

MINING PIONEER

Big uranium plans unveiled by Mashile-Nkosi

Mpho Sibanyoni
Business Reporter

BUSINESSWOMAN Daphney Mashile-Nkosi has become the first black person in South Africa to build a large-scale uranium mine fresh from a green field.

Kalahari Resources chairwoman Mashile-Nkosi sprang to prominence when she accused late businessman and ANC donor Sandi Majali of hijacking her company.

She appeared to have put most of her challenges behind her when she unveiled the mine and sinter plant in the Kalahari basin, Northern Cape, on Wednesday.

"About 85% of the mine construction is done and it will take about six months for us to be able to do large

scale mining," Mashile-Nkosi said.

She said though 97% of the sinter plant was complete, tests were being conducted on equipment.

The plant would be fully operational in February.

Kalahari Resources owns 40%, ArcelorMittal 50% and the Industrial Development Corporation 10% of Kalagadi.

ArcelorMittal has, however, decided to sell its stake to Mashile-Nkosi or any person she nominates. Kalahari has so far pumped R4-billion into both operations.

Over the next two years the company aims to invest an additional R2.8-billion to complete the projects.

Kalagadi owns three farms – on which the company holds new order mining rights – containing an



DIG DEEP :
Kalagadi sinter plant, near Kuruman, during construction.

PHOTO:
MARIANNE
SCHWANKHART

estimated 960 million tons of chrome ore.

But a recent exploration programme has identified 102 million tons of mineral resources. The mine and sinter plant, still in the construction phase, have both employed over 1 600 people.

When the construction is concluded both operations will employ between 1 200

and 1 500 people.

They range from semi-skilled workers like rock-drill operators to highly specialised personnel that include miners, rock engineers and metallurgists.

The workers include supporting staff such as chefs, security and medical staff.

"Chrome will be dug from the mine and then trans-

ported to the sinter plant," said Mashile-Nkosi.

"The manganese content in the ore stands at 36%. The sinter plant will be used to raise the ore content to 46%."

Mashile-Nkosi will soon build a smelter in Eastern Cape's Coega Industrial Development Zone. – sibanyonim@sowetan.co.za