

A WDC update from the KP Plenary in Brisbane – December 10, 2017

The Kimberley Process (KP) Plenary session commenced in Brisbane, Australia, on Sunday, December 9, and we wanted to share with you how the meetings are evolving.

Prior to the commencement, the World Diamond Council (WDC) led bilateral meetings with members of the KP family including the Chair, some of the 81 KP member countries and the Civil Society Coalition. It also conducted its third Observer's Forum to discuss mutual interests among industry, the Civil Society Coalition (CSC) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The WDC is led by Acting-President Stephane Fischler and Executive Director Marie-Chantal Kaninda. They are supported by nearly a dozen engaged KP Task Force members from industry, including those from ALROSA, Antwerp World Diamond Centre, Chow Tai Fook, De Beers, Rio Tinto, Rubel & Ménéché, Signet Jewelers, the US Jewelry Council and the World Federation of Diamond Bourses.

In the meetings, the WDC talked at length about the importance of reform in order to continue the KP's mission to deliver the duty of care owed to communities and consumers with respect to conflict-free diamonds. The WDC focused specifically on three areas outlined below and discussions were generally well received by all bilateral partners.

1. The need to broaden the scope of the KP definition of conflict diamonds. As part of that discussion, the topic of "systematic violence" within the definition arose as an example of a progressive step.
2. The need to establish a permanent secretariat with a location to be determined based on international best practice, built on the success of the Administrative Support Mechanism (ASM) that was established four years ago.
3. The implementation and enforcement of the KPCS minimum requirements should be strengthened by standardizing the peer review mechanism.

In addition to the bilateral meetings, WDC members also participated in productive discussions within the various KP working groups. These groups draw on the collective experience and capabilities of Participants (i.e., governments) and Observers (i.e., industry and civil society), with each focusing on specific and crucial elements to progress the work of the KPCS.

WDC is a member of the following Working Groups: the Working Group on Monitoring (WGM); Working Group on Statistics (WGS); Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production (WGAAP); the Committee on Participation and Chairmanship (CPC); and the Committee on Rules and Procedures (CRP). In addition, WDC Chairs the Working Group of Diamond Experts (WGDE). More information about the Working Groups can be found at the recently updated www.worlddiamondcouncil.org. The working group and committee meetings will run through Wednesday, December 13, which includes a special forum on artisanal mining and sustainable development; sustainability reporting; and Blockchain technology. The Plenary closes Thursday, December 14.

Of the proceedings to date, Stephane Fischler, Acting President of the WDC, said, “I am encouraged by the open dialogue and discussions we have had so far, but we should not underestimate the complexity of what lies ahead. Reaching consensus among such a large and diverse group is never easy. A successful outcome on KP reform will require patience, openness and compromise. As the voice of industry in this process, the WDC is fully committed and we remain confident that together we will reach this goal.”

Fischler added, “I am grateful for the support of the organizations who have made the commitment to the WDC, especially our engaged KP Task Force members. As an official KP Observer, we actively engage in order to influence change and contribute to greater transparency and accountability within the diamond industry to ensure consumer confidence. For example, the WDC System of Warranties (SoW) extends the assurance of the KP from rough to polished diamonds, covering the entire diamond value chain.”