'Mining sector buoyant'

•ABSA Bank Zambia Head - Agribusiness Lombe Mwale explains about products and services offered by the bank during an interaction with farmers in Mpongwe District. Picture by CHATULA KANGALI

By KENNEDY MUPESENI

ZAMBIA needs to galvanise US$200 million yearly to invest in green and brown mining projects for the country to achieve the target of producing three million tonnes of copper per annum by 2031.

The Zambia Chamber of Mines (ZCM) said the mining policy stabilisation in the last four years had continued attracting fresh capital in the mining industry which called for more support towards mineral explorations and expansions to reach production milestones.

ZCM Chief Executive Officer Sokwani Chilembo said this during the virtual launch of the 2025 Zambia Mining Survey report by PriceWaterCoopers (PwC) Zambia last week whose findings show that the highest the country could achieve given the circumstances in terms of copper production was 1.9 million tonnes of copper.

Mr Chilembo said the mining policy stabilisation in the last four had continued attracting fresh capital in the mining industry which called for more support towards mineral explorations and expansions to reach production milestones.

"The mining industry was previously gasping for fresh air but with the policy consistency we have seen the mining industry rebounding by an average of 10 per cent…," he said.

He said meeting the three million tonnes of copper per year by 2031 required annual capital injection of about US$200 million in mining expansion and exploration while maintaining consistency in the policy environment.

In a presentation, PwC Zambia Country Senior Partner Andrew Chibuye said from the survey perspective, the country was not likely to attain the three million tonnes but that there was a possibility of graduating to 1.9 million tonnes from the brown and green fields potential.

"The country has made progress in the mining industry if you consider Kansanshi Mine's S3 Project, the revival of Mopani Copper Mine and Konkola Copper Mine (KCM)…but our findings show that we will only manage 1.9 million by 2031," Mr Chibuye said.

Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development Director - Planning and Information Obias Musonda who was on the panel maintained the Government's target of achieving three million tonnes of copper by 2031.

"We are confident the milestone of reaching three million tonnes of copper will be attained because the Government is not sitting idle and waiting for things to happen…," Mr Musonda said.

He said the formalisation of the Artisanal and Small Scale Miners (ASM) where the Government was expecting 100,000 tonnes of copper this year were some of the additional interventions.

Schweizer, Absa and Megasave partner to support CB farmers

By CHATULA KANGALI

SCHWEIZER Agriculture has announced a collaborative partnership with Absa Bank Zambia and Megasave Supermarket to implement an Input Financing Scheme (IFS) targeting small-scale farmers across the Copperbelt Province.

The initiative will support the production of 5,000 hectares of soyabeans, connected to the Sustainable Agricultural Financing Facility (SAFF), Constituency Development Fund (CDF) programmes and structured market systems such as off-take by Megasave.

Executive Director Joas Chihangu says the partnership aims to improve yields and technical capacity, strengthen financial inclusion, restore soil health through climate-smart practices, enhance farmer incomes and market participation and build resilient rural economies.

Speaking during an engagement with smallholder farmers in Mpongwe last week, Dr Chihangu said Schweizer Agriculture unveiled financing models, training pathways and market-linked opportunities designed to support small-scale farmers.

"This partnership aligns with Zambia's national development agenda, supporting food security, renewable energy value chains and inclusive economic growth," he said.

Dr Chihangu said the partnership was expected to have a significant impact on the lives of smallholder farmers on the Copperbelt, improving their livelihoods and contributing to the country's economic growth.

He said the organisation was looking forward to scaling impact and unlocking new opportunities for smallholder communities.

Dr Chihangu said Schweizer was working with other stakeholders to redefine the future of agriculture.

He said the partnership was part of Schweizer Agriculture's efforts to strengthen Zambia's agricultural value chain through strategic partnerships.

Tomato demand outstrips supply – FVAZ

By ANDREW MULENGA

THE demand for tomatoes on the market may outstrip the supply of the commodity which has begun tightening due to weather conditions, the Fruits and Vegetables Association of Zambia (FVAZ) has observed.

FVAZ further notes that currently there is an adequate supply of onions as well as potatoes on the market to satisfy the demand for the commodities across the country until mid-January.

Secretary general, Gideon Kalima said tomatoes were available on the market; however, the supply had begun to tighten across the country mainly due to weather conditions.

Mr Kalima said in an interview that supply of the commodity was at the moment only coming from farmers that had strategically planted tomatoes with a view of harvesting at the onset of the rain season.

"Most farmers grow their tomatoes for harvesting in August, September and October. So around that time supply of the commodity is in abundance; but, around this time most of the commodity is depleted," he said.

Mr Kalima said that due to the huge demand on the market the price of the commodity had also increased to about K450 and K500 per box, a huge leap from the previous K100 and K150 per box price.

He said that despite the disruptions in the supply of tomatoes, there was no policy to import the commodity as local farmers were perfectly capable of producing enough to satisfy the entire market.

Mr Kalima said supply of onion and potatoes on the market was expected to be adequate and meet the demand likely up to mid-January when the two commodities would become scarce.

"At that time the association together with other stakeholders such as chain-stores will undertake an assessment to determine their availability then make resolutions to submit to the ministry of Agriculture," he said.

Mr Kalima said once the government reviews the resolutions, a recommendation would be made on whether to lift the temporary ban on importation of the commodities to fill the supply gap.

He said that the supply was currently adequate, with prices of around K100 and K120 per 12 kilogrammes remaining unchanged.

…As copper extends record-breaking run

COPPER in London settled near a new all-time high, propelled by a bullish price outlook from Citigroup Inc. as traders anticipate a shortage caused by stockpiling in the United States (US).

The industrial metal closed 1.5 per cent higher at $11,620.50 a tonne on the London Metal Exchange (LME) last Friday after setting a fresh record of $11,705 a tonne that topped the previous all-time high earlier in the week.

The moves came as Citi analysts outlined a base scenario that sees copper averaging $13,000 a ton in the second quarter as inventories build up in the US.

"We have conviction in copper upside through 2026 supported by multiple bullish catalysts, including an incrementally constructive fundamental and macro backdrop," the Citi analysts, including Max Layton, said in a Friday note.

They forecast a 2.5 per cent rise in global end-use consumption next year, citing a lower interest-rate environment and fiscal expansion in the US as drivers of growth, as well as European rearmament and the energy transition.

Copper, a key component in pipes, power cables and electric vehicles, has gained more than 30 per cent on the LME this year.

The rally has accelerated in recent weeks as concerns grow of an exodus of metal to the US in anticipation of import tariffs next year — in turn, draining inventories in other key locations.

The copper market is set to enter a structural deficit next year, with the shortfall widening over the next decade on robust demand and constrained supply, BloombergNEF said in a report.

Other analysts, however, have issued more conservative outlooks for copper in recent days.

While the metal is expected to remain "volatile" and could easily reach new highs, prices above $11,000 a tonne are not sustainable as the global market is not physically tight, Macquarie Group analysts led by Peter Taylor said in a note.

Copper inventories at global exchanges have spiked to more than 656,000 tonnes, the highest since 2018, with around 60 per cent held in warehouses under Comex in the US. – **Bloomberg**

Forest Africa's wild products on high demand

By CHATULA KANGALI

FOREST Africa Zambia Limited, a company that has been processing wild fruits into various products since 2020, is experiencing a surge in demand for its products on the local market.

The company, which is based in Chilanga District, manufactures jams, juice, and yogurt from wild fruits such baobab, musekese and ngai.

Company Quality Standards and Production Manager Malifa Mwendelema said the consumption of such fruits was gaining popularity.

Ms Mwendelema said in an interview that the company was supplying its product in various chain-stores like Pick'n Pay on the local market.

"Our products are natural and organic, consumers are appreciating them and consuming more and demand is growing," she said.

Ms Mwendelema said the company was exploring the international market for the exports of its products.

She said the company started making products from wildfruits after identifying the gap on the markets for processed wild fruits.

Ms Mwendelema said the company observed that the wild fruit value chain was currently underutilised and had potential to help increase income for rural communities.

She said the company currently had eight products and the current equipment was able to produce 1,000 bottles per hour.

"We are looking forward to procuring refrigerated tracks to enable us to export our products,you know these are fresh products and need refrigeration at all times," she said.

She said the company currently employed 58 locals and had more than 200 primary collectors of wild fruits.

Ms Mwendelema said the company was in the process of signing contracts with the collectors of wildfruits

She said the company was also utilising waste from baobab fruits to produce charcoal to promote environmental sustainability around the community it was operating from.

•SOME of the products made by Forest Africa Zambia Limited.

National Breweries' profits soar

By CHATULA KANGALI

NATIONAL Breweries has posted a K146.6 million profit driven by cost savings and Kwacha gains in the half year ending September 30, this year.

According to the financial statement posted on the Lusaka Securities Exchange (LuSE), the company recorded a profit after tax of K146.6 million compared to a loss after tax of K140.6 million in the previous year.

The company says it benefited from the appreciation of the Kwacha which positively impacted landed costs of imported raw materials.

Operating profit also saw a significant surge jumping to K213 million from a loss of K94 million in the prior year.

The company states that the gross profit increased by 68 percent over the comparative period driven by margin enhancement initiatives on grain procurement import substitution and product improvement.

The resilience of the company distribution footprint and route to market continued to yield positively to sales volume.

"We remain committed to optimizing our operations and improving our product offerings to drive growth and profitability," it states.

It also indicates that its financial performance was supported by a 15-per cent increase in volumes in the first quarter and a 12 percent growth in the second quarter.

The company says despite sales volumes being 41 per cent below the previous year, the sales mix biased towards higher margin pack offerings delivered value with sales in monetary terms down by only 30 per.

It states that its power stabilisation plan which included the deployment of generators helped mitigate production challenges and sustain production.

The company states that it planned to launch new products to enhance customer service through an increased distribution footprint and focus on optimising the local supply chain to grow margins.