

TAJIKISTAN

By Interfax-CNA

Tajikistan is one of the weakest economies in Central Asia. The country's weak potential and the recent civil war are complicating development. The only industries that can export their products are aluminium, cotton and electricity. The TadAZ smelter produces all of the aluminium exported from the country.

Tajikistan's GDP grew by 10.2% in 2001. Industrial production rose by 14.8%, consumer goods production grew by 37.6% and agricultural output by 11%. Tajikistan had a visible trade deficit of US\$31.0 million. The foreign trade turnover dropped by 9% to US\$1.33 billion, and exports fell by 17% to US\$651.5 million whereas imports rose by 1% to US\$682.4 million. Exports in 2001 were down 13.8% for mineral products, 43% for chemical products, 83.9% for machinery and equipment, 81.6% for transport equipment, and 8.4% for nonprecious metals.

Aluminium makes up 61% of Tajikistan's exports, and cotton fibre accounts for 11%. In 2001, Tajikistan exported 287,000 t of aluminium (13,500 t more year-on-year) worth US\$398.4 million, including US\$64.9 million to fellow CIS members and US\$333.5 million or 84% to the rest of the world. Tajikistan shipped 49% of its aluminium exports to the Netherlands, 19% to Turkey, 13% to Russia, 10% to Hungary and 6% to Iran.

Tajikistan plans to create several joint ventures in the mining industry. The country plans soon to launch production at the major Altyn-Topkanskoye lead and zinc field, which has reserves of more than 110 Mt of ore. The government was in preliminary talks with a foreign company whose name was not disclosed. A joint venture will probably be formed. Altyn-Topkanskoye previously produced 1.5 Mt of lead and zinc ore that was shipped by rail to the Almalyk Mining and

Metallurgical Combine in Kazakhstan for processing. The mine suspended production in 1996 and was completely shut down in 1999.

The government passed a resolution to create a Tajik-Austrian joint venture at the Anzobsky GOK, which produces antimony and mercury ore. The enterprise can produce about 500,000 t/y of ore, but is currently producing less. The new joint venture will set up production of metallic antimony in Tajikistan. The project will cost at least US\$10 million.

A Tajik-Russian joint venture will be set up at the Adrasmsky GOK under a protocol signed at intergovernmental level. A small metallurgical plant will be built to produce at least 10,000 t/y of lead. The project will cost US\$52 - US\$54 million and will be carried out in several stages over the next few years.

The country possesses some gold reserves. According to the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, the country has 28 gold-fields containing a total of 430 t of gold. If necessary investment is made in the gold industry and the political situation remains stable, Tajikistan could increase gold production to 10 - 20 t a year by developing new mines, according to the country's precious metals committee.

Aluminium

The TadAZ aluminium smelter at Tursunzade, the only primary aluminium smelter in Central Asia, produced 324,000 t last year, up 8% from 300,000 t in 2000. The company was able to export 287,000 t worth US\$398 million as a result of the increase. Production has increased at an annual rate of about 10% for the past three years, and the plant expects to maintain that rate this year.

TadAZ receives most of its raw material from Russia's Ansol and Russian Aluminium and pays for it with aluminium and aluminium

products. The plant has a capacity to produce 517,000 t/y. To achieve this it must operate 12 electrolysis and three pre-baked anode units. Production peaked in 1989 at 460,000 t of aluminium.

The smelter will be able to produce 500,000 t/y, if the supply of electricity increases. The Sangtidinskaya hydro-electric plant, alone, will generate 2.7 billion kWh when it goes into operation and then Tajikistan will be self-sufficient in electricity. Once the Riogunskaya hydro plant, capacity 3.6 billion kWh, starts up, Tajikistan will be generating 13.3 billion kWh a year, enough to export to neighbouring countries and beyond.

Coal, Oil, Gas

The Republic has six large coal-fields, with proven reserves at Fan Yagnob (Leninabad

region) totalling around 2,000 Mt. Shurab, one of the largest fields not far from Isfar, was the main supplier of coal for Tajikistan and various regions in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan before the break up of the Soviet Union. In total, Tajikistan has 17 coal deposits and 24 prospects, and estimates total reserves at 3,600 Mt.

Coal production totalled 27,500 t in 2001, an increase of 18.2%. During the year, state-owned Tochikangisht (Tajikugol) set up six affiliates located in the Rashta valley in the east and in the Khatlon region in the south. The affiliates, Sayed, Khakimi, Mienadu, Shurobod, Nazar Ailok and Saimiri are open-pit producers.

Tajikistan produced 26,200 t of crude oil in 2001, down 12.5% year-on-year.