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**CONTACT**

*WDC Communications  
wdc.communications@gmail.com*

**WORLD DIAMOND COUNCIL EXPRESSES REGRET AT DECISION  
BY GLOBAL WITNESS TO LEAVE KIMBERLEY PROCESS**

NEW YORK: December 5, 2011 - The World Diamond Council expresses its regret at the announcement by Global Witness that it is leaving the Kimberley Process, and calls upon the organization's leadership to reconsider its position.

The World Diamond Council has always felt that progress in the campaign to end the trade in conflict diamonds will come through dialogue and engagement, and in this respect feels that the decision by Global Witness to walk away from the table will be counterproductive.

Global Witness' withdrawal from the Kimberley Process is regrettable, particularly given the important progress that has been made in addressing the concerns they raise.

- In spite of the organization's absence at November's Kimberley Process Plenary Meeting in Kinshasa, an agreement was reached by all governments, including Canada, the European Union, the United States and Australia, to continue to hold the Zimbabwe government to account and to allow only exports from those operations in Marange that have demonstrated compliance.
- With regard to the Ivory Coast, which has been suspended from the KP for several years, the Kimberley Process, with the active participation of the diamond industry, has been working closely and effectively with UN agencies to identify diamonds from that country and establish remote monitoring of its diamond mining activity. And even now, with peace being restored to the Ivory Coast, the KP continues to work with these parties to ensure that procedures are in place and compliance is achieved, before it is allowed back into the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

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- Venezuela, which also is suspended from the Kimberley Process, has been given until December 20 to provide the documents and data required, or it will be "removed from the list of KP participants."

While the rate of progress is sometimes slower than desired, the Kimberley Process has proven over the years that it is effective and does have teeth. Legal exports from the Marange region of Zimbabwe were effectively held up for two years, before it was decided that the situation at certain mines has improved to the point that monitored exports could proceed. Indeed, while boycotts against Zimbabwe have almost all proven ineffective, the KP was the only organization able to report actual progress in getting the government to change its approach.

"The overriding goal of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has been to protect the integrity of the diamond, so that it properly contributes to bettering the lives of ordinary people living in the areas in which it is mined and processed. The system is not perfect, and is in need of constant review. However, you cannot contribute to the process if you are no longer engaged," said Eli Izhakoff, WDC President.

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