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Giant diamond found in Lesotho

LONDON - Miners in Lesotho have found one of the world's largest diamonds, a near-flawless white gem weighing nearly 500 carats, mining group Gem Diamonds said yesterday.

The diamond was discovered in the Letseng Mine on September 8, the company said. It has been analysed by experts in Antwerp and found to weigh 478

EXPERTS SAY IT WEIGHS 478 CARATS

carats, with very few inclusions and of outstanding colour and clarity.

"It has the potential to yield one of the largest flawless round polished diamonds in history," the company said.

Letseng is one of the most productive mines in history.

Four of the world's 20 largest rough diamonds have been found at the mine, including the three largest diamonds found this century.

Before it is cut into gems it is hard to value the diamond, but a spokesman for Gem Diamonds said a similar weight stone with lesser quality colour and clarity had recently sold for R95 million.

Minister for natural resources Monyane Moleleki praised the productivity of the mine, one of the highest in the world at more than 3 000 metres. - Reuters

