

# Business time for South Sudan

In essence, the presence of the Republic of South Sudan at the event symbolises the importance of Africa Down Under, poised to celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2013, to the continent.

The conference has been the stage for mining and services companies alike to sell their African stories, and it is now an increasingly popular forum for African Governments to encourage foreign investment and participation in their respective mining communities.

A creation of **Paydirt**, Africa Down Under was helped along by a handful of intrepid Australian explorers that realised the prospectivity and accessibility of doing business in Africa.

Just like junior mining companies have taken to the podium to tell of their progress made over the years, Africa's newest investment destination was also back for a second year to report on developments.

"Welcome to South Sudan. Come and grow with us," was the message from Deputy Minister of Mining and Petroleum Elizabeth James Bol.

Last year the Republic of South Sudan was initiated as the world's newest country and Africa's 53rd nation prior to Africa Down Under and secretary general, Pa'gan Amum Okiech, came to Australia to let the world know the country had arrived in its own right.

Fast forward 12 months and Bol's visit to Australia was not about the liberation of South Sudan, rather business and the opportunities for investors and explorers inherent in the country.



**Hon Elizabeth James Bol**

While prospecting and geological information are still works in progress, the ministry of petroleum and mining is striving towards opening these facets up.

Programmes of airborne geophysics, regional and detailed geochemical and geophysical mapping of South Sudan in its entirety are activities the ministry is planning.

From the information at hand, gold has emerged as a prime metal to chase in the country as well as diamonds, iron ore, copper, uranium, lead-zinc, tin and tungsten, chromite, nickel, marble and bauxite.

Private Australian company Epic Explora-

tion Pty Ltd is one explorer keen on manganese and gold in South Sudan and its hierarchy made it clear that the country would soon spark interest from bluechip miners.

Proving its legitimacy as a serious mining destination may come when the Mining Bill is tabled for its third reading in the National Legislative Assembly on October 3.

Via the Mining for Development initiative, which helps countries use their natural resources to grow their economies and provide social benefits to their people, Australia has provided assistance to help build a sustainable mining sector in South Sudan.

One of the key objectives of the programme is facilitating the implementation and dissemination of the Mining Act and providing training opportunities for South Sudanese ministries in Australia.

For this part and the visit by Tim Fischer, the special envoy to the Australian Prime Minister – Africa portfolio, Bol was most grateful for Australia's engagement with South Sudan.

"The entire leadership of the Republic of South Sudan conveys its appreciation and message of thanks to the Australian Government for their entire support for the ministry of petroleum and mining," she said.

**– Mark Andrews**