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Louis Watum Kabamba: From Engineer to Strategic Steward of the **DRC's Mining Future**

- Story on pg9

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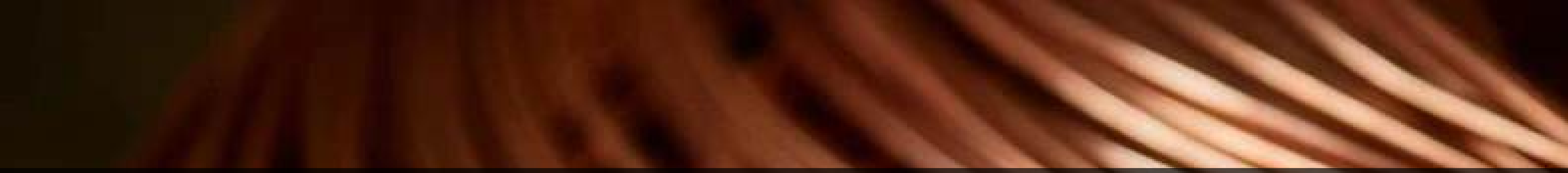

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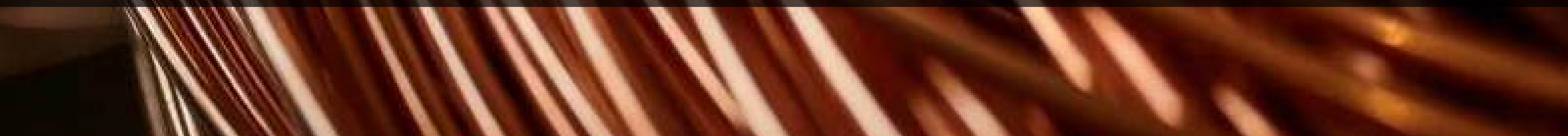

Publisher
Biju Makelele

Editor
Constance M
news@copperbeltkatangamining.com

Associate Editor
Pierre Kadimba

Editorial Contributor(s)
Johansen
Majory

Graphics, Layout and Production
Arnold's Designs
designer@arnolds-designs.com

Advertising
advertising@copperbeltkatangamining.com

Kitwe Office
Near ECL Mall, Freedom Avenue
Kitwe, Zambia

Lubumbashi Office
Quartier Industriel 2,
Lubumbashi,
Democratic Republic of Congo

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Gold Discovery in Mfuwe Prompts Govt to Ensure Structured Mining

Gold Found in Mfuwe, Zambia: Government Pledges Safe and Legal Mining Practices

The Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Chipoka Mulenga, has announced the discovery of gold in Mfuwe constituency, Lavushimanda District, Muchinga Province. The find has already begun attracting people to the area.

Minister Mulenga explained that the New Dawn administration is committed to ensuring that mining activities in Mfuwe are carried out in a structured and inclusive manner.

He emphasized that local communities will directly benefit from the discovery through fair participation, safe working conditions, and access to proper mining equipment.

"They will not be left out of the benefits. We will bring them on board, provide shareholding opportunities, ensure a safe working environment, and support them with equipment," the minister said, citing previous efforts in Kasenseli as an example.

He reiterated the government's commitment to formalising mining operations across the country, stressing that unregulated or illegal mining poses risks to safety, the environment, and long-term economic development.

DRC to Issue First-Ever $1.5 Billion Eurobond to Finance Infrastructure and Boost Connectivity

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will issue its first-ever Eurobond worth $1.5 billion, the Ministry of Finance announced on Friday.

The bond aims to finance priority infrastructure projects and enhance national connectivity in line with the government's 2024–2028 Action Program.

A Eurobond is a debt instrument issued on international financial markets in hard currency—typically U.S. dollars—to attract foreign investors. In exchange, the issuing country commits to repaying the capital, plus interest, over an agreed period.

According to the Finance Ministry, the issuance is supported by favorable economic indicators: inflation contained at 7.8%, a modest 1.1% depreciation of the Congolese franc in the first seven months of 2025, and projected economic growth of 5.3% for the year.

The DRC also holds sovereign credit ratings of B- from Standard & Poor's and B3 from Moody's, both with a stable outlook. While still classified as speculative-grade debt, these ratings provide reassurance for international investors considering exposure to the country.

The government indicated that the bond issuance could be finalized before June 30, 2026. Proceeds will be directed toward accelerating economic reforms, developing nationally significant infrastructure, and fostering what authorities describe as "inclusive, diversified, and sustainable" growth.

Lobito Atlantic Railway Transports 15,000 Tons of Sulphur to DRC

The ANEMON vessel recently docked at the Lobito Mining Terminal (TMPL) carrying 15,000 tonnes of sulphur bound for Kolwezi in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This shipment brings Lobito Atlantic Railway's (LAR) total sulphur transport to over 36,000 tonnes, cementing its reputation as a reliable logistics partner for Africa's mining sector.

After unloading at the port, the cargo was efficiently transported via the Benguela Railway, highlighting the seamless integration between port and rail operations provided by LAR.

The operation, conducted in partnership with TradeVis, underscores LAR's strategic role in linking the Atlantic coast to the Copperbelt, driving regional trade and promoting sustainable economic growth across the region.

DRC's Niobium Exports Record Modest Price Uptick

Niobium concentrate, one of the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) key export products, recorded a slight price increase on international markets during the week of August 25–30, 2025.

The metal is now trading at US$5,633.04 per ton, up from US$5,629.12 the previous week, marking a modest 0.07% rise, according to price data released by the Ministry of Foreign Trade on August 26.

Industry experts note that while the increase is marginal, it underscores the relative stability of global demand for niobium, a strategic metal widely used in steelmaking and superalloy production.

Analysts suggest the trend could encourage Congolese producers to optimize export logistics and remain vigilant amid ongoing uncertainties in global commodity markets.

News Brief

Kizito Pakabomba Bids Farewell as DRC Minister of Mines

Former DRC Minister of Mines, Kizito Pakabomba, thanks President Félix Tshisekedi and PM Judith Suminwa as he hands over to Louis Watum, who will lead the strategic mining sector.

Following the announcement of the Suminwa II government on Thursday, August 7, 2025, Kizito Pakabomba officially stepped down from his role as Minister of Mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In a message posted on his X account (formerly Twitter) this Friday, August 8, 2025, the outgoing minister expressed his "deep gratitude" to President Félix Tshisekedi and Prime Minister Judith Suminwa for the trust and "constant support" they provided throughout his tenure.

Describing his service at the Ministry of Mines as "an honor and a privilege," Pakabomba said he was leaving "with a sense of duty accomplished."

Kizito Pakabomba congratulated his successor, Louis Kabamba Watum, who now heads the ministry under the new government. He wished him success and expressed confidence in the continuation of initiatives aimed at strengthening the mining sector—one of the most strategic pillars of the Congolese economy.

Louis Watum inherits a portfolio of critical importance, at the heart of both economic growth and geopolitical positioning for the DRC, the world's top cobalt producer and a major player in the global copper market.

Munali Nickel Mine Halts Operations Amid Funding Crisis and Mounting Debt

Zambia's Munali Nickel Mine Faces Shutdown as Funding Delays Leave 900 Workers Unpaid and Contractors Withdraw

Munali Nickel Mine, operated by Mabiza Resources Limited, has announced severe operational challenges that have forced the suspension of several mining activities, leaving the future of the mine in uncertainty.

Nearly 900 employees have gone more than two months without salaries, after shareholders CE Mining (UK) and CTG Jintong (China) failed to provide the promised funding by the July 31, 2025 deadline, mine officials confirmed.

The situation worsened when key contractor Epiroc withdrew its equipment over unpaid debts, effectively crippling underground production and sharply reducing operational flexibility.

The mine has since requested emergency funding, but major contractors—including ZESCO and other suppliers—have already been affected, forcing the processing plant to shut down twice.

Southern Province Minister Credo Nanjuwa expressed concern over the mine's financial instability, questioning why a newer nickel operation in North-Western Province is thriving under similar market conditions, while Mabiza Resources struggles under a $7 million debt burden.

The crisis has raised fears of further job losses, supply chain disruptions, and lost revenue in Zambia's mining sector unless urgent financial intervention is secured.

Zambia's Copper Output Slips in Q2 on Operational Challenges at Key Mines

Zambia's copper production dipped slightly in the second quarter of the year as operational issues at four major mines weighed on output, Mines Minister Paul Kabuswe announced.

Kabuswe pointed to the closure of Sino Metals following an acid spill and reduced ore grades at First Quantum Minerals' Trident mine as key factors behind the decline.

According to the minister, first-half production totaled about 439,644 metric tons. With first-quarter output reported at roughly 224,000 tons, second-quarter production is estimated at 215,644 tons.

Zambia, the world's eighth-largest copper producer and Africa's second-largest after the Democratic Republic of Congo, is closely monitoring the situation as copper remains a critical export and driver of its economy.

Rail Link Between **Kinshasa** and **Kongo-Central** Nears Resumption After Successful Inspection

The long-awaited resumption of rail traffic between Kinshasa and Kongo-Central is drawing closer after a successful inspection of the railway line on Wednesday evening.

The line runs from Kinshasa's central station to Kasangulu.

According to Eddy Eyoko, secretary of the Kasangulu territory, a locomotive pulling three luxury coaches made the journey to assess the condition of the track.

"This field trip is part of preparations for the upcoming resumption of urban rail traffic. The objective was to check the practicability of the track to ensure safety and the smooth flow of the journey," Eyoko explained.

The technical teams evaluated the state of the railway infrastructure and identified adjustments needed before the official relaunch of the service.

The reopening of this rail link, which connects the capital with Kongo-Central province, is eagerly awaited by commuters and travelers who rely on this important transport corridor.

Zambia Launches **100 MW Solar Plant** to Cut Imports and **Power Mining Sector**

Zambia's President Hakainde Hichilema on Monday inaugurated the country's largest grid-connected solar power plant, the 100-megawatt Chisamba project, developed by PowerChina.

The facility will supply electricity directly to First Quantum Minerals, one of Zambia's largest copper producers.

The project is expected to significantly reduce Zambia's reliance on electricity imports from neighboring South Africa and Mozambique.

By supplying power to the mining giant, the solar plant will also free up additional electricity capacity for local consumers.

Zambia currently depends heavily on hydropower for its electricity needs. However, a prolonged drought has caused water levels at key reservoirs to drop, forcing the state-owned utility, Zesco, to implement electricity rationing.

Speaking at the launch event, President Hichilema emphasized that the drought has underscored the urgent need to diversify Zambia's energy mix and reduce overdependence on hydroelectric power.

There are plans to expand the Chisamba facility with an additional 100 megawatts of capacity, although a timeline for this second phase has yet to be announced.

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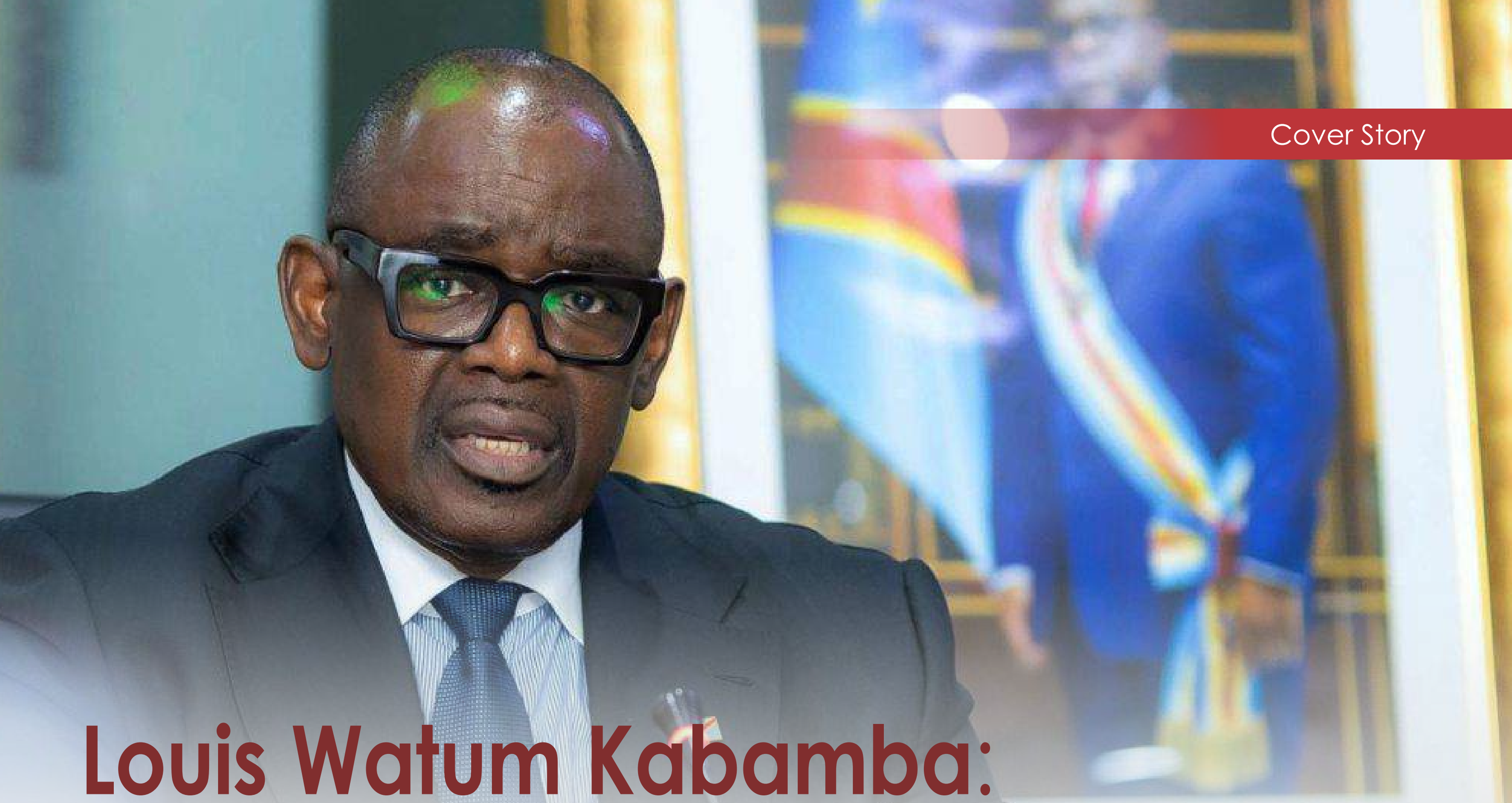


Louis Watum Kabamba: From Engineer to Strategic Steward of the **DRC's Mining Future**

When Honorable Eng. Louis Watum Kabamba was sworn in as the new Minister of Mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), observers across Africa's mining and political circles paid close attention. His appointment, part of the Suminwa II government's cabinet reshuffle, signals a deliberate attempt to bring technocratic expertise into one of the country's most strategic portfolios.

For the DRC, the stakes could not be higher. The nation sits atop an estimated $24 trillion in untapped mineral wealth, including cobalt, copper, gold, lithium, and other critical minerals essential to the global energy transition. Yet paradoxically, this abundance has not translated into broad-based prosperity. Instead, it has fueled governance challenges, illicit trade, and uneven development.

A Technocrat at the Helm

Hon. Watum's trajectory uniquely positions him for the task ahead. Born in Kinshasa on March 22, 1962, and trained in industrial chemistry at the University of Lubumbashi, he went on to become one of Africa's most respected mining executives. His career includes senior leadership roles with Ivanhoe Mines, Kamoa Copper SA, Randgold's Kibali project, Moto Gold Mines, and Mali's Yatela Gold Mine. He also served as Chairman and CEO of these companies in several capacities, strengthening his expertise in both operational and strategic dimensions of mining.

Hon. Watum's influence extended to the private sector: he was elected President of the Chamber of Mines within the Federation of Congolese Enterprises (FEC), in February 2020. This position allowed him to serve as a critical bridge between policymakers and private-sector stakeholders, underscoring his ability to navigate complex governance and industry landscapes.

Political Career and Ministerial Roles

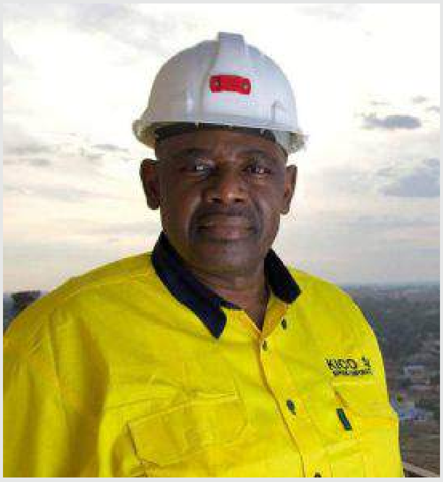
In May 2024, Hon. Watum was appointed Minister of Industry and Small and Medium Enterprises, where he focused on promoting local transformation of raw materials and supporting the development of SMEs. In August 2025, he transitioned to become Minister of Mines, succeeding Kizito Pakabomba. This appointment coincided with strategic discussions on foreign investment and cobalt exports, placing him at the center of both national policy and global mineral markets.

The Weight of Expectations

Hon. Watum takes charge of this office at a moment of global urgency. The DRC produces roughly 70% of the world's cobalt and is on track to supply nearly 15% of global copper output by 2030, making it indispensable to electric vehicle and renewable energy supply chains.

But his to-do list is formidable:

- Illicit trade and smuggling siphon off an estimated $1–2 billion annually in lost state revenues.
- Revenue-sharing disputes persist, despite laws requiring 40% of mining royalties to be returned to producing provinces—funds that are often delayed or diverted.
- Social and environmental concerns are widespread: UNICEF estimates that over 40,000 children work in artisanal cobalt mines.
- Value-addition bottlenecks mean that more than 95% of DRC's cobalt and copper is exported in raw or semi-processed form, with little local refining.



Lessons from the Region

The DRC's challenges are not unique, but its scale sets it apart. Looking at its neighbors highlights alternative governance paths:

Mining in Perspective: DRC vs Regional Peers

Country	Key Minerals	2023 Production	2024 Production	Mining Share of GDP	Revenue/Governance Model
DRC	Cobalt, Copper	~2.84M tonnes copper	~3.3M tonnes copper	~20% of GDP	High production, weak governance; 95% exports raw
Zambia	Copper	~698,000 tonnes	~820,670 tonnes	~12% of GDP; ~30% govt revenue	Stabilized tax regime; investor-friendly reforms
Botswana	Diamonds	~24.6M carats	17.93M carats	~30% of GDP; 80% export earnings	50-50 Debswana JV; strong reinvestment in public goods
Namibia	Uranium, Diamonds	~5% global uranium	(2023 baseline)	~12% of GDP	State stakes + value-addition (cutting/polishing)

These comparisons highlight the gap between the DRC's mineral dominance and its limited development outcomes. Unlike Botswana, Congo struggles with reinvestment discipline. Unlike Zambia, it lacks policy stability, though Zambia's recent rebound from 698,000 tonnes in 2023 to 820,670 tonnes in 2024 shows the benefits of investor-friendly reforms. And unlike Namibia, it has yet to build industries beyond extraction.

Reformist Agenda or Political Test?

Colleagues describe Watum as methodical and media-shy, preferring clear objectives to political theatrics. His reported priorities include strengthening mining administration, building traceability systems to curb smuggling, and promoting domestic processing.

In a recent speech in Lubumbashi, he declared: “The Congolese subsoil must no longer only enrich export statistics.”

Still, reform efforts in the DRC often collide with entrenched political and economic interests. Even the most competent technocrats risk being constrained by networks that profit from the status quo.

Global Implications

The success or failure of Watum's tenure will resonate far beyond the Congo. With China controlling an estimated 70% of global cobalt refining capacity, and Western governments scrambling to diversify supply chains, Congo's governance decisions will directly affect the pace and equity of the green transition.

If the DRC can emulate Botswana's transparent revenue management, Zambia's investor stability, and Namibia's value-addition strategies, it could transform from a cautionary tale into a model for resource-led development. If not, the risk is that its vast wealth will continue enriching foreign markets and domestic elites while leaving ordinary Congolese behind.

The Road Ahead

Louis Watum Kabamba enters office with both a rare pedigree and daunting expectations. His background as an engineer and industry insider gives him tools to push for reform. But his ability to translate expertise into systemic change will depend on political will, institutional capacity, and his ability to balance global demand with local development needs.

For Congo, this appointment is not just about a new minister—it is about whether the country can finally chart a path from mineral abundance to sustainable prosperity, learning from its neighbors while forging a model uniquely its own.

Kibali Gold Mine Set for Long-Term Expansion as **Barrick** Confirms **Major New Orebodies**

Barrick Gold (NYSE: GOLD) announced that recent drilling along the ARK-KCD corridor at its flagship Kibali mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has revealed significant new orebodies.

These discoveries could extend the life of the Tier 1 asset well beyond its current 10-year production plan.

Since commencing production in 2013, Kibali has successfully replaced every ounce of gold it has mined. Barrick noted that its total in-country investment has now exceeded $6.3 billion.

Speaking to reporters, CEO Mark Bristow highlighted that a newly installed 16-megawatt solar-plus-battery plant has increased the site's renewable energy share to 85%.

This upgrade enables Kibali to operate entirely on green power for approximately half the year.

Underground productivity improvements are also expected to boost gold output starting in the third quarter of this year, Bristow added.

Following the announcement, Barrick's stock rose 0.49% to close at $21.33 on Wednesday in New York. The company currently holds a market capitalization of $36.7 billion.

In a recent research note, RBC Capital Markets reiterated its "outperform" rating on Barrick and raised its price target to $26.00, suggesting a potential 22% upside.

Kibali remains a cornerstone of economic development in northeastern DRC. Over the past decade, the mine has helped build a robust regional economy, supported by extensive partnerships with local communities and businesses.

Barrick reported it has invested nearly $3 billion through agreements with local contractors and suppliers.

The Kibali mine is jointly owned by Barrick (45%), AngloGold Ashanti (45%), and Société Minière de Kilo-Moto (SOKIMO), which holds a 10% stake.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Vision AI for Asset Reliability: Converting Untapped Visual Data into Uptime, Safety, and Measurable ROI

Across sub-Saharan Africa, mines and minerals processors are under pressure to improve plan-to-actual adherence, reduce unplanned downtime, and lift safety performance, often with ageing assets, skills shortages, and uneven connectivity. DGC Africa's Vision AI for Asset Reliability transforms existing optical and thermal camera networks into a 24/7 intelligent monitoring layer that detects anomalies earlier, prioritises interventions, and, where authorised, automates protective actions. Documented results across comparable industrial deployments include 3–5% yield improvement, ~10% downtime reduction, ~3% energy savings, 95%+ detection precision, 10× more relevant anomalies surfaced, and 1:5+ first-year ROI.

The reliability gap: thousands of cameras, almost no analysis

Industrial sites often operate hundreds of cameras, yet less than 1% of captured video is ever analysed. Human observation is limited by shift length and attention; point sensors provide depth but lack visual context. The consequence is predictable: late detection, reactive maintenance, and avoidable safety exposure.

Vision AI closes the gap by continuously analysing streams from optical and thermal cameras, learning normal operating patterns, and elevating only material deviations—complete with video evidence, location, severity, and trend context.

What Vision AI for Asset Reliability is — and how it works

DGC Africa's solution combines computer vision, thermal analytics, and edge processing with open integration to plant systems.

Core capabilities

- Continuous visual analytics (24/7) across hot, dusty, vibration-prone zones where human rounds are risky or infrequent
- Model-based pattern recognition that distinguishes normal process cycles from true anomalies
- Risk-prioritised alerting via control room HMI, email, SMS, or WhatsApp to eliminate noise and accelerate decisions
- Optional machine integration to slow/stop conveyors, interlock feeders, or trigger safety actions when thresholds are crossed
- Edge + cloud architecture for low-latency detection even on limited-connectivity sites, with secure dashboards for trend review
- Open protocols (e.g., OPC-UA) for interoperability with SCADA/PLC/DCS without costly rip-and-replace

High-impact use cases in mining and minerals processing

Equipment monitoring: towards zero unplanned downtime

- Conveyor health: progressive crack/tear tracking from first abrasion; severity escalation tied to load and duty cycle
- Thermal integrity: kiln and furnace shell profiling, refractory hot-spot detection, switchyard thermal exceptions
- Rotating equipment oversight: visual cues of misalignment, abnormal vibration proxies, lube leaks, seal failures

Material monitoring: quality, throughput, and Net Zero alignment

- Granulometry: continuous particle size distribution for ore, sinter, coke, and coal to stabilise downstream circuits
- Moisture and contamination: IR-assisted moisture estimation; foreign object detection to protect crushers and mills
- On-belt quality control: fines/undersize rates, oversize excursions, and blending adherence in real time

Process and safety monitoring: zero-incident ambition

- Big-rock detection pre-crusher with interlock options to prevent jams
- Restricted-zone intrusion and PPE: automated compliance oversight in high-risk areas
- Casting/ladle monitoring: flow anomalies, slag carryover indicators, and bay-level safety envelopes

Quantified business outcomes

- Throughput and yield: 3–5% improvement via tighter process control informed by real-time visual data
- Asset availability: ~10% reduction in downtime through early detection and planned interventions
- Energy intensity: ~3% reduction through thermal optimisation of kilns, furnaces, and auxiliary systems
- Operational focus: 95%+ precision in anomaly detection and 10× more relevant issues surfaced than manual inspection—without alert fatigue
- Financial return: portfolios report 1:5 or better ROI in year one, compounding as models learn and scope scales

Field vignette: conveyor failure prevented by progressive monitoring

A large open-pit operation faced recurring belt rips. Vision AI flagged faint abrasion lines on Day 1, escalated severity as growth accelerated by Day 4, and issued a high-severity alert on Day 7 with precise belt coordinates and progression graphs. Maintenance executed a controlled splice during planned downtime. The site avoided a catastrophic rip, multi-shift production loss, and emergency repair premiums—paying for the pilot within weeks.

Why DGC Africa: implementation that works in African conditions

- 115+ years of industrial execution in smelting, minerals processing, cement, and power—translating analytics into timely, competent action
- Pan-African delivery across South Africa, Zambia, DRC, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar for rapid mobilisation and local compliance
- Integrated asset-integrity ecosystem—condition monitoring, oil analysis, mechanical services, industrial linings, shutdowns—so insights flow into work orders and get closed out
- Brownfield-ready architecture with rugged hardware, edge analytics, and staged integrations suited to dust, heat, and patchy networks
- Change enablement through operator training, supervisor playbooks, and KPI governance so the system is used—and trusted—on the floor

Governance and KPIs: making value visible and auditable

- Leading indicators: detection-to-intervention time, hot-spot dwell time, crack-growth rate, big-rock near-misses avoided
- Reliability metrics: MTBF/MTTR improvements, planned vs. unplanned work mix, maintenance schedule adherence
- Production and energy: yield variance, specific energy consumption, rework and scrap rates
- Financials: avoided downtime hours, avoided damage events, payback and ROI tracked by use case

Implementation with minimal disruption

Phase 1 — Assess and prioritise: site survey of camera coverage and connectivity, value mapping to pinpoint the highest-impact lines, kilns, bays, or switchyards; business case and roadmap agreed

Phase 2 — Deploy and integrate: plug-and-play rollout for the first use cases in under a week; secure dashboards live; optional SCADA/PLC/DCS hooks; operator and supervisor training

Phase 3 — Optimise and scale: model tuning, alarm rationalisation, and expansion to adjacent processes; quarterly value reviews

Vision AI has moved beyond promising pilots to become a practical reliability lever for African heavy industry. By converting under-analysed visual data into precise, context-rich signals, DGC Africa enables earlier interventions, safer operations, and steadier throughput, without demanding rip-and-replace investment or perfect connectivity. The combination of 24/7 coverage, plant-specific learning, and integration with proven asset-integrity services is what changes outcomes: fewer surprises, lower total cost of reliability, and a sturdier path to plan adherence in some of the world's most demanding operating environments.

About the Dickinson Group

Founded in 1910, the Dickinson Group of Companies stands as a fifth-generation, privately-owned enterprise specialising in Asset Integrity Management, Industrial Solutions, and Human Capital Development. With operations spanning sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, the Group combines deep industrial expertise with innovative approaches to complex operational challenges.

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President Hichilema Inaugurates The $1.25 Billion Kansanshi S3 Expansion

President Hakainde Hichilema officially commissioned the $1.25 billion Kansanshi S3 Expansion by First Quantum Minerals (FQM), a landmark investment set to transform Zambia's mining sector, extend the life of Africa's largest copper mine, and power economic growth for decades to come this week.

The S3 Expansion will prolong the operation of Kansanshi Mine into the 2040s while significantly boosting copper output.

The project features the opening of a new mining pit known as the South East Dome, the construction of a state-of-the-art processing plant, and a $115 million upgrade to the Kansanshi smelter, reinforcing Zambia's ability to process minerals locally and capture greater value from its resources.

Once fully operational, Kansanshi's ore processing capacity will almost double—from 28 million tonnes annually to around 53 million tonnes.

This expansion will offset declining ore grades and sustain Zambia's copper production for the next 20 years.

The project created 1,800 jobs during construction and will generate an estimated 800 permanent positions.

Beyond direct employment, the development engaged more than 430 Zambian-owned companies, highlighting its far-reaching impact on local businesses and supply chains.

At the commissioning ceremony, President Hichilema described the investment as a powerful vote of confidence in Zambia's economic stability and potential:

"Nobody invests $1.25 billion in a country where there is no trust or confidence," he said, reaffirming his government's commitment to a stable, investor-friendly environment.

The President also stressed that the project aligns with Zambia's national growth agenda and its ambitious target to triple annual copper production to 3 million tonnes, positioning the nation as a top global copper supplier.

FQM CEO Tristan Pascal underscored the company's long-standing partnership with Zambia, calling the expansion a reflection of its belief in the country's future:

"This project reflects our confidence in Zambia's leadership, policies, and, most importantly, the talent of its people."

With the S3 Expansion, FQM expects copper production from its Zambian operations to rise to between 450,000 and 500,000 tonnes annually.

The new processing plant, designed to handle 25 million tonnes of ore per year, incorporates cutting-edge technology and sustainability features.

Beyond production, Pascal highlighted FQM's dedication to skills development, education, and community support.

At the peak of construction, more than 2,500 Zambians gained valuable training, equipping them with expertise that extends far beyond mining.

And mines and Minerals Development Minister Paul Kabuswe hailed the S3 Expansion as a cornerstone of Zambia's economic revitalization.

He credited government policy reforms with unlocking stalled investments and contrasted today's projected 6% economic growth in 2025 with the negative growth rates recorded in 2021.

"This project is not just about copper—it symbolizes Zambia's economic turnaround," Kabuswe said.

KoBold Metals Expands Lithium Exploration in DRC with Seven New Permits

KoBold Metals Secures Seven Lithium and Critical Mineral Permits in DRC Amid U.S. Investment Push

KoBold Metals, the mineral exploration company backed by U.S. billionaires Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates, has secured seven new permits to explore lithium and other critical minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The licenses were awarded weeks after the Berkeley, California-based company signed an exploration agreement with the Congolese government, part of a broader strategy to attract American investment into the country's mining sector.

The DRC is the world's largest producer of cobalt, the second-largest source of copper, and holds significant reserves of lithium and tantalum, making it a key focus for global mineral supply chains.

The new permits are located in southeastern Congo near the Manono lithium project, which KoBold aims to develop into a major mining operation.

The rights allow the company to prospect for lithium, manganese, tin, and tantalum in the region.

KoBold has informed Congolese authorities that it must first resolve a dispute with Australia's AVZ Minerals Ltd., which is challenging the government's termination of its Manono rights. AVZ has initiated arbitration proceedings, seeking either a settlement or buyout.

KoBold's shareholders include BHP Group, Andreessen Horowitz, and Equinor ASA. The company plans to deploy its AI-driven exploration technology in Manono, funding digital geological mapping, hiring local staff, and supporting infrastructure improvements in host communities.

The move aligns with U.S. efforts to reduce dependence on China for critical minerals used in clean energy and electric vehicles, highlighting KoBold's role in securing strategic resources for global supply chains.

Barrick's $2B Lumwana Expansion to Double Copper Output and Drive Sustainable Growth in Zambia

Barrick's $2 Billion Lumwana Mine Expansion Set to Double Copper Output and Boost Zambia's Economy

Construction of the $2-billion expansion at Barrick Gold Corporation's Lumwana copper mine in Zambia is well underway, marking a pivotal step in its transformation into a world-class Tier 1 copper operation.

The project is being spearheaded by the NYSE- and TSX-listed mining giant and is set to significantly increase output and economic impact.

During a recent visit to Lusaka, Barrick president and CEO Mark Bristow highlighted how the expansion builds on a remarkable turnaround that has repositioned Lumwana as a cornerstone of both Barrick's global copper portfolio and Zambia's national development strategy.

"When we assessed Lumwana in 2019, it was a high-cost, underperforming operation. Today, it is rapidly evolving into a major force in African copper production.

With this expansion progressing swiftly, Lumwana is on track to become one of the world's most strategically significant copper mines and a powerful engine of growth for both Zambia and Barrick," Bristow stated.

The expansion project will double the mine's annual copper output to 240,000 tonnes, supported by a new 50-million-tonne-per-year processing plant.

Construction activities are in full swing, major equipment orders have been placed, and critical infrastructure upgrades—such as a new power transmission system developed in collaboration with the state-owned Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation—are advancing steadily to support the mine and the surrounding region.

Since 2019, Lumwana has injected over $4 billion into the Zambian economy through taxes, royalties, wages, and procurement.

Impressively, $3.4 billion—or 79% of the mine's total procurement—has been spent with local Zambian suppliers.

In Q1 2025 alone, $177 million (81%) of procurement contracts were awarded to local contractors. The mine also boasts a 98% Zambian workforce, with nearly half of its employees drawn from nearby communities.

As part of an integrated development plan aligned with Zambia's Mining and Minerals Policy 2031, the Lumwana expansion is also driving broader regional development.

This includes the construction of the Manyama township and an industrial supplier park, which aim to stimulate local industry and job creation.

Additionally, a new regional airstrip is slated for completion by the end of 2025, and a training centre accredited by Zambia's Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) will be launched to strengthen the country's mining skills base.

On the environmental front, Lumwana is pushing forward with an ambitious carbon and sustainability agenda. In collaboration with local chiefdoms and the Forestry Department, the mine is developing a REDD+ forest conservation program covering up to 300,000 hectares.

This initiative is designed to generate future carbon credits while promoting biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods, and land stewardship.

"Lumwana is becoming a model for sustainable copper mining," Bristow said. "It exemplifies how a top-tier mining operation can support economic development, environmental responsibility, and industrial growth all at once."

Operationally, the mine is performing in line with its 2025 production targets. The first quarter saw strong results, driven by increased plant throughput and ongoing efficiency gains in open-pit mining.

Lumwana has maintained its ISO 14001 and 45001 certifications and has reported no Class 1 or Class 2 environmental incidents year-to-date.

"This is more than just a mine expansion—we're building a long-term partnership with Zambia," Bristow added. "We're actively exploring additional growth opportunities throughout the Zambian Copperbelt, supported by our recent memorandum of understanding with the government.

Together, we're laying the groundwork for sustainable economic and social progress that will endure far beyond the life of the mine."

Sponsored Content

Gear up for upcoming mining expos in **Zambia**

Zambia is blessed with a wealth of mineral resources, although the shining star of its mineral portfolio is – and has been for many decades – copper. With copper being the country's biggest export, and its increase in processing positively impacting the country's economy, these informative and innovative exhibitions will take place in Kalumbila, Solwezi and Kitwe respectively.

MTE chooses the location for its expo tours carefully, with Zambia being a major mining economy in SADC – so there is a target market interested in new solutions and innovation, especially where the drive for in-country beneficiation is so pronounced at the moment. MTE's Zambian tour traditionally includes three stops in the thriving copper belt, in the north-western provinces. The travelling exhibition company will host three consecutive shows within a week this month. MTE's yellow and orange trademark tents will make their customary mark when the company hits Kalumbila on 15 September, Solwezi on 17 September and finally Kitwe on 19 September this year!

Kalumbila

MTE's first stop in Zambia will be in Kalumbila, at the grounds near Choppies on 15 September 2025. The expo will start at 12:00 and conclude at 17:00, with a fully booked supplier line-up. Significant operations in the area include the open-pit Kalumbila copper mine, also known as the Sentinel Mine – where the Enterprise project is currently in process – as well as Lumwana Mine, consisting of two open pits: Malundwe and Chimiwungo.

Solwezi

MTE then moves on to Solwezi, where the next expo of the trilogy will be held at Trident College on 17 September 2025. The Solwezi expo opens at 13:00 and concludes at 17:30, with the expo being fully booked with suppliers. Solwezi is a fast-growing town due to the booming mining industry – which has made it an international attraction for investments. The Kansanshi copper-gold mine, 10km north of Solwezi, is the largest copper producer in Africa. Annually, the mine is capable of producing 340 000t of copper and over 120 000oz of gold.

Kitwe

The final stop on MTE's calendar in Zambia is Kitwe, where the expo will take place on 19 September 2025, at Nkana Cricket Club. The Kitwe expo starts at 12:00 and ends at 17:00. 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 country – alongside Ndola and Lusaka. It has a complex of mines on its northwestern and western edges.

Some products and services you can expect to see at the expos

- Laboratory instruments
- Industrial heat-transfer products
- Pumps, machining workshop, pipe work, motors and machining works
- Mining, smelter and mineral processing contractors, furnace and industrial services
- Electrical substation, electrical switchboards, drives, motors and plant automation
- Automatic fire suppression systems for all engine compartments
- Non-destructive testing (NDT) equipment, accessories and consumables
- Industrial and LED lighting
- Electrical cables and wires
- Bulk and water treatment chemicals
- Abrasives
- Heavy-duty pump solutions
- Ground engaging tools, undercarriage and service parts
- Fire suppression, down-hole geophysics and fiberglass
- Handheld elemental analysis instrumentation
- Crushing and screening, load and haul, and plant hire
- Fleet management systems, mining software and mining systems

Visitor information

For visitors of the Kalumbila, Solwezi and Kitwe MTE exhibitions, entrance is completely free. The expos in the Zambia trilogy will showcase the latest mining technology and provide key mining professionals the opportunity to meet suppliers and manufacturers directly. MTE calls on all employees of gold, copper or cobalt operations – be it underground mining, surface mining, or the power industry – these are the expos for you!

View expertise to be showcased here:

https://mteexpos.co.za/event/mte-kitwe-2025-zambia/

https://mteexpos.co.za/event/mte-kalumbila-2025-zambia/

https://mteexpos.co.za/event/mte-solwezi-2025-zambia/

Visit African Mining Incorporating Mining Mirror on:

https://joom.ag/EYMd/p28 for an "interview with Andrew Macnamara, operations director at MTE, a standout industrial expo organiser where he talks reliability and ROI for exhibitors and visitors.

Contact andrew@interactmedia.co.za to book a stand or to visit the show.

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Kansanshi's Golden Thread: How **Zambia**'s Largest **Copper Mine** Became a Pillar of **National Gold Reserves**

In the heart of Zambia's North-Western Province, Kansanshi Mine towers as a copper giant — but it is gold that increasingly shines in the national conversation.

For nearly two decades, Kansanshi Mine has produced gold as a copper by-product, pouring it into bars that have become a cornerstone of Zambia's national reserves through the Bank of Zambia (BOZ).

While Kansanshi's processing plants are optimized for copper output, the gold extracted now stands at the center of national economic strategy, contributing to Zambia's reserves, bolstering the kwacha, and attracting high-value global investment.

This strategic role in Zambia's economy was underscored again on 7 August 2025, when Kansanshi Mining Plc renewed its agreement with the BOZ to continue supplying gold doré for the next three years.

The deal builds on a relationship dating back to 2021 and reflects a growing recognition — both at home and abroad — that Kansanshi's gold has a role to play far beyond the mine's fence.

From Copper Giant to Gold Producer

Kansanshi's gold journey began long before First Quantum invested in the mine. Artisanal miners had been recovering small quantities of the precious metal from the region's deposits since the early 1990s.

In 2005, when First Quantum commissioned full-scale operations at Kansanshi, gold recovery was integrated into the copper processing circuit, transforming it into a modern, large-scale by-product commodity.

Today, Kansanshi produces gold doré bars — semi-refined gold containing between 94% and 97% purity. Under the contract, the Bank of Zambia takes possession of the gold while on Kansanshi's premises.

These bars are later refined to 99.995% purity and exported under strict government oversight, in compliance with Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development (MMMD) regulations, Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) requirements, and customs laws.

Gold at Kansanshi moves under a security and compliance framework that could rival a central bank vault.

The process involves five government agencies: ZRA, MMMD, the Office of the President – Special Division (OP-SD), the Zambia Air Force (ZAF), and the Zambia Police.

The protocol is precise:

Day before shipment:

- Agencies witness product inspection.
- They verify the weight of each doré bar.

Day of shipment:

- Agencies oversee final packaging and sealing.
- They supervise loading at the Kansanshi Gold Plant.
- The shipment is escorted all the way to its point of dispatch.

This multi-agency presence ensures transparency, prevents illegal exports, and reinforces Zambia's control over one of its most valuable resources.

Gold for National Reserves

In 2021, Kansanshi's gold became central to a national strategy when FIRST QUANTUM signed its first agreement with the BOZ. The aim: to purchase locally produced gold for Zambia's reserves and enhance macroeconomic resilience.

Since the start of that agreement, BOZ has purchased 92,100 ounces of refined gold from Kansanshi — the equivalent of 2.8 metric tonnes — representing 61% of the mine's total doré output over the period.

The price is set according to the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) rate, with payment made in kwacha at the BOZ mid-rate.

This structure not only secures fair market value for FIRST QUANTUM but also keeps foreign exchange inside Zambia's borders.

The economic benefits are multifaceted:

- Reduces dependence on foreign currency reserves.
- Supports the kwacha and investor confidence.
- Provides a hedge against inflation.
- Strengthens Zambia's global financial reputation.
- Ensures a portion of Zambia's gold remains within the country.

When the original three-year contract expired in December 2024, BOZ initiated a competitive tender FIRST QUANTUM's Kansanshi Mining Plc secured the renewal, signing a new three-year agreement to continue the gold supply.

Sponsored

Kansanshi's Golden Thread, continued...

BOZ Governor Dr. Denny H. Kalyalya praised this ongoing partnership:

"We look forward to buying more gold from your esteemed firm. We have so far purchased about 2.8 metric tonnes of refined gold, and we aim for even greater reserves."

Under the renewed agreement, the amount of gold sold will be agreed quarterly, based on Kansanshi's anticipated production and kwacha requirements. FIRST QUANTUM expects to produce 100,000–110,000 ounces of gold at Kansanshi this year, ensuring a steady supply.

Royal Gold Streaming Agreement

A few days before the renewal of the gold supply agreement with BOZ, FIRST QUANTUM unveiled another major development — a $1 billion streaming agreement with Royal Gold Inc., a US-based precious metals investment company. The deal is one of the largest of its kind globally in the past decade and further cements Zambia's position as an attractive mining investment jurisdiction.

Key terms of the Royal Gold agreement include:

- A $1 billion upfront payment to FIRST QUANTUM in exchange for gold credits tied to Kansanshi's copper production.
- No physical gold from Kansanshi will be delivered to Royal Gold until a later stage; all physical production remains under FIRST QUANTUM's control.
- Zambia's taxes, royalties, and other revenues remain unaffected.
- The agreement spans the life of the mine, ensuring long-term financial stability.
- Royal Gold will contribute $4.5 million to social and community projects over the mine's operational life.

FIRST QUANTUM Country Manager, Dr. Godwin Beene, addressed concerns about meeting both commitments:

"Kansanshi has enough gold doré; we will meet the requirements of both entities as the commissioning of the S3 Expansion guarantees a steady input of gold-bearing ore into the concentrator. As far as production is concerned, there's no cause for worry."

Dr. Beene further emphasized the national benefit of Kansanshi's gold output:

"The benefit of this arrangement is that a good percentage of the gold stays in the country. It will support Zambia's treasury and benefit the nation at large — not just our immediate communities."

Meanwhile, FIRST QUANTUM Country Director Anthony Mukutuma highlighted the deal with Royal Gold Inc. as a statement of confidence:

"This is the largest indirect investment of its kind globally in the last decade and a strong endorsement for continued investment in Zambia."

The streaming arrangement allows FIRST QUANTUM to maintain full exposure to about 84% of its gold production in 2026 and 2027, while retaining all rights to newly identified near-surface gold zones at Kansanshi.

Two Deals, One Strategy

The BOZ renewal and the Royal Gold streaming agreement may seem like parallel tracks, but together they represent a dual strategy: secure national reserves while attracting long-term foreign investment.

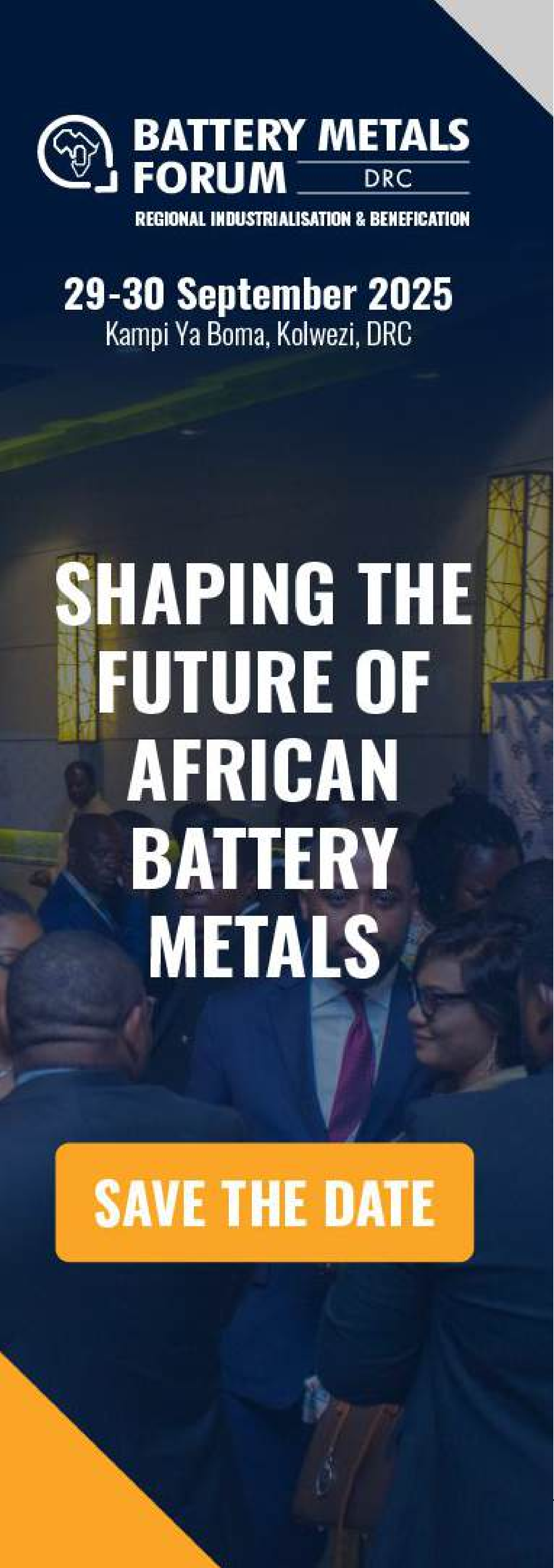
For Zambia, the BOZ agreement means a steady inflow of gold into official reserves. For FIRST QUANTUM, the Royal Gold deal provides upfront capital for expansion and stability without surrendering physical gold immediately.

Kansanshi's gold is no longer just a line item in a copper mine's output report — it is part of Zambia's financial foundation. By embedding gold into national reserves and leveraging it to attract major investment, Zambia is positioning itself for greater economic resilience.

Future prospects are promising. The S3 Expansion will boost throughput, as exploration has revealed promising near-surface gold zones that could extend Kansanshi's gold story well beyond its current life-of-mine plan.

For a mine built on copper, Kansanshi's golden legacy is proving just as significant. In a world where currencies can weaken and markets can shift overnight, gold remains a universal store of value. Through careful planning, rigorous oversight, and strategic partnerships, Zambia is ensuring that more of that value stays within its borders.

As BOZ Governor Dr. Kalyalya noted, this is not merely about ounces and contracts — it's about building "a stronger, more self-reliant national economy." And in that vision, Kansanshi's gold is more than a by-product; it is a golden thread woven into the fabric of Zambia's future.



KCC Denies Reports of Selling Three Artisanal Mining Sites in Lualaba Province

Kamoto Copper Company Refutes Claims of Selling Lualaba Artisanal Mining Sites

In a press release issued on Thursday, August 7, 2025, Kamoto Copper Company (KCC) firmly denied allegations that it intends to sell its three artisanal mining sites in Lualaba Province.

"KCC has made no such commitment," the company stated, underscoring its importance as an employer, community partner, and taxpayer in the province. "We intend to continue playing our role to the fullest by operating all of our mining permits," the statement added.

KCC clarified that during the renewal of its mining titles in 2024, three permits—PE 4960, PE 11601, and PE 4963—were returned to the Mining Cadastre (CAMI). These titles are now property of the State, which alone has the authority to reallocate them.

This clarification comes shortly after the Mining Registry submitted a major report to the Minister of Mines, Kizito Pakabomba, confirming the recovery of 594 mining titles by the Congolese State as part of a nationwide mining registry cleanup.

While the recovery is considered a step toward improved governance, the Observatory for Studies and Support for Social and Environmental Responsibility (OEARSE) has urged the government to publish the full list of recovered titles to strengthen institutional accountability.

About Kamoto Copper Company

Based in Kolwezi, Lualaba Province, Kamoto Copper Company specializes in the extraction, production, and processing of copper and cobalt. Its operations are conducted under mining permits issued and regulated by CAMI.

AVZ Minerals Secures 10% Manono Stake After ICC Victory

Australian mining company AVZ Minerals has won its arbitration case against Dathomir Mining Resources before the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

The ruling, issued on July 14, 2025, definitively confirms AVZ's acquisition of a 10% stake in Dathcom Mining SA, owner of the world-class Manono lithium project in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

AVZ's subsidiary AVZI initiated the case before the ICC to confirm the legality of a 2020 Share Purchase Agreement (SPA). The tribunal ruled that:

The transfer of shares was fully completed under the 2020 SPA.

AVZI has been the legal owner of the 10% stake since August 13, 2021.

Dathomir's Claims Rejected

The ICC dismissed all of Dathomir's arguments, including:

Annulment of the share transfer.

Recognition of SPA termination.

A downward revision of AVZ's stake or renegotiation of the purchase price ($43.3 million).

Allegations of fraud and breach of duty, along with a $40 million compensation claim.

Financial Implications

The tribunal ordered Dathomir to:

Pay part of the arbitration costs.

Reimburse AVZI about AUD 1.8 million in legal and defense expenses.

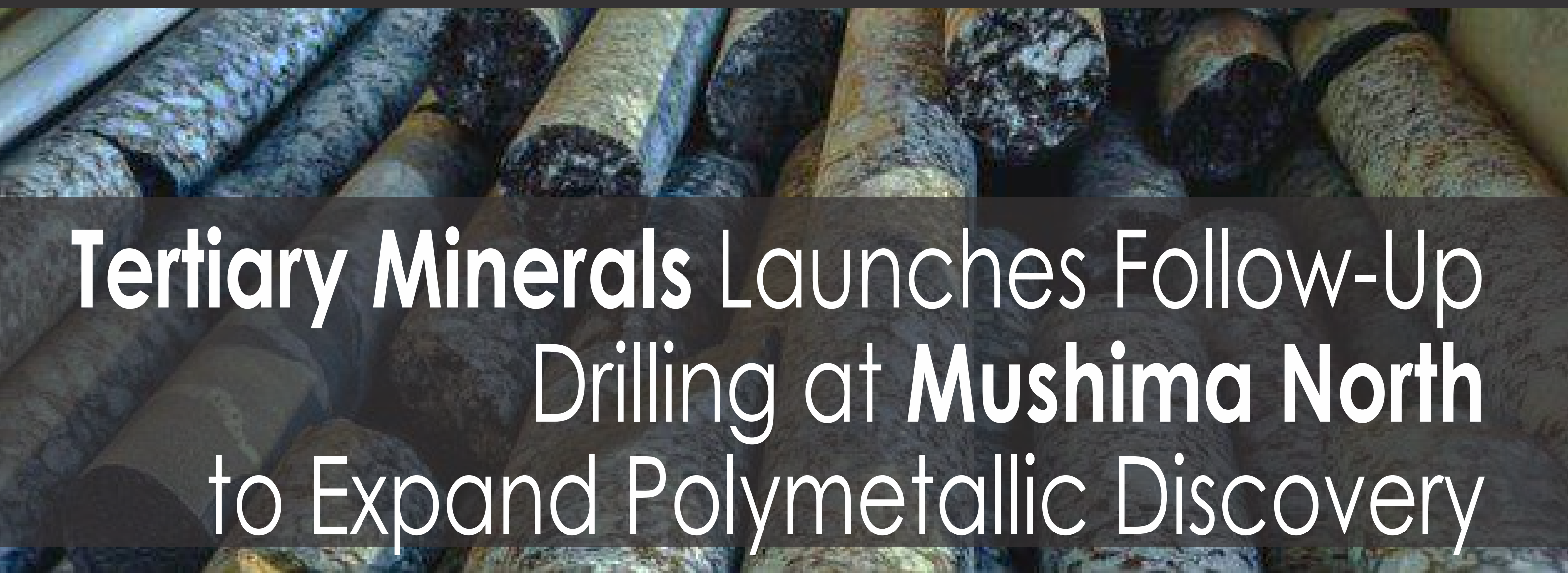
Meanwhile, AVZ confirmed it will pay Dathomir the remaining $15 million due under the 2020 SPA.

Stronger Control Over Manono

Following this ruling, AVZ Minerals now controls 70% of Dathcom Mining, reinforcing its position in the Manono lithium project, considered one of the world's largest and most promising deposits.

However, a separate arbitration is still underway concerning an additional 5% stake acquisition under a 2019 SPA. That hearing is expected to take place in late 2025.

"We remain confident in the outcome of this second procedure, which should confirm the validity of this acquisition," AVZ stated in its release.



Tertiary Minerals Launches Follow-Up Drilling at Mushima North to Expand Polymetallic Discovery

Tertiary Minerals Begins New Drilling Campaign at Zambia's Mushima North Project After High-Grade Gold and Copper Hits

AIM-listed Tertiary Minerals has commenced a 1,500-metre air core and reverse circulation drilling programme at its Mushima North Project in Zambia, focusing on Target A1—a highly promising zone identified in previous drilling.

The new drill campaign is designed to test both strike and downdip extensions of mineralisation discovered during a successful drilling programme in late 2024. That campaign returned standout intersections, including:

57 metres grading 25 g/t gold, 0.20% copper, and 0.15% zinc from 14 m downhole

65 metres grading 23 g/t gold, 0.14% copper, and 0.27% zinc from 69 m downhole

Target A1 is located 28 km east of the historic Kalengwa copper-silver mine, which is currently undergoing redevelopment.

Tertiary Managing Director Richard Belcher noted that the initial 1,274-metre drill programme revealed near-surface polymetallic mineralisation extending over a 350-metre width, with drill intervals reaching up to 67 metres.

h3Many holes, he added, ended in mineralisation, indicating strong continuation potential.

The current programme aims to:

Further define the surface footprint of silver and zinc anomalies, which stretch over a 1.6 km strike length and are approximately 300 metres wide

Investigate the downdip potential of the mineralisation to depths of up to 150 metres

Tertiary Minerals owns 90% of Copernicus Minerals, which holds 100% ownership of the Mushima North Project.

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Copper Tariff Exemption Reveals the **U.S.** Balancing Act Between **Industry Protection** and **Energy Costs**

In a move that surprised global markets, the United States last week announced it would exempt refined copper metal from new import duties—while maintaining steep tariffs on semi-finished copper products such as wire, tube, and sheet. The decision sent Comex copper prices down more than 20% since the announcement last Wednesday.

The contrast between this exemption and the earlier imposition of 50% tariffs on aluminum imports highlights the crucial role of energy costs and industry lobbying in shaping U.S. trade and industrial policy.

Since June, aluminum metal shipped to the U.S.—where smelters face higher electricity costs than copper producers—has been subject to these steep duties.

The broader objective is part of a U.S. strategy to revive domestic metal production and reduce reliance on foreign supply chains.

Industry voices have played a central role in these developments. Century Aluminum, one of the few remaining U.S. aluminum producers, has been a strong advocate for the tariffs.

"Century Aluminum Company applauds President Trump's unwavering defense of the nation's domestic production of critical metals by increasing aluminum tariffs to 50%," the company said in a statement in June.

By contrast, the exemption granted to refined copper reflects its critical role in U.S. manufacturing and the political influence of major producers, such as Freeport-McMoRan.

Earlier this year, the company warned the U.S. government that imposing copper tariffs amid a global trade war could damage the already fragile domestic industry.

"A global trade war could result in slower economic growth," Freeport said in a public comment submitted to a government investigation into copper tariffs.

"Slower growth in the U.S. or globally would negatively impact copper prices, which could threaten the viability of the domestic copper industry due to its elevated cost structure."

Aluminum smelting is far more energy-intensive than copper production. According to Macquarie, energy accounts for roughly 50% of the cost of producing primary aluminum, compared to 30% for copper.

"There is no economic case for building any greenfield aluminum smelting capacity without substantial intervention," said Macquarie analyst Marcus Garvey.

"Even then, intervention may not be sufficient."

One of the biggest barriers to investing in U.S. aluminum smelting is the difficulty in securing long-term power purchase agreements at competitive rates.

Power costs in the U.S. remain significantly higher than in major aluminum-producing countries such as China, the UAE, and Bahrain.

High electricity costs have driven a sharp decline in the U.S. aluminum industry over the past three decades. The number of operational aluminum smelters has dropped from 23 in 1995 to just four today.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, domestic production of primary aluminum fell from 3.35 million metric tons in 1995 to 1.6 million tons in 2015, and just 670,000 tons in 2024.SOURCE:mining.com

Zimbabwe's Kuvimba to Construct **$270M Lithium** Concentrator with **Chinese** Partners in 2025

Zimbabwe's state-owned Kuvimba Mining House will begin construction of a $270 million lithium concentrator at its Sandawana mine in the third quarter of 2025, with commissioning expected in early 2027, according to CEO Trevor Barnard.

The facility is designed to process 600,000 metric tons of lithium ore per year and will be developed in partnership with two major Chinese metals companies.

Under the agreement, the Chinese firms will build and operate the plant for a minimum of five years, after which it will be handed over to Kuvimba.

Barnard did not disclose the names of the companies, citing ongoing negotiations.

"We are finalizing the last few agreements and ensuring the right industry conditions are in place for our partners to begin construction," Barnard said. "We are aiming to break ground in Q3 2025."

Barnard noted the project's timing could align with a recovery in global lithium prices, which have dropped nearly 90% in recent months due to oversupply and slower-than-expected electric vehicle (EV) demand.

Despite the price slump, Chinese companies continue to invest heavily in Zimbabwe's lithium sector to secure raw materials for their domestic refining operations.

According to CRU Group data, Zimbabwe accounted for about 14% of China's lithium imports in 2024.

Analysts believe the current market weakness may be temporary. Production cuts and a resurgence in EV sales in China are expected to rebalance supply and demand, potentially pushing lithium prices higher by late 2025 or 2026.

"Our forecast is that lithium prices will recover in 2027—coinciding with the expected launch of our concentrator," Barnard said.

In a bid to maximize local value addition, Zimbabwe recently announced a ban on lithium concentrate exports starting January 2027.

The move is part of a broader push to industrialize and retain more mineral wealth within the country.

For years, Chinese companies operating in Zimbabwe have exported lithium concentrates to China for processing, bypassing domestic beneficiation.

To change this, Zimbabwe is now supporting the development of local refining capacity.

Two lithium sulphate processing plants are currently under construction: one at Bikita Minerals, owned by Sinomine Resource Group, and another at Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe, operated by Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt.

India Unveils Strategic Plan to Boost **Copper Output** and Secure **Global Supply Chain**

India has announced a comprehensive strategy to ramp up copper production, reduce its dependency on imports, and secure long-term access to global copper reserves.

The plan includes inviting foreign companies to establish smelters and refineries in India in exchange for state-owned enterprises investing in overseas mining operations.

According to a newly released government policy document—portions of which were first reported by Reuters—India, currently the world's second-largest importer of refined copper, may need to import between 91% and 97% of its copper concentrates by 2047 if domestic production does not significantly increase.

In fiscal year 2025, copper imports rose by 4%, reaching 1.2 million metric tons. The demand is projected to surge to 3–3.3 million metric tons by 2030, and further escalate to 8.9–9.8 million metric tons by 2047.

To mitigate this growing gap, the policy outlines India's intention to attract global mining giants—such as Chile's state-owned Codelco and Australia's BHP—to invest in building smelting, refining, and other downstream infrastructure in India.

The document confirms that these companies may be approached as part of India's long-term copper strategy.

The government also encourages Indian companies to invest in overseas mining projects to ensure a reliable and diversified copper supply chain, especially in light of potential supply disruptions.

Financial Incentives and Infrastructure Development

India plans to offer a range of financial incentives, including:

Capital investment subsidies

Customs duty exemptions on imported machinery for smelters and refineries

Support for scrap processing facilities

The goal is to develop 4–5 million metric tons of new smelting and refining capacity over the long term.

Despite having an estimated 12.2 million metric tons of copper resources, only 18% are classified as reserves—highlighting the scarcity of economically viable domestic copper. The document points to challenges such as:

Resource nationalism

Geopolitical tensions

Declining ore grades

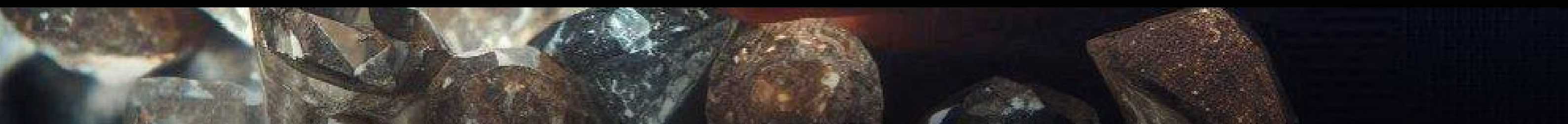
Global underinvestment in copper mining

These issues may significantly limit India's access to copper from key exporters like Australia, Chile, Peru, and Zambia.

India also plans to incorporate a dedicated chapter on copper in its ongoing free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with Chile and Peru, aiming to secure long-term contracts for fixed quantities of copper concentrate.

Additionally, tightening export conditions in countries such as Indonesia and Panama have further constrained India's import options.

In parallel, the government has released a plan to enhance aluminum output, anticipating that domestic demand will reach 8.5 million metric tons by fiscal 2030.



Botswana Aims for Majority Stake in **De Beers** as **Anglo American** Prepares Exit

The Government of Botswana has signaled its intention to acquire a controlling stake in diamond giant De Beers, according to Mining.com, citing a report from the Financial Times.

This move adds a new layer of complexity to Anglo American's ongoing efforts to divest its ownership of the iconic diamond producer.

Currently, Botswana holds a 15% stake in De Beers and owns 50% of Debswana, a joint venture with the company that handles a significant portion of De Beers' diamond output.

Now, the country is seeking to increase its stake significantly, with the ultimate goal of securing majority ownership.

Botswana's Minister of Minerals and Energy, Bogolo Kenewendo, stated that President Duma Boko is committed to gaining greater control over this strategic national asset—including its entire value chain, from production to global marketing.

While De Beers previously hinted in February that Botswana might seek to expand its ownership, recent remarks by government officials indicate a stronger and more urgent intention to assert control.

With an early August deadline approaching for prospective buyers to submit bids for De Beers, Minister Kenewendo emphasized that any transaction made without Botswana's backing would be fraught with difficulty.

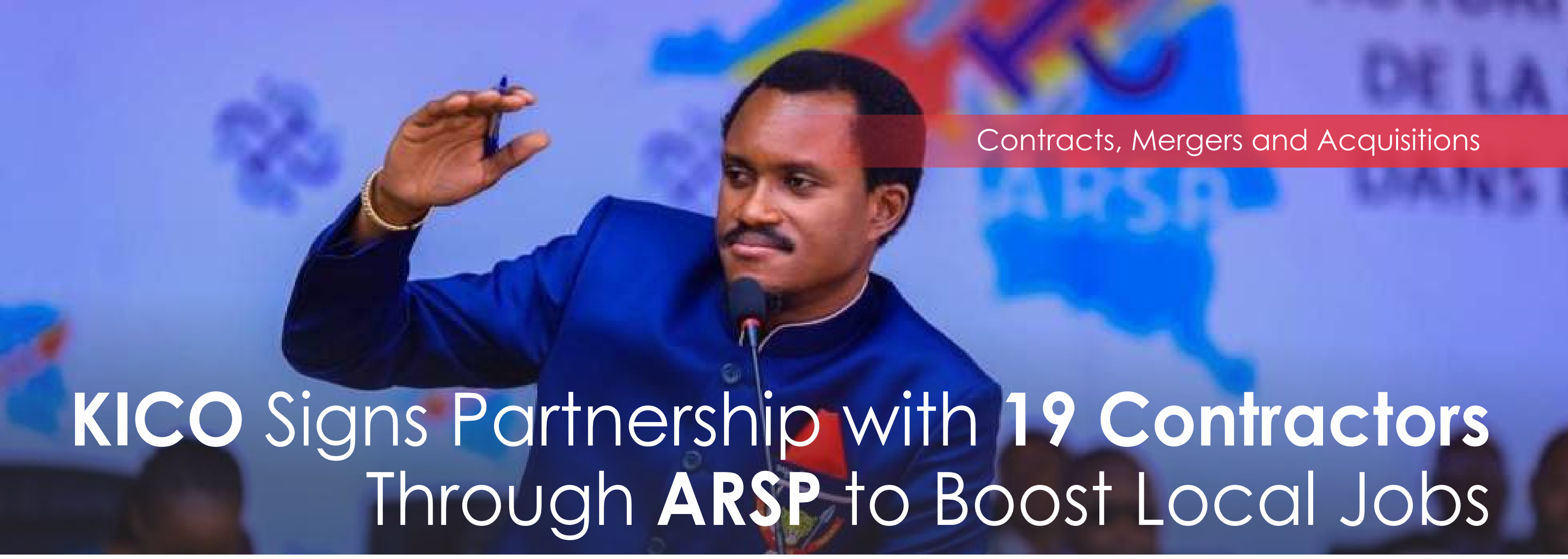
"Our partners at Anglo American have, regrettably, failed to manage the process transparently or in coordination with the government and with our support," Kenewendo stated.

Botswana's firm stance could pose a major obstacle to Anglo American's plans. The mining conglomerate is currently pursuing a dual-track strategy—welcoming offers from interested buyers while also preparing for a potential public listing of De Beers should no suitable buyer emerge.

Anglo American is under increasing pressure to complete its exit from De Beers by the end of the year. The divestiture is part of a broader corporate restructuring following the company's rejection of a £39 billion ($52.8 billion) takeover bid from BHP in 2024.

However, the timing is far from ideal. The global diamond market is currently facing headwinds, including rising competition from lab-grown diamonds and softening demand in key markets such as China. These factors have left De Beers with a growing stockpile of unsold diamonds.

Botswana's strategic push to gain control over De Beers underscores the country's broader ambition to extract greater value from its natural resources and take a more active role in shaping the global diamond trade.



KICO Signs Partnership with 19 Contractors Through ARSP to Boost Local Jobs

Nineteen subcontracting companies and Kipushi Corporation (KICO), a subsidiary of Ivanhoe Mines, have signed a partnership agreement aimed at generating both direct and indirect jobs in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The signing ceremony was presided over by Miguel Kashal Katemb, Director General of the Regulatory Authority for Subcontracting in the Private Sector (ARSP).

The initiative fulfills a pledge made by President Félix Tshisekedi during the inauguration of the Kipushi zinc mine in November 2024.

At that time, President Tshisekedi had promised to promote local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and ensure that Congolese workers benefit from the mining sector's growth.

The event brought together political leaders, administrative officials, and community representatives from Kipushi territory.

It was preceded by a public accountability session, during which ARSP's Director General outlined the progress made in delivering on the President's commitments during his campaign and his 2024 visit to Kipushi.

Local residents welcomed the agreements, expressing satisfaction that job opportunities are being created for young people in the community while ensuring local companies gain access to mining contracts.

Macsteel Expands to a Bigger Better Location to Serve Southern Africa

Macsteel Zambia a subsidiary of **Macsteel Service Centres South Africa** the largest distributor of steel in **Africa** with over **100 years** wishes to announce that it is moving its` moving to new location at **Vibhav, Kitwe -Chingola Road, Plot Number 2810, Kitwe, Zambia —** a milestone that underscores its commitment to serving clients even better.

Macsteel Zambia continues to embrace the **Macsteel group**'s vision by fostering innovation, and growth through consistently delivering the steel that builds businesses, communities, and futures.

This legacy of leadership is driven by a simple but powerful commitment: always putting the needs of clients first.

By understanding the demands of industries ranging from construction and engineering to energy and manufacturing, **Macsteel** has built a service model as dynamic as the markets it serves.

Macsteel Zambia will continue to provide its current services at **Vibhav Park** among them **Rolling of roofing sheets**, **Flashings & ridges, profiling of Quench & Tempered Plates**, **Band saw operations** for Specialised steel from **EN8-20mm-290mm,EN19-20mm-320mm** and **cut and bend** for **Deformed bars** for all sizes ranging from **Y10-Y32.**

Relocating to a bigger, better facility is not just a change in address; it is a strategic investment in the future.

CEC and ZESCO Partner to Fast-Track 1,000MW Solar Projects Across Zambia by 2025

The Copperbelt Energy Corporation (CEC) and ZESCO Limited have entered advanced talks to co-develop solar photovoltaic (PV) projects across Zambia, signaling a major step forward in the country's renewable energy transition.

The development was confirmed during the Invest Zambia International Conference held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre, themed "Sustained Investment in the Energy Sector – Trends and Opportunities."

CEC's Head of Investments and Government Relations, Silvester Hibajene, revealed that the two power companies are exploring a public-private partnership (PPP) model designed to accelerate the deployment of clean energy infrastructure nationwide.

"We are in advanced discussions with ZESCO on a model to jointly invest in multiple solar projects across the country," Hibajene said. "CEC has already delivered several solar projects, and we aim to expand our footprint through a risk-sharing PPP framework that enhances project delivery."

CEC currently operates 94 megawatts (MW) of installed solar PV capacity and is constructing the 136MW Itimpi II Solar Project, scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2026. Upon completion, CEC's total solar capacity will rise to 230MW.

Meanwhile, ZESCO Managing Director Justin Loongo affirmed the state utility's strategic shift toward renewable energy. ZESCO recently commissioned the 100MW Chisamba Solar PV plant and plans to break ground on Chisamba II, another 100MW facility, in the coming month.

Loongo said ZESCO has also earmarked new solar sites in Siavonga, Chipata, the Kafue Gorge Lower area, Mumbwa, and Kasama, with each site expected to host 100MW solar PV plants.

"We intend to roll out these 100MW solar plants until the national grid reaches its solar capacity threshold," Loongo said, noting that ZESCO is also investing in new hydroelectric projects in northern Zambia to stabilize the grid and complement intermittent solar output.

Addressing financing challenges, Loongo stressed the need for faster, more flexible funding mechanisms.

Citing the Chisamba project, he noted that ZESCO secured financing from Stanbic Bank in under a year, compared to the four-year timelines typical of institutions like the World Bank.

The Zambian government aims to add 1,000MW of solar power to the national grid by the end of 2025, part of a broader strategy to reduce dependency on hydroelectric power, which has become increasingly vulnerable to drought.

This partnership between CEC and ZESCO marks a significant milestone in Zambia's clean energy ambitions, combining public sector oversight with private sector efficiency to deliver scalable, sustainable power solutions.

Trafigura Secures Copper Anodes in $200M Prepayment Deal with Ivanhoe Mines

Trafigura Group has agreed to pay $200 million in a prepayment deal to secure copper anodes from Ivanhoe Mines' new smelter in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is expected to begin operations in September.

The agreement, finalized in June, was announced by Ivanhoe in a statement on Tuesday. The deal highlights the growing trend of global commodity trading firms — including Mercuria and Vitol — offering upfront financing to lock in future supplies of critical metals as global competition intensifies.

Under the three-year agreement, Trafigura, the world's largest independent copper trader, will receive 20% of the copper anodes produced by the new smelter.

The prepayment will accrue interest at the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) plus 3.75%. The remaining 80% of output is allocated to Ivanhoe's joint venture partners — China's CITIC Metal and Zijin Mining Group.

Trafigura declined to comment on the deal.

The smelter, with a planned capacity of 500,000 metric tons per year, is poised to become Africa's largest copper smelting facility.

It forms part of Ivanhoe's Kamoa-Kakula complex, a major copper mining hub in the DRC. However, operations at Kamoa-Kakula have recently faced challenges due to seismic activity and flooding that began in May.

In addition to the Trafigura agreement, Kamoa Copper — the Ivanhoe subsidiary managing the complex — has also extended a $200 million loan facility with South Africa's Standard Bank for another 12 months, providing further financial stability as the project advances.

The Trafigura deal underscores the increasing urgency among trading houses and end users to secure reliable supplies of copper, a metal vital to the global clean energy transition and high-tech industries.

Zambia Targets **1 Million Tonnes** of Copper in 2025 as **Mining Sector** Rebounds

President Hakainde Hichilema has announced that Zambia is on track to produce one million tonnes of copper in 2025—marking a significant milestone toward the government's long-term goal of reaching three million tonnes annually by 2030.

Speaking at the Invest in Zambia Conference in Lusaka, President Hichilema highlighted the country's renewed mining momentum, powered by a series of strategic reforms designed to unlock dormant mining assets and attract large-scale investment.

A key component of this revitalization includes the reopening of previously inactive mining sites such as Kalengwa and 28 Shaft.

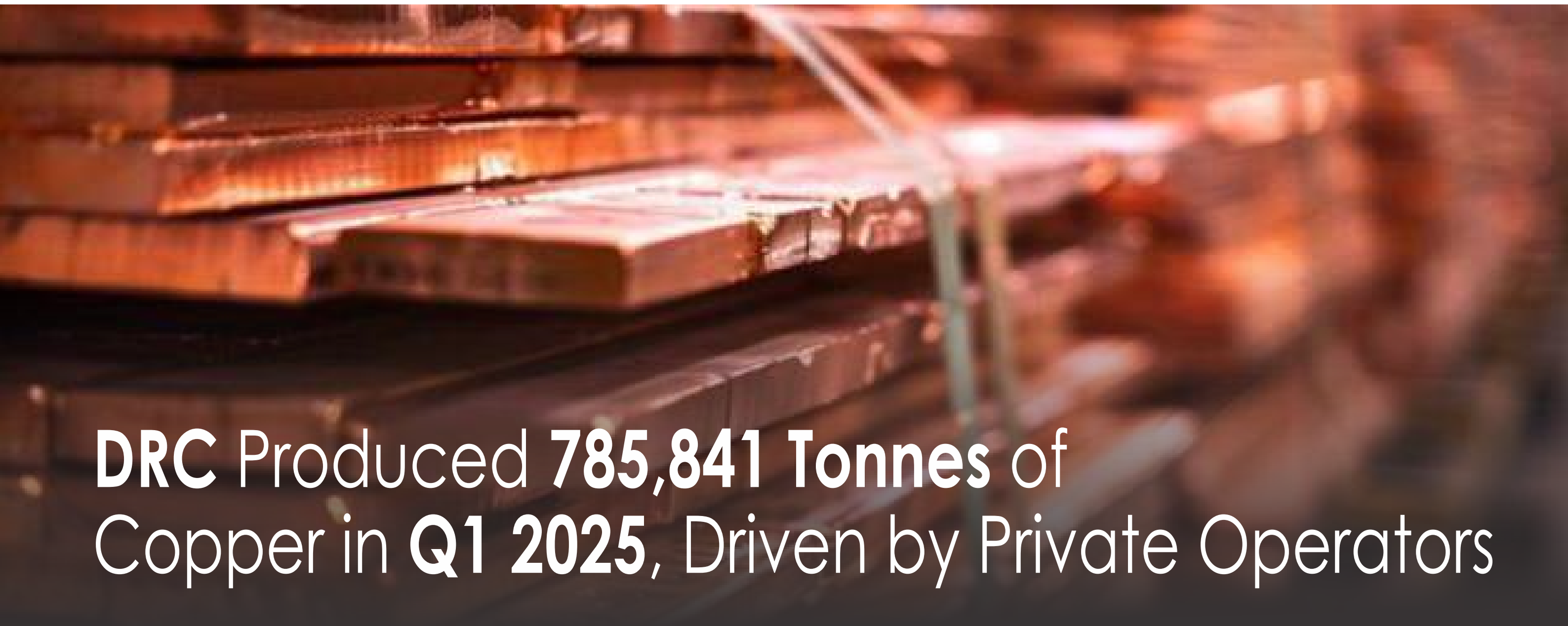
These reactivations are part of a broader plan to boost copper output and revitalize Zambia's mining landscape.

The President also spotlighted the turnaround at Barrick Lumwana, a major copper mine that had once considered pulling out of Zambia.

Following consistent government engagement and policy dialogue, Barrick has now committed over $2 billion in reinvestment, underscoring renewed investor confidence in Zambia's evolving business environment.

Zambia's rising copper production is supported by a stable governance structure and a transparent legal framework that protects investors, fosters accountability, and promotes long-term economic partnerships.

With its mining sector playing an increasingly vital role in both regional development and global copper supply chains, Zambia is positioning itself as a leading force in the global transition to clean energy and industrial growth.



DRC Produced **785,841 Tonnes** of Copper in **Q1 2025**, Driven by Private Operators

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) recorded a production of 785,841 tonnes of copper in the first quarter of 2025, according to the statistical bulletin released by the Central Bank of Congo (BCC) at the end of August.

Out of this total, Gécamines, the state-owned mining company historically central to the Congolese mining sector, produced only 2,318 tonnes. The overwhelming majority—783,523 tonnes—came from Gécamines' private partners and other mining operators active across the country.

These figures confirm the DRC's role as one of the world's leading copper producers. The country holds some of the planet's richest copper deposits, making it a critical supplier of a metal essential to:

- the electrical and electronics industries,
- the energy transition, and
- the production of electric vehicles and batteries.

In 2024, national copper output reached 3,100,234 tonnes, according to data from the Ministry of Mines relayed by the BCC. The Q1 2025 results suggest that production is on track to maintain this momentum, although they highlight a structural reality: the sector's heavy reliance on private operators compared to the limited contribution of Gécamines.

Strategic and Economic Stakes

Beyond the numbers, copper production is a cornerstone of the DRC's economy. It provides a major source of foreign currency and contributes significantly to public finances. Yet, it also raises recurring challenges, including:

- the redistribution of mining revenues,
- the quality of sector governance, and
- the living conditions of communities in mining regions.

With global copper demand projected to rise sharply in the years ahead, the DRC stands at a strategic crossroads. Its ability to translate mineral wealth into sustainable development will depend not only on maintaining production growth but also on:

- ensuring a stable and transparent regulatory framework, and
- fostering greater local value addition in the mining sector.

Blu Rock's Precision Drilling, Powering Africa's Mining Frontier

For over 17 years, Blu Rock. has quietly but relentlessly built a reputation as a cornerstone of Copperbelt's mining operations. With its head office strategically located in Kitwe, Zambia, Blu Rock has emerged from a local contender to a regional drilling powerhouse, delivering exceptional results across Zambia and into the highly competitive terrain of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

At the heart of Blu Rock's success is a simple, client-first philosophy driven by a commitment to operational efficiency, unparalleled safety standards, and superior core recovery. Founded in 2007 by Kris Jedrzejczyk, a mining veteran with over four decades of experience, the company's deep-rooted expertise and fresh approach to mining services have consistently exceeded client expectations. Its impressive list of partners, including First Quantum Minerals (FQML), Barrick Gold, and Glencore, speaks to a proven track record of dependability and performance in some of the region's most demanding projects.

Blu Rock's robust service portfolio encompasses the full spectrum of drilling needs. From intricate Surface and Underground diamond drilling to Reverse Circulation, Geotechnical drilling, and specialized Blast Hole operations, the company's fleet is both versatile and powerful. The deployment of advanced equipment, such as Epiroc's SmartRoc and Christensen rigs, enables Blu Rock to tackle the toughest ground conditions with precision and safety. This technological advantage, combined with a highly skilled and experienced workforce, ensures optimal results, whether in deep exploration or complex geotechnical assessments.

Beyond the rigs and technical specifications, Blu Rock's true engine is its highly skilled and dedicated team. The deep technical and hands-on expertise of our drilling crews, combined with a collective commitment to project success, consistently translates into higher core recovery and optimized operational efficiency. From site managers to rig operators, every member of the Blu Rock family is empowered to utilize their specialized skills to overcome challenges in even the most complex geological environments. This dedication is not just part of our culture; it's a proven formula that has enabled us to consistently deliver high-quality, on-time results for our clients.

As Africa's mining industry continues to evolve, Blu Rock remains a symbol of progress and quality. With its recent "Mining Exploration Company of the Year" award in 2024 and ongoing investments in technology and talent, the company is well-positioned for further strategic growth. For any mining company operating in Central Africa, partnering with Blu Rock means securing a reliable, experienced, and high-performance drilling partner. Their impact isn't just measured in meters drilled but in the enduring partnerships and successful projects that define a truly world-class service provider.

Sandvik, Glencore expand partnership to include Newtrax collision-avoidance technology

Sandvik Mining and Glencore International AG have expanded an existing partnership to include the Newtrax OEM-agnostic proximity detection and collision avoidance technology, supporting Glencore's ambition to become a leader in safety.

Under the expanded partnership, Sandvik can deliver its fully OEM-agnostic Newtrax Collision Avoidance Safety technology and the Newtrax Mining Data Platform (MDP) to complement operational safety and efficiency and continue to optimize performance across Glencore's underground mixed fleet.

Implementation of these solutions on Sandvik and third-party equipment is currently underway at Glencore's Kamoto Copper Company operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its Raglan nickel mine in Canada.

The Newtrax product offers a scalable, OEM-agnostic safety and data solution designed to meet the evolving needs of modern underground mining operations.

The system supports multiple levels of protection, from proximity detection systems to fully automated collision avoidance systems, and integrates seamlessly with the Newtrax MDP.

This powerful combination supports mines, regardless of their digital maturity, to enhance safety, gain real-time operational insights and drive productivity across mixed equipment fleets.

"Glencore is committed to incorporating technologies that can help create a workplace free from fatalities and injuries and improve operational efficiency," said Mark Davis, CEO Copper Africa at Glencore. "The integration of Newtrax systems reflects our focus on safety and innovation at all levels of our global operations.

Proven in mines worldwide, the Newtrax solution plays a vital role in preventing incidents and improving safety and reliability across Sandvik and third-party equipment.

Designed to address the unique safety challenges of underground mining, its advanced proximity detection capabilities support customers like Glencore to achieve and exceed their safety and productivity goals.

The existing partnership already encompasses Sandvik equipment, spare parts, and rock tools. With the addition of Newtrax safety solutions, the partnership adds solutions contributing to safer, smarter mining.

"We appreciate Glencore's continued partnership and trust in Sandvik and our technologies and look forward to delivering Newtrax safety solutions and continuing in the journey towards zero harm together," said David Hallett, Vice President Automation at Sandvik Mining.

"Their decision to implement our Newtrax safety solutions shows a strong vote of confidence in our technology and purpose. At Sandvik, we don't just talk about safety, we deliver it.

Kobold Metals to Invest in AI-Powered Exploration Under New Deal with DRC

DR Congo Signs Strategic Mining Deal with U.S. based Company Kobold Metals to Boost Lithium Exploration and AI-Driven Geological Mapping

On Thursday, at the African Union City in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) President Félix Tshisekedi presided over the signing of a major agreement between the Congolese government and U.S.-based company Kobold Metals.

The agreement marks a significant step toward American investment in the country's mining sector.

The document was signed by Congolese Minister of Mines, Kizito Pakabomba, and Benjamin Katabuka, the Managing Director of Kobold Metals in the DRC.

This strategic partnership is aimed at unlocking investment opportunities and advancing technological innovation in mineral exploration.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Katabuka highlighted that the agreement falls under the broader cooperation framework between the United States and the DRC to promote peace and prosperity.

"We hope this door opened by the Congolese government to American investors will lead to further U.S. engagement in the DRC," he stated.

According to Katabuka, the partnership will focus on three key areas:

Digitizing Geological Data: Kobold Metals will invest in converting the DRC's extensive but underutilized geological data into digital format.

Advanced Exploration Technologies: The company plans to use cutting-edge tools, including artificial intelligence, for mineral exploration.

Lithium Development: A major focus will be the development of a lithium mining project in Manono, located in Tanganyika Province.

Katabuka emphasized that the DRC holds vast geological data that has yet to be harnessed for national development.

Kobold Metals aims to fund the digitization of this data to make it more accessible, thereby attracting further investment into the mining industry.

As part of its long-term vision, Kobold Metals also intends to apply for large-scale exploration permits using American technology.

In closing, Mr. Katabuka reiterated Kobold Metals' commitment to local development. "Our goal is to employ more Congolese citizens, provide training, ensure fair compensation, and contribute to the construction of essential infrastructure to improve the well-being of local communities," he said.

BHP Accelerates Electrification with New Battery Technology Partnerships in China

Global mining giant BHP is ramping up its electrification strategy through preliminary agreements with two leading Chinese battery manufacturers.

These initiatives aim to integrate advanced battery technologies across BHP's worldwide operations.

On Monday, the Melbourne-based company announced the signing of two memoranda of understanding (MoUs): one with Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Limited (CATL), and the other with FinDreams Battery (FDB), a subsidiary of the BYD Group.

Under its agreement with CATL, BHP will explore the development of battery-powered mining equipment and locomotives, as well as supporting infrastructure for rapid charging.

The partnership will also assess opportunities in energy storage systems and battery recycling for mining applications.

A major focus of the collaboration is advancing the circular economy by enhancing battery recycling capabilities.

This includes leveraging BHP's copper operations to support more sustainable value chains in the mining sector.

"CATL is a global leader in advanced battery technology, energy storage solutions, and battery recycling—and a natural partner for BHP," said Rashpal Bhatti, BHP's Procurement Officer.

"By working with companies like CATL, we aim to find solutions that drive greater efficiency and sustainability in the resources industry."

The MoU with FDB will focus on evaluating battery solutions for heavy mining equipment and locomotives, along with adjacent flash-charging infrastructure.

Additionally, BHP and FDB will explore the use of BYD's commercial and light electric vehicles to support BHP's efforts to reduce reliance on diesel.

"BYD is a global leader in battery development and a fast-growing force in electric vehicle manufacturing," BHP stated.

"Through this engagement, BHP aims to assess the potential of these technologies in mining, while also exploring BYD's capabilities in energy storage and battery recycling."

Jack Li, General Manager of Global Commercial Vehicles at FDB, described the partnership as a "pivotal milestone," noting that BHP's ambition to reach net-zero operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions aligns with FDB's mission.

BHP has set a long-term goal to achieve net-zero operational GHG emissions (Scope 1 and 2 from operated assets) by 2050. These partnerships mark a significant step in advancing that target.

The agreements follow a recent announcement regarding BHP's efforts to cut emissions in maritime transport.

Last week, BHP signed a deal with China's COSCO Shipping Group to charter two ammonia dual-fuelled Newcastlemax bulk carriers. When fueled with low- or zero-emissions ammonia, these vessels could reduce emissions by 50% to 95% per voyage compared to conventional fuels.

DRC Aims to Boost Local Cobalt Refining by Targeting Fairer Prices and Long-Term Market Stability

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is pushing for a sustainable cobalt price to encourage domestic processing, as the government charts its course following a suspension of cobalt exports.

The move, part of a broader strategy to stabilize global markets and attract local investment, comes amid shifting dynamics in the critical battery metal industry.

Congo, responsible for nearly 75% of the world's cobalt supply, first halted exports on February 22 for four months.

In June, the government extended the ban by another three months. This decision followed a prolonged price slump driven by surging production, particularly from two major mines operated by China's CMOC Group.

"No one can invest in a refinery in the country because the price was not sustainable," said Guy-Robert Lukama, chairman of state-owned mining company Gécamines, during a recent discussion hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

Most of Congo's cobalt is exported as cobalt hydroxide — an intermediate product later refined into battery-grade material, primarily in China.

The export suspension was enacted shortly after benchmark cobalt prices dropped to near-record lows below $10 per pound.

Since then, prices have rebounded sharply, with cobalt hydroxide prices more than doubling and benchmark cobalt increasing nearly 60%, according to data from Fastmarkets.

While Congo does not seek a return to the extreme highs of over $40 per pound seen in 2018 and 2022, Lukama emphasized the government's responsibility to stabilize the market.

He attributed the recent volatility to "totally insane" growth in supply, which resulted in more than a year's worth of unsold inventory accumulating outside Congo.

The pressure on supply chains is mounting. In June, CMOC's trading arm declared force majeure on cobalt hydroxide deliveries, citing constraints from the ongoing ban.

Meanwhile, miners continue to export copper — which is often mined alongside cobalt — while cobalt is being stockpiled.

Chinese imports of cobalt intermediates dropped more than 60% in June compared to May, marking the first significant monthly decline since the ban was implemented, according to recent customs data.

Aside from CMOC, other major cobalt producers operating in Congo include Glencore Plc and Eurasian Resources Group, backed by Kazakhstan. Gécamines holds minority stakes in joint ventures with all three companies.

The export ban comes at a pivotal time for Congo, which is strengthening ties with the United States to attract more American investment in critical minerals such as cobalt, copper, lithium, and tantalum.

The initiative aligns with broader efforts by the U.S. to reduce reliance on China for key components in electric vehicle and energy storage technologies.

“We want cobalt to be available for everyone, not just controlled by one jurisdiction," Lukama said.

Looking ahead, Congo's government is considering longer-term market management tools, including potential export quotas after the ban is lifted.

Such measures aim to support local refining, stabilize global supply, and maintain fair prices.

"We are very pragmatic about our goals," Lukama added, suggesting that carefully designed export controls "could make sense."

However, analysts caution that excessive restrictions and rapid price increases could accelerate a shift toward cobalt-free battery technologies — particularly in the electric vehicle industry, which is the single largest consumer of the metal.

DRC Govt Backs Kivuvu Manganese Project to Boost Jobs and Local Development

DRC Prime Minister Supports Kivuvu Manganese Project, Promising 2 Million Tonnes Production and 7,500 Community Jobs.

On the sidelines of the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD9), DRC Prime Minister Judith Suminwa reaffirmed her government's commitment to the Kivuvu project, a joint venture between Congolese firm Kerith Resources Ltd and the Japanese group Asia Mineral Limited (AML), a global leader in manganese mining.

During a meeting in Yokohama, Prime Minister Suminwa welcomed AML President Hirotaka Suzuki, who presented the framework of this strategic partnership aimed at transforming the manganese sector in Kongo Central.

The Kivuvu project is designed to achieve an annual production capacity of two million tonnes of manganese while generating over 1,000 direct jobs and benefiting approximately 7,500 indirect community members.

Prime Minister Suminwa emphasized the importance of responsible operations.

"The Government supports this project, but it is essential that the rules are respected so that the exploitation truly benefits the national economy and the population," she said.

Kerith Resources Ltd Director Fely Samuna also welcomed the government's backing, noting the project's potential impact beyond Kongo Central, extending to the entire DRC.

AML President Hirotaka Suzuki outlined an investment plan that goes beyond mining, incorporating initiatives in infrastructure, education, and fiscal development.

The project places strong emphasis on community development. Training centers, livestock programs, and agricultural projects are integrated to diversify local economic opportunities.

"We aim to exceed 1,000 jobs and directly or indirectly involve around 7,500 people. Our ambition is to make this project a catalyst for community development," said Mr. Samuna.

The Kivuvu project is emerging as a model of sustainable, win-win cooperation, ensuring responsible manganese exploitation while driving national development and benefiting local populations.

US Plans **$500m** Cobalt Procurement to Strengthen **Defense Mineral** Stockpiles

The United States is moving to secure its supply of critical minerals, with the Department of Defense (DoD) announcing plans to procure up to $500 million worth of cobalt for its defense stockpiles.

The initiative comes as Washington intensifies efforts to reduce reliance on China's near-total control of the critical minerals sector.

China's Export Restrictions Spark Urgency

The global supply chain for rare earths and other strategic minerals has come under pressure following China's recent export restrictions.

In June, China's rare earth magnet exports plunged by 75%, forcing some automakers to suspend production.

To counter such vulnerabilities, President Donald Trump in March invoked emergency powers to boost domestic production of critical minerals.

The White House also appointed former mining executive David Copley in July to lead a National Security Council office dedicated to supply chain resilience.

According to a tender document released by the DoD and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), the US aims to purchase approximately 7,480 tonnes of alloy-grade cobalt over the next five years.

The purchase value could range from $2 million to $500 million, depending on supply and pricing.

Cobalt is an essential component in:

Rechargeable batteries

Nickel superalloys for high-temperature sections of jet engines and industrial gas turbines

Other critical defense and industrial applications

Currently, the US imports most of its cobalt, underscoring its supply chain vulnerability.

Limited Supplier Pool

The tender revealed that offers are being sought from only three qualified suppliers:

Vale (Canada)

Sumitomo Metal Mining (Japan)

Glencore Nikkelverk (Norway)

This restricted supplier pool highlights both the scarcity of secure cobalt sources and Washington's push to build more diversified and reliable supply lines.

USA Eyes **DRC**'s **Coltan** as Key to Peace, Investment, and **Supply Chain Security**

A recent peace agreement signed in Washington between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda is raising eyebrows—not only for its geopolitical implications but also for its economic undercurrents.

The lengthy document includes a significant clause that effectively ties U.S. private investment to mineral-rich regions in eastern DRC.

In particular, the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu—bordering Rwanda—are known for their abundant reserves of cobalt, coltan (tantalum), tin, lithium, and gold.

Reports suggest that American investors have expressed strong interest in the Rubaya coltan mine, currently under the control of the M23 rebel group.

The plan is to transform the Rubaya site into a large-scale mining operation under U.S. oversight and investment.

The DRC-Rwanda peace accord is being framed as a "minerals-for-security" deal, granting American companies preferential access to critical minerals in exchange for commitments to peace, security, and economic stability in the region.

According to the Financial Times, the United States is supporting a major bid by Gentry Beach—a close ally of former President Donald Trump—to acquire the Rubaya coltan mine.

Locally known as the Bibatama Mining Concession, Rubaya is a cluster of open-pit mines located in Masisi Territory, North Kivu, near the town of the same name.

It is situated about 105 kilometers from Alphamin Resources' prolific Bisie tin mine, one of the world's highest-grade tin operations, which already benefits from U.S. backing.

Bisie alone supplies nearly 6% of the world's tin, underscoring the strategic value of the region's mineral wealth.

Coltan is essential for producing capacitors and high-performance electronics, particularly in military, aerospace, and medical sectors.

The United States currently does not produce any tantalum (derived from coltan) and relies almost entirely on imports—making access to sites like Rubaya economically and strategically vital.

The White House reportedly sees the Rubaya coltan cluster—which yields more than 50% of the DRC's coltan—as central to its strategy to end decades of violence in eastern Congo through economic investment.

The U.S. plan would channel over $500 million in private capital toward mining and infrastructure, aiming to reduce China's dominant position in the critical minerals supply chain.

Washington also hopes its investments will incentivize M23 rebels to withdraw from contested areas, creating a more stable environment for both regional peace and foreign investment.