

CHAD

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Chad has approximately eight million inhabitants and covers an area of 1.3 million km². Since coming to power in late 1990, after decades of political instability and civil war, President Idriss Deby has successfully managed a difficult transition to political reconciliation and democracy. A new conflict began in 1998, though fighting was confined to the Tibesti region in the north. In January 2002, the Government of Chad and the rebels signed a peace agreement. The economy is heavily reliant on the cotton sector, and agriculture generates 40% of GDP and provides a livelihood for 85% of the population. Following increased revenues associated with the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline project, Chad's real GDP grew by 8% in 2001. This project may transform the economy of the country. In addition to doubling the government's annual budget, the project is expected to double Chad's GDP in the near future. In 2002, side-lights on history were marked by the discovery of the seven million-year-old Toumai skull in northern Chad, which was reported to be the oldest human ancestor yet found.

The mining sector is still poorly developed and the resources mined in Chad are quite limited. Small-scale alluvial mining is producing a recorded amount of 1,000 oz/y of gold, but the actual yearly production is assumed to be much larger. Occasional artisan diamond production is reported from a few locations (Baïbokoum and Guera) but no figures are available. Exploitation of natron gives occupation and revenue to a large part of the population of Kanem, north of Lake Chad, which produces an estimated 25,000 t/y.

Chad is a landlocked country, and gold and diamonds appear to have the most development potential, although many other mineral occurrences, both metallic and industrial minerals, are known in the country. Exploration carried out in the late 1980s and early 1990s by UNDP/DRGM confirmed that the greenstone belts of the Mayo Kebbi and Ouaddaï regions, in the southwest and northeast of Chad, respectively, were similar to, and had the same gold potential as, the Birimian greenstone belts of West Africa. Afko Corea Co., together with various partners, began semi-industrial gold production in the Gamboke area, southwest of Chad.

Chad is endowed with petroleum deposits. The Doba crude oil project comprises three oilfields, which are reported to contain close to 1,000 Mbbbl of oil. Some 300 wells will provide a peak production of 225,000 bbl/d, to be pumped to the Kribi seaport in Cameroon via a 1,050 km long pipeline. The project was eventually launched by a consortium, comprising Exxon (40%) and Chevron (25%) of the US and the Malaysian company Petronas (35%), with the blessing of the World Bank. Construction of the pipeline began in 2001 in Cameroon. The commissioning of the Chad oil-exporting system is

expected in 2003. It will mark the last significant date before the first oil sales and revenues, expected in 2004.