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## **US Jewelry Council Hosts World Diamond Council 2016 Annual General Meeting in New York City**

### ***WDC Discusses Importance of the November Kimberley Process Plenary***

### ***Proposes Increases in Industry Self-regulation***

### ***Representatives from the Diamond Industry, United Nations, and U.S. State Department Praise the Industry's Efforts to Help Strengthen the Kimberley Process***

**NEW YORK, NY, September 12, 2016** — World Diamond Council (WDC) members from across the globe gathered in New York City last Thursday for the organization's 12th Annual General Meeting (AGM). Hosted by the United States Jewelry Council (USJC) and generously supported by Signet Jewelers, ABN Amro Bank, De Beers Group, Brinks, UL and JCK, more than 100 representatives from the diamond industry, government, civil society and media came together to study new proposals for current industry self-regulation procedures, as well as proposals for the Kimberley Process (KP) review process to be engaged in 2017.

Representing every sector of the diamond supply chain, the WDC's AGM focused on its proposed new Strategic Plan, which will guide the organization's work through 2020 as it continues to serve as the industry voice in the KP. "The WDC has been tasked with maintaining stability in the diamond world, building upon the successful eradication of 99% of the world's conflict diamonds," stated Andrey Polyakov, president of the WDC and vice president of ALROSA. "This success is being realized through active participation, transparency and continued dialogue."

The AGM's keynote address was delivered by Mr. Maurice Tempelman, Chairman of the board of directors of Lazare Kaplan International Inc., who praised the progress the diamond industry continues to make and its ability to collaborate across diverse groups. "It is vital to maintain a sense of direction and the WDC is a rarity in that its mandate requires strategic dialogue with governments as well as nongovernmental organizations," said Mr. Tempelman.

Other speakers included government representatives who complimented the work of the WDC and discussed international efforts to strengthen the KP. Expressing the United Nations'

perspective, H.E. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, noted, “The WDC is the strongest lobbyist for the diamond industry within the Kimberley Process and a perfect example of an organization coming together to accomplish goals through compromise during a time of continuous global instability.”

Mr. Andrew Keller, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counter Threat Finance and Sanctions in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, echoed this theme and further complimented the WDC’s success over the past 15 years. “I’d like to personally recognize the WDC’s support of the KP review system,” said Mr. Keller. “We must keep tackling the issues facing us to ensure the integrity of the world’s diamond supply chain from mine to market.”

WDC members also heard from Mr. Robert Owen-Jones, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who will become the next KP Chair in 2017. During his speech Mr. Owen-Jones applauded the relationship between the WDC and the KP pointing out, “It is something you don’t see a lot of in other intergovernmental processes. It is not just an open forum but a true lasting partnership.”

Andrew Bone, Executive Director of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), and Fred Waelter, Global Business Lead for UL’s Responsible Sourcing division, also made valuable presentations on RJC industry certification and UL supply chain verification, respectively.

The AGM provided a platform for WDC members to discuss industry issues, share educational information and hold the organization’s board of directors and business meetings. Since the formation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in 2003, the establishment of best practices and voluntary guidelines like the WDC’s System of Warranties have transformed the diamond industry.

The WDC concluded the AGM eager to build upon the progress made at this year’s meeting, looking ahead to the KP Plenary Session taking place November of this year in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

#### **About the World Diamond Council**

*Established in 2000, the primary objective of the WDC is to represent the diamond industry in the development and implementation of the regulatory and voluntary systems to control the trade in diamonds embargoed by the United Nations or covered by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. Visit <http://www.worlddiamondcouncil.org> to learn more.*