



Avocet Mining

News Release

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West African exploration update

Avocet Mining PLC (“Avocet” or the “Company”) announces an update of exploration activities in West Africa. A key objective in the first quarter of 2010 has been to prioritise the Company’s extensive range of exploration projects in West Africa and to build the framework for accelerating the exploration programmes over the remainder of the year.

Burkina Faso

The evaluation of projects in West Africa has identified several known gold mineralised systems in the 100 per cent Avocet-owned Bélahouro group of permits that cover an area of 1,660 square kilometres surrounding the Inata Gold Mine in northern Burkina Faso. These include the 16 kilometre long Souma Trend, 12 kilometre long Damba Trend and near-mine gold prospects at Pali, Filio and Inata North. This work has also identified significant areas of young Saharan sand cover that potentially conceals additional targets.

Avocet has contracted Geotech Airborne Limited to conduct a 9,100 kilometre heliborne VTEM geophysical survey over the entire Bélahouro District. This is part of an initiative to map all prospective geological structures and develop an inventory of viable targets to guide exploration going forward. The survey commenced in April 2010 and should be completed by the end of June 2010, with interpretation being conducted during the wet season (July and August) and completed by September 2010. At this time, approximately 35 per cent of the survey has been completed. Results from near the Inata mine are yet to be fully analysed but are encouraging enough to indicate at this early stage that the mineralised gold bearing system that hosts the Inata deposit is likely to extend in a number of directions. If proven to be the case, this has the potential to significantly increase Inata’s resource and reserve base over time.

The Company has also contracted West African Drilling Services, a subsidiary of Layne Christensen Drilling, to conduct a 22,000 metre scout drilling programme at the Souma Trend. This will focus on the core gold mineralised prospect of Dynamite, south of Souma village, where previous RAB and RC drilling, conducted prior to Avocet’s entry in West Africa, returned up to 6m @ 13.0 g/t Au from 87 metres depth and 30m @ 3.06 g/t Au from 20 metres depth, respectively. Drilling will also target other mineralised vein zones within the Souma Trend where earlier RC drilling intersected up to 23m @ 15.5 g/t Au from 16 metres depth. The scout drilling programme commenced in May 2010 and will be completed prior to the onset of the wet season in July 2010.

The above two initiatives will lead on to a more aggressive exploration programme in the second half of the year, with the objective of developing new open pittable gold resources in the Inata area.

Guinea

Guinea is proving to be another exciting new destination in West Africa for gold companies, and Avocet has a number of high quality gold exploration projects in the northeast of the country. These include the 986 square kilometre Tri-K Block that hosts the Koulékoun and Kodiéran gold prospects, the 142 square kilometre Balandougou permit and the 130 square kilometre Kankan permit. Avocet owns 95 per cent of the Koulékoun permit and 100 per cent of all the other permits.

The Tri-K Block consists of six permits which have been subjected to soil geochemistry surveys and two new permits where soil sampling will be undertaken in the second quarter. Only two of twelve main gold anomalies in the six sampled permits have been drilled to date. Infill drilling over a small area at Koulékoun led to the estimation of Indicated Mineral Resources of 12.69 Mt @ 1.55 g/t Au and Inferred Mineral Resources of 0.72 Mt @ 1.49 g/t Au (667,000 ounces gold in total above a 0.5 g/t Au cut off), while scout drilling at Kodiéran returned 20m @ 6.43 g/t Au from 35 metres depth and 60m @ 2.01 g/t Au from 72 metres. Mineralisation is hosted by metallurgically-clean feldspar porphyry intrusions at both prospects. The remaining ten geochemical gold anomalies are untested. Work in the second quarter will focus on mapping and pitting of these untested anomalies with a view to defining targets for a scout drilling programme in the second half of the year.

Balandougou consists of a 7 kilometre zone of artisanal mining that is up to 200 metres wide. RAB and aircore drilling by Ashanti in 1997 returned up to 17m @ 17.3 g/t Au and 6m @ 16.0 g/t Au. Mapping and sampling will proceed ahead of a scout drilling programme planned for the second half of the year.

The second quarter exploration programme includes trenching and pitting to evaluate the hard rock source of the 5 kilometre long geochemical anomaly at Kankan.

On 19-20 May 2010 a number of mining industry analysts from the UK and Norway will visit Avocet's operations in Burkina Faso. A copy of the corporate and exploration presentations to be made to the analysts will be available on Avocet's website from today.

Peter Flindell, Avocet's EVP for Exploration, commented:

"Avocet has a quality portfolio of gold projects in West Africa and a talented exploration team with the experience to lead the discovery of new gold mines. We are committed to an exploration programme that will underpin organic growth and aid the Company in becoming a 300,000 ounce a year producer."

For further information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Avocet Mining PLC (“Avocet” or “the Company”) is a gold mining company listed on the AIM of the London Stock Exchange (Ticker: AVM). On 27 April 2010 the Company announced that it had submitted an application for listing on the Oslo Stock Exchange and now expects to list in June 2010. The Company’s principal activities are gold mining and exploration in Burkina Faso (as 90 per cent owner of the Inata gold mine), Malaysia (as 100 per cent owner of the Penjom gold mine, the country’s largest gold producer) and Indonesia (as 80 per cent owner of the North Lanut gold mine and Bakan project in North Sulawesi). The Company has a number of other advanced exploration projects in West Africa and South East Asia.

Background to operations

Inata has a resource of 1.7 million ounces and reserves of 932,000 ounces. Inata poured first gold in December 2009 and is currently ramping up to full production rates in excess of 10,000 ounces per month. Other assets in West Africa include exploration licences in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali (the most advanced being the Tri-K gold exploration project in Guinea with a resource of 666,500 ounces).

Penjom is Malaysia’s largest gold mine and was developed by Avocet after applying modern technology to grass roots exploration in an area of historic alluvial mining. The mine is located in Pahang State, approximately 120 km north of the country’s capital, Kuala Lumpur.

North Lanut in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, was developed by Avocet from the exploration stage and has produced over 300,000 ounces since it was commissioned in 2004. North Lanut is located within a Contract of Work which includes exploration and mining rights over approximately 50,000 hectares in an area highly prospective for gold. Avocet holds an 80 per cent interest and an Indonesian company, PT Lebong Tandai, owns the remaining 20 per cent.

Competent Person Statement

All references to Mineral Resources and exploration results have been reviewed and approved for release by Mr Peter Flindell, BSc (Hons) MAusIMM, Executive Vice President - Exploration for Avocet, who has more than 20 years experience in the field of activity concerned. Mr Flindell is a Competent Person as defined by the JORC Code (2004) and a Qualified Person as defined by National Instrument 43-101. He has consented to the inclusion of the technical information in this announcement in the form and context in which it appears.