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PRESS RELEASE

Nearly a trillion dollars of infrastructure investment in SADC creates market for revamped sand and gravel processing

Once neglected minerals and materials may hold the key to millions of jobs across Southern Africa at a time when oil and metal exporting countries are grappling with low commodity prices. Mega infrastructure projects agreed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State are forecasted to draw in US\$986 billion in investments over the next ten years, ramping up the demand for construction materials exponentially. Estimates from the African Development Bank indicate that for each billion invested in African infrastructure, between 3-7 million jobs are created.

“The need for infrastructure investment in southern Africa is immense and local construction materials will play a huge role,” said Viwanou Gnassounou, Assistant Secretary General of the ACP Group. “It’s clear that the mining, processing and use of materials like sand and gravel can be an engine for domestic economic growth and employment, especially for youth and women. We need to make sure this sector is up to the task. We need it to be productive, inclusive, responsible and capable of creating sustainable jobs.”

However, the national and local enterprises that mine, process and supply minerals and materials used in construction are in need of an overhaul. While nurturing home-grown jobs and boosting local enterprise development, the small-scale and mid-size operators that dominate the sector in Southern Africa lack know-how to access markets and better technologies and have a poor environmental, health and safety record.

“Building sand and gravel are very high value for Africa. We need to unlock the potential in this sector to create jobs, fuel local enterprise development and accelerate achievement of Africa’s industrialization agenda,” said Frank D. Mugenyi, senior industry advisor at the African Union Commission.

Construction materials are part of the ‘Development Minerals’ sector, which comprises the range of minerals and materials mined, processed, manufactured and used locally in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and agriculture.

Endorsed by the African Union as a priority sector for the achievement of Africa’s Blueprint for

Development: Agenda 2063, ‘Development Minerals’ are increasingly recognised for their potential to spur domestic economic development.

The ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme is investing €13.1 million in training and developing SMEs, governments, civil society and other stakeholders in 40 countries across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to equip this essential sector to meet the growing domestic demand for Development Minerals. In the first eighteen months of the programme, more than 1500 people participated in 28 training and knowledge sharing workshops. It is an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, financed by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and implemented by UNDP.

“The potential of the Development Minerals sector lies largely untapped and building the capacity of governments, civil society and operators, which are mostly small and medium scale, will help underpin strong local economies. We are proud to support this capacity-building programme in partnership with the ACP group and the UNDP,” said Geert Anckaert, interim head of cooperation in the Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique.

“This programme is about the materials that are used to build roads, hospitals and schools. We are working with the ACP Group of States and the European Union to revive the domestic minerals sector in Southern Africa. This sector generates employment, income, and livelihoods for the very poor, bringing us closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,” said Marcia de Castro, UNDP Resident Representative in Mozambique.

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For more information about the Programme, please contact: Dr. Daniel Franks, Chief Technical Advisor/Programme Manager of the ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme (daniel.franks@undp.org). For press and media enquiries, please contact: Mr. Luis Zaqueu, Communication Officer, UNDP Mozambique (luis.zaqueu@undp.org)

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About the Southern Africa Regional Training Workshop on Environment, Community, Health & Safety: Improving the sector’s environmental, health and safety and other professional practices will help Southern African countries make the most of the minerals and materials essential for domestic economic development. This event, organized by the ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme brings together around 40 participants from **Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland and Zimbabwe**, who work in regulatory agencies and local governments, small-scale mining enterprises, associations, business development centres, civil society organisations and community groups, to learn more about the responsible management of ‘development minerals.’ These include industrial minerals, like gypsum and salt, construction materials, like sand and gravel, dimension stones, like marble and granite, and semi-precious stones, like garnet and tourmaline. As the workshop host, Mozambique will play a leading role in sharing new knowledge in the region.

About the ACP-EU Development Minerals Programme: The ACP-EU Development Minerals

Programme is a three-year, €13.1 million capacity building programme of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, financed by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and implemented by UNDP. The programme is supporting sustainable and inclusive development in the industrial minerals, construction materials, dimension stones and semi-precious stones sectors through capacity development of key stakeholders such as regulatory agencies and local governments; private stakeholders including small-scale mining enterprises, construction companies, mining and quarrying associations; as well as training centres, universities, civil society organizations and community groups. The 40 countries involved in the programme are:

Africa: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea – Conakry, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Caribbean: Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

Pacific: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu.

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