted by future pandemic events and what sophisticated mining jobs are outsourced to expats. Yes, data is important, but I believe the most critical thing to do is for countries to establish an organisation which is overseen by a committee of mining operators and the government, to create a database of approved local suppliers and criteria for companies not on the database to get on it. The data can then be of help to identify where the local supply gap is and therefore this can be easily identified as an opportunity by a local company or entrepreneur.

SPRING A PERIOD OF CHANGE

Not quite an Arab Spring but the last few months has brought significant upheavals on the African continent.

SENEGAL TENSIONS BOIL OVER, THEN ABATE

In Senegal, usually the bastion of calm and democracy riots caused by the trial of the opposition leader Ousmane Sonko paralysed the country for a couple of weeks. The main cause behind this however was the lack of opportunities for the Senegalese youth in terms of employment and the economic frustration caused by curfews to limit the spread of COVID. Local content in Senegal's mining industry will be one of the main themes debated at the forthcoming [SIM Senegal](#) mining conference which will take place in Dakar from 2-4 November 2021.

MOZAMBIQUE LOOKING FOR PEACE

Mozambique has experienced significant problems after a militant attack adjacent to its multibillion-dollar gas projects. The President of the Republic of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi inaugurated on April 21st 2021, [MMEC](#), Mozambique's leading oil, gas, energy and mining conference organised by [AME Trade Ltd](#). In his opening speech he remarked: "We will make all efforts to return peace to our country, in particular in the north, in Cabo Delgado which in recent years has been the target of terrorist attacks". He added the "peace is a fundamental condition for the development of the projects". He called on all stakeholders to overcome this crisis. Mozambique expects more than \$100 billion dollars from gas projects and MMEC's main theme of "Utilizing Natural Resources as the Catalyst for Economic Development and Diversification" focused on the country's sustainable development.



TCHAD PRESIDENT IDRIS DEBY KILLED

The day after winning Tchad's 2021 presidential election, President Idriss Deby was killed whilst visiting troops fighting a rebel insurgency on the Northern front of the country. Deby had ruled Tchad for three decades and was a crucial ally in fighting terrorism in the Sahel region. A military transitional government will be led by the former President's son, Mahamat Deby for the next eighteen months. Time will tell with regards to what this means for security in the region and the democratic, sustainable development of Tchad.

FIRST DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION OF POWER IN NIGER SINCE 1960

The Republic of Niger installed Mohamed Bazoum, the former Interior Minister, as President of the Republic of Niger during the first week of April 2021, after its first democratic transition of power since independence from France in 1960. This however was not fraught with difficulty as an attempted coup three days prior to the inauguration was thwarted. The new government includes the son of former President, Mahamane Sani Mahamadou who was appointed as the Minister of Petroleum, and the first woman Minister of Mines, Ousseini Hadizatou Yacouba. ECOMOF, the ECOWAS Mining and Petroleum Conference and Exhibition will be taking place in Niamey from 14-16 September 2021 and the new government of Niger will be unveiling their new strategies for the development of the country's mining and petroleum sectors.

EBOLA NOW UNDER CONTROL IN GUINEA

In the Republic of Guinea, a mini outbreak of ebola caused concern but it now seems to be under control. 16 cases of Ebola were confirmed, including 5 confirmed deaths and 9 recoveries however 6,505 people have been inoculated.

HIGH-RANKING IVORIAN'S VICTIMS OF COVID-19

Cote d'Ivoire had the misfortune to lose two of its Prime Minister's in a short period of time. Hamed Bakayoko succumbed to COVID-19 in March 2021 and previously Amadou Gon Coulibaly passed away in July 2020. Other high-ranking victims who passed away presumably from COVID 19 include the President of the Republic of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza and President John Magufuli, Tanzania.



MINING UPDATE PER COUNTRY

MALI MINING PERMITS AND ACTIVITIES

B2Gold have applied for a one-year renewal of their Menankoto permit, which forms part of the Anaconda area, adjacent to their Fekola mine. Fekola is expected to produce 530,000-560,000 ounces of gold this year, making up more than 50% of company's annual forecast circa 1 million ounces. The Malian government at the time of writing has not agreed to this renewal, B2Gold are currently in negotiations to overturn this decision.

Firefinch who half a year ago acquired the Morila Gold mine from Barick is now starting its activities to access the Morila Mineral Resource of 2.2 Moz. In order to achieve this, they have started to dewater the Morila superpit. Mining is expected to commence in 2022.

Oklo has announced positive results at their Dandoko Gold project, according to their company announcement "On March 30, 2021, the company delivered a measured, indicated and inferred resource of 11.3 million tonnes at 1.83 g/t gold for 668,500 ounces encompassing the Seko, Koko, Disse and Diabarou deposits at its flagship Dandoko Project".

Robex has announced the acquisition of a new gold permit in Mali. The Gladié exploration permit was previously owned by Goldfields. At their flagship mining project, the Nampala mining, four new pits were dug, allowing the company to expand measured and indicated resources to 663,000 oz. between oxide and transition (vs 598,000 oz. 2020 MRE).

Find out more about the Malian mining industry at [JMP Mali 2021](#) which will take place from 16 – 18 November 2021 in Bamako, Mali.

GUINEA'S BAUXITE EXPORTS TO INCREASE IN 2021 AS MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS KICK OFF

Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG) have shelved their plans to increase their bauxite exports to 18.5 million tonnes in 2021. This was due to the delayed expansion of the Sangaredi mine caused by the COVID pandemic. The expansion is projected to cost more than \$1bn. In 2020, CBG exported 16.6 million tonnes and they are expected to reach their production target of 17.7 million tonnes in 2021.

The Liberian and Guinean governments are in discussion regarding the transporting of Guinean Iron Ore via the port of Buchanan. These talks are key to develop the iron ore and battery minerals located in South Eastern Guinea, because the Buchanan port is located only 300 km away, rather than routing it via Guinea's Atlantic coast, which is 700 km away with no rail connection to the mining sites.

The Winning Consortium has appointed the companies who will be involved in the environmental and social impact study of the Simandou 1 and 2 iron ore deposits development. The aim is to have the studies completed by the end of 2021. The consortium is also planning to build a 700 km railway and an Atlantic coast port to ship the ore. The work on the port, mine and railway will be divided between three different companies.

Société minière de Boké (SMB) have had the feasibility studies for Santou II and Houda approved by the Ministry of Mines and Geology. Therefore, development can start immediately and production starts as quickly as possible. A 135km railway will be needed to link the new mine to the port of Dapilo, this is a major part of the total project cost estimated to be \$3 billion. The Kendia tunnel of the railway line was inaugurated in March 2021.

The Guinean mining industry will be detailed at the [Symposium Mines Guinea](#), from 09 – 11 May 2022 in Conakry, Republic of Guinea.

POSITIVE RESULT OF A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR URANIUM IN NIGER

The Akouta mining company (COMINAK) active since 1978, an Orano subsidiary, will close its mine in the Agadez province. The mine previously produced 75,000 tonnes of uranium up until 2021. However, due to plummeting uranium prices, it was deemed non profitable to continue.

Better news is that Goviex Uranium are moving ahead with their development plans in Niger, recently announcing that “Following the positive results of the updated pre-feasibility study (“Updated PFS”) announced February 18, 2021 and based on our view that the uranium market fundamentals are demonstrating continued improvement, we have decided to move straight on to the completion of the Feasibility Study required to secure project financing. A key benefit from the Updated PFS was the simplification and optimisation of the Project - which has also simplified the scope of the remaining test work expected to be completed in support of a Feasibility Study. As a result, our priorities for the advancement of Madaouela include a drilling program designed to further our understanding of the molybdenum mineralization of the Project and confirmatory metallurgical test work.” ([Uranium stocks](#))

Global Atomic has received a three-year permit extension for their six exploration properties, including Adrar Emoles 3 (AE3), Adrar Emoles 4 (AE4), and Tin Negouran 1, 2, 3, and 4. The most promising of which is the AE3 permit known as the Dassa Deposit. All their permits are located in the Tim Merso Basin which has produced uranium for the last half century.

Learn about the Nigerian and West African mining industry at [ECOMOF, the 3rd ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Conference](#) taking place in Niamey from 14- 16 September 2021.



THE FIRST ISO 14001 CERTIFICATION FOR A SENEGALESE MINE

Grand Cote Operations has received ISO 14001 certification for its mines in Senegal, the first mining company in the country to do so. The company is a subsidiary of the Eramet Group and specialises in the exploitation of the country's mineral sands.

Senegal is currently in the process of securing investment for rail infrastructure to unlock the country's iron ore deposits. The newly created national mining company SOMISEN is currently leading the talks to form a public private partnership. The railway line will extend and repair the rundown railway line to Bamako and connect with Tambacounda in Eastern Senegal.

Join us at the [Senegalese Mining Conference \(SIM Senegal\)](#) focusing on the Senegalese mining industry taking place from 2 – 4 November 2021 in Dakar, Senegal.

ZAMBIA, AN EXCELLENT PERIOD FOR COPPER PRODUCTION

Despite the pandemic, it has been an excellent year for Zambia with regards to copper production. 882,061 tonnes of copper were produced in 2020, up 10.8% from 796,430 tonnes in 2019. The country's goal is to generate more than 900,000 tonnes of copper in 2021, and soon to exceed 1 million tonnes per annum. The outlook for copper demand is optimistic due to the global trend of moving to electric cars and the amount of copper used to manufacture them. Zambia is respectively Africa's 2nd and globally the 7th largest copper producer.

Cobalt production witnessed a decline from 367 tonnes (2019) to 287 tonnes (2020) this was due to operational issues and reduced cobalt mineralisation. Nickel production was a major success growing from 5,712 tonnes in 2020 from 2,500 tonnes in 2019. Manganese production rose from 15,904 tonnes in 2019 to 28,409 tonnes in 2020. Zambia's emerald mine at Lufwanyama, which has been closed for a year due to COVID-19, will resume activities in April 2021.

Zambia has significant solar energy potential, averaging about 2,000-3,000 hours of sunshine per year. There are significant opportunities for providers of solar energy technology to cooperate with the public, private sector, and NGO's. National access to electricity is just 31%, demand for electricity is growing at a rate of 3% per annum. The country has an installed capacity of 2,800 Megawatts (MW), 85% of which is hydro based. New government legislation enacted in 2019, notably the Electricity Act and the Energy Regulation, means there is scope for greater liberalisation of the energy market, facilitating independent power producers (IPPs) to play a more active role in the generation, transmission, and distribution of power in Zambia.

Find more about the Zambia mining industry at [ZIMEC 2021](#), the 10th edition of the [Zambia International Mining and Energy Conference and Exhibition](#) is happening next year and the virtual pre-conference recording from the 26th of May 2021 is accessible online.



THE MOATIZE METALLURGICAL AND THERMAL COAL MINE IN MOZAMBIQUE

Vale will buy Mitsui's stake in the Moatize metallurgical and thermal coal mine and port project in Mozambique. The company will buy the 15% interest in the venture held by Japanese trading company Mitsui for a token fee as well as Mitsui's interests in the Nacala Logistics Corridor (NLC) — the railroad connecting the mine to a nearby port.

Kenmare has seen its revenue fall at its Moma Titanium mine in Mozambique due to decreased production and shipment from its Moma titanium mine. The lower volumes were caused by disruption during the moving of infrastructure and offset by strong prices in 2020.

Find out more about the future of Mozambique's mining industry at [MMEC 2021](#) during the session on Mozambique's mining activities: current and future development plans which included the following speakers: Geert Klok, General Manager, GK Ancuabe Graphite Mine, S.A; Adriano Senvano, Director General, INAMA; Gareth Clifton, Mozambique Manager, Kenmare Resources; Reinaldo Goncalves, Chairman, AGMM; and Gary Roskin, Chief Executive Officer, International Colored Gemstone Association. You can still access [Mozambique Mining & Energy Conference & Expo \(MMEC 2021\)](#) sessions.