

WDC PRESIDENT'S OPENING SPEECH - KP PLENARY NOVEMBER 10 2017, BRISBANE

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, November 10, 2017 - Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honor for me to address you today and it's a pleasure to be in Australia again, for this closing session of the KP year. I would also like to thank the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of this session.

This Plenary is the first of three crucial Plenary sessions, as we entered the three-year cycle of KPCS review. We won't look back, but forward only. Not for 3 years, but for many years to come.

At our recent Annual General Meeting in Dubai, I quoted an Arabic saying: *The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that is it too low and we reach it.* This reform cycle is not about blocking criticism, it's about growth; it's not about being bold, it's about being true. I hope that that will be the language we shall use the coming days, the true one.

There is no use in fooling ourselves. We need to step up. Not only because consumers ask questions, but to protect who we are. The International Standard Organization decided that a synthetic diamond cannot be referred to as 'a diamond'. Only diamonds created by nature are true 'diamonds'. Only our product has the sparkle, the magic, the future and the past all combined into one. Something so rare needs constant protection. Not only to protect our product or its reputation, but also the millions of people making this industry real, deserve at least the same respect. But dear KP members, you cannot just simply walk away because "it's complicated", giving up on challenged mining countries and then turning on us, the industry, to fix all the past and present failures.

The past months we have been working very thoroughly on the update of the website diamondfacts.org. It's a website that tells the full and true story. Not only what you read in the media, not only what people know, but what the complex truth is all about. Nothing is as important as telling our story, as explaining it to as many people as possible and being proud every time we do so. As WDC we are an observer, not a member.

We don't have a vote, but we do have a voice, and we will use it.

Last year, once again, the Central African Republic, a country still facing enormous challenges, slowly returned to the market under strict supervision of the KP appointed monitoring team. That was great news, and the proof of the importance of the KP. But we hear that diamonds are being smuggled across borders of neighboring countries. That's fooling ourselves. As WDC we believe that in the future a conflict situation must be expanded with a regional approach. We must prevent rather than react. Too many lives are at stake. Too many individual futures compromised. And so, it is essential to promote cooperation between neighboring countries, to curb diamond smuggling and illicit cross boarder diamond transactions. If we are in this together, we need to take our responsibility together.

For many years our members have been the KP Chair year after year. Everybody trying as hard as possible to make a difference in just 12 months. But what is it worth without having an institutional memory, without on hand expertise? The proposal to have a Permanent Secretariat is an important one in order to support and protect this crucial process. One the industry is fully behind.

You are all aware that in order to incorporate more assurances related to impact on human security and successful long term development, we created our System of Warranties. A chain of assurances from mine to consumer. We must ensure that all industry participants including the thousands of small and medium companies all around the globe, can and will commit to this very important effort. I am happy to say that we are close to finalizing the Guidelines which will serve to update our self-regulation system.

The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything. Not my words, but Einstein's. We are the ones that need to protect, we are the ones that create the truth, we are the ones who write the future, nobody else will.

I looked at previous speeches I delivered. I always ask for the diamond community to unite, to collaborate, to act. I keep using the same words, as I believe them to be the key to our only future.

Thank you again, Chair for hosting us in your beautiful country.

I wish all of us a productive and successful week.