

PRESS RELEASE

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Mining ministers from South Africa and Zimbabwe to attend and address the WDC Annual Meeting in Tel Aviv

NEW YORK: APRIL 18, 2013 – With fewer than three weeks to go before the start of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the World Diamond Council in Tel Aviv, Israel, two senior ministers from African mining countries have confirmed their attendance. They are the Minister of Mineral Resources of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Ms. Susan Shabangu, and the Minister of Mining and Mining Development of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Hon. Dr. Obert Mpofu. Both will address the WDC Plenary Session on May 6.

Minister Shabangu, whose country currently holds the Chair of the Kimberley Process, has been a firm proponent of the World Diamond Council in the campaign to end the trade in conflict diamonds. “The WDC had a significant role in ensuring that the statutes and resolutions adopted in Kimberley Process plenaries did not wither on paper, but rather were effectively communicated with and implemented by industry,” she declared last year, at the WDC Annual Meeting in Vicenza. “It is through this partnership among governments, industry and civil society, as facilitated by the Kimberley Process, that we are able to proudly proclaim that over 99 percent of all diamonds that enter this value chain are legitimate in their origin and conflict free.”

“Zimbabwe’s present thrust is focused on promoting collective development and progress within the Kimberley Process,” said Minister Mpofu, speaking last month at the Dubai Diamond Conference. At the meeting he reported that new diamond discoveries in Zimbabwe have the potential to meet up to 25 percent of world diamond demand by volume.

“The presence of senior government representatives from the African rough producing countries is of critical importance,” said Eli Izhakoff, President of the World Diamond Council. “Progress in the Kimberley Process has never come about through confrontation, but rather through engagement and discussion among the producers, the manufacturers and the consuming countries. It is this type of engagement that we seek to facilitate.”

Minister Shabangu and Minister Mpofu join a growing list of government representatives who will attend the WDC Annual Meeting. Among the others who will be traveling to Tel Aviv are Jose W. Ferndadez, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State; Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, Chair of the Kimberley Process; and Tung-Lai Margue, Head of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission.

The dedicated WDC Annual Meeting website is located at: <http://meeting2013.worlddiamondcouncil.org/>

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