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**Address to special meeting on ‘From blood diamonds to peace diamonds: conflict prevention through the Kimberley Process,’ conducted as part of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York**

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Excellencies; Mrs. Hilde Hardeman, our host and outgoing KP Chair; ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered today in this auspicious House of the Nations, in recognition of the suffering of a great too many innocent individuals, caused by proceeds earned from mineral wealth, which in our case involve rough diamonds. Capital that should have been invested in building better lives was diverted from doing good to causing harm. And a great deal of harm it did, in countries like Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

But, 20 years ago, a coalition of the willing engaged under the stewardship of the United Nations, and over the course of the next few years not only managed to stem, almost entirely, the trade in what came to be referred to as conflict diamonds, but by doing so also played a key role in bringing an end to several of the world’s most intractable civil wars. Led by the UN’s special envoy at the time, Canadian Ambassador Robert Fowler, his assistant David Angel, as well as Swedish Ambassador Anders Mollander, what then an unlikely alliance of individuals included co-founder of Global Witness Charmian Gooch, Ian Smillie, and a number of leaders from the diamond industry who are present today.

What we essentially managed to do together was contribute to the ending of deadly violence, by cutting off the flow of funds necessary to fuel, and so sustain, ongoing civil conflict.

We are tremendously proud of what we managed to achieve together, but also recognize that, ultimately, it was the members of the UN who had finally decided that enough was enough.

What was born out of pain, destruction and suffering in 1999 led to the establishment of the Kimberley Process a year later, and to the launch of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in 2003. Today we look back at what we achieved and consider the road ahead.

There is also a broader perspective to consider. **What lessons can be learned from the Kimberley Process for the prevention and resolution of all conflict where natural resources are involved?**

The Kimberley Process was designed around a consensual model, which ensures that each participating country can equally contribute and have its say. It also invited both civil society and industry, who were also co-architects of the system, to participate as observers.

In the industry's opinion, within the narrow focus of KP's mandate, which specifically addresses conflicts related to rebellions against recognized governments, the system has proven quite successful.

But its potential to eliminate conflict has not been replicated when it comes to mineral-related conflicts not directly associated with civil war. There we have failed thus far, and tragically at great cost to a massive number of individuals.

This brings us to the next question. **In those parts of the world that the Kimberley Process has been successful, how has it impacted on the livelihoods of mining communities?**

Importantly, it is fair to state that the KP did raise the awareness of governments of the risks and challenges faced daily by individuals in mining areas. But in terms of on-the-ground commitments and capacity building, it has not really managed to achieve meaningful and sustained positive impact.

It is important to qualify that statement. In the rough diamond industry, around 85% of production in volume is produced by large-scale miners, and more often than not they do make very significant and positive contributions to the local communities and economies. The remaining 15% of production is predominantly artisanal, and, although no longer really subject to the type of conflict associated with the KP mandate, with the exception of the Central African Republic, these miners and their communities are still often victims of systemic violence, and are lacking in infrastructure, proper training and the financial means and knowledge to access legitimate markets.

Defensive measures, like with the current KP, are not adequate in and of themselves. We must now move to positive action and providing solutions. For us in the industry, we know what should be done. This is to support the formalization of artisanal mining, and the introduction of the Maendeleo Diamond Standards, created by the Diamond Development Initiative, which is a body created through a coalition of expert scholars, civil society and the diamond industry. These will help ensure that artisanal mining operations abide by acceptable health and safety standards, environmental sustainability and respect for human rights.

And so onto the next question. **How has the Kimberley Process evolved to tackle contemporary challenges?**

I will be blunt. Thus far the KP has failed to properly stem the incidence of “systemic violence,” nor to reduce the tenuousness of stability in artisanal mining communities and the lack of development opportunities.

However, with the KP currently in the final year of its review and reform cycle, it today has a unique opportunity to prove its potential of relieving millions of artisanal miners and their families, of the predicament they currently face. The terms “conflict” needs to be expanded beyond civil rebellion, and come to include instances of directly-related ongoing systemic violence.

We all know for a fact that development is dependent on peace and security. This was clearly demonstrated by the situation in the CAR and how the concept of conflict has evolved.

How can we justifiably expect to see international development funding if the basic elements of peace and security are not properly addressed by the KP?

Which brings us to the final question – **How should the Kimberley Process evolve to further contribute to international peace and security?**

Several things need to happen. First, we must strengthen the standards and modalities currently in place within the Kimberley Process, like the peer review mechanisms. These need to be used efficiently to ensure stricter adherence and stronger transparency.

Second, there needs to be an unwavering commitment to the conflict-preventative mission of the Kimberley Process. It is unacceptable to refuse to address the drivers of violence by stating that the primary function of the KP is to defend to continuance of trade. It simply diverts this process from its original “raison-d’être,” namely a conflict reduction and prevention tool.

Third, and closely related to my previous point, we must address the fact that, while the UN has degree of ownership over the KP by virtue of its mandate, it has been almost totally absent during proceedings. This must change. UN representatives should attend our meetings and be more than ever involved in providing guidance and support.

Fourth, the level of representation of each member state, and especially those most at risk, must include, at the very least, senior diplomats.

Fifth, we must do a better job of measuring impact of all actors involved, both positive and negative. Data gathering is an essential tool. To ensure timely intervention and an acceptable measure of success, key information needs to be properly collected and analyzed.

Sixth, a considerably more professional support structure is of paramount importance. This includes a permanent secretariat to which the diamond industry has pledged to contribute financially. A consensus was reached on its need, but its structure, the nature of its mission and its long-term financing will require commitment. Real commitment.

And finally, seventh. In order to prevent conflict and promote development, it is essential to expand the definition of “conflict diamonds.” The Kimberley Process will only fulfill its potential, both as means of preventing violence and promoting capacity building if such an expansion is agreed to. This must include long term solutions to issues related to systemic violence and the conduct of state and private security forces. A proposal to this effect has already been put forward by one member country, and it is jointly supported by civil society and industry. We must achieve consensus around this issue by the end of this year, with India as the KP Chair.

Let me stress that the World Diamond Council has not been waiting idly for the KP to evolve. We have actively expanded our own System of Warranties, which now expressly include references to international standards supporting human rights and strict labor practices.

Additionally, the WDC has expressed strong support for the Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas of the OECD, as well as for the efforts of industry compliance bodies like the Responsible Jewellery Council, CIBJO and the WFDB. Furthermore, individual members have launched and invested heavily in their own initiatives, like De Beers’ Gemfair project, which supports the wellbeing and economic sustainability of artisanal diamond miners in Sierra Leone, in close partnership with the Diamond Development Initiative.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, it is up to the UN and the KP member states to assure the future relevance of the Kimberley Process. Standing before this assembly today I can assure you of my colleague’s support in heeding the call of the millions of artisanal miners, their families and communities that they finally share the same security and opportunities enjoyed by other members of our diamond industry, and so be able to provide their own countries, which are often in dire need of long-term development, with a more sustained income.

Thank you.