

## Press Release

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### UM takes new initiatives in Africa

The UM group has recently concluded a significant number of cobalt related transactions in Africa.

UM Engineering, the group's engineering services subsidiary, has concluded a contract with the Zairian state-owned copper and cobalt producer Gécamines, to assist in improving cobalt recovery yields and to upgrade some of the older hydrometallurgical purification steps, as well as to revamp the measuring and control equipments at the Shituru cobalt plant near Likasi. When implemented, these measures should allow to boost cobalt recoveries by several hundred tonnes per year. This project is expected to be operational by early 1997.

Concurrently, the group's UM Cobalt & Energy Products division has acquired approx. 28,000 tonnes of low grade cobalt hydrates, containing some 1000 tonnes of cobalt.

These hydrates have been shipped to South Africa where they are upgraded and from where they will be sent to UM's cobalt refinery in Olen, Belgium.

The upgrading of the cobalt hydrates in South Africa will be undertaken by Union Mineral Concentrators Pty (UMC), a company based near Johannesburg and active in the treatment of low grade metal bearing raw materials and residues.

UM Cobalt & Energy Products has acquired a 33 % stake in UMC. The balance of the shares are held by UMC's management, as well as by Fraser Alexander (Pty) Ltd, a diversified South African industrial and services group. UM has the intention to contribute to the development of UMC, whose capabilities are both complementary and supplementary to UM's own refining and recycling operations.

Finally, the Kasombo cobalt mine, in which UM invested jointly with Gécamines earlier this year, is now fully operational. The first ore has already been processed and refined at Gécamines' Shituru refinery and is ready for shipment. This metal will be marketed through Gécamines' usual sales channels. Part of the metal will be purchased by Union Minière. The Kasombo mine is on target to produce more than 1000 mt of cobalt in 1996.

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