



Part of the African chrome fields plant that was commissioned in kwekwe

Patrick Chitumba, Midlands Bureau Chief

THE Aluminothermic plant launched by President Emmerson Mnangagwa last Wednesday at African Chrome Fields has created 50 new jobs and will be producing at least 600 tonnes of Ultra Low Carbon High Grade Ferrochrome (ULCHGFeCr) per month.

The plant at Zimbabwe's biggest chrome miner, ACF, is set to further increase the company's range of products through the addition of ULCHGFeCr and boost employment across ACF's operations. The technologically-advanced plant will initially produce 300 tonnes of ULCHGFeCr and is expected to ramp-up production to 600 tonnes when at full production.

The Aluminothermic Plant creates certain by-products that have economic value themselves and will be sold as a secondary income from the plant.

“The launch of this plant brings with it the creation of 50 new jobs, bringing the total number of employees at ACF to more than 1 250. The new plant will increase the economic value of the high-grade chromite ore by removing large quantities of gangue minerals, resulting in the production of a higher grade ferrochrome with minimum impurities,” said ACF national projects liaison officer, Mr Ashruf Kaka .

He said one of the advantages of the new plant is that no electricity is required.

“The Aluminothermic Beneficiation Plant is a very exciting step both for our flagship operation and for the development of Zimbabwe’s ferrochrome industry. Zimbabwe currently sits on more than 12 percent of global chrome reserves and we want to help the country realise its full potential as a major global player in the production and beneficiation of this vital stainless-steel ingredient.”

Mr John Drummond, chief technical officer with ACF, said the aluminothermic process is not only more efficient, but cleaner as well when compared to more conventional methods.

“The specific recipe and know-how of the Aluminothermic Plant for this manner of beneficiation is unique to ACF. The main ingredient being the high-grade ferrochrome that ACF mines alluvially,” he said.