



World Diamond Council

580 Fifth Avenue / New York, NY 10036 / USA

For more information, contact
Eli Izhakoff, Chairman and CEO
+1 212-575-8848

WDC calls for concerted international action to halt theft of natural resources in Zimbabwe

(New York, NY) – 10 December, 2008 – Like many, the World Diamond Council is appalled and dismayed at the continuing humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

In this context, we are concerned that some natural resources in the country, including a small number of diamonds, are reportedly being exported illegally for the personal gain of a few.

Zimbabwe's production of rough diamonds is relatively modest, and is estimated to be 0.4% of world production. The majority is exported legitimately through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme by reputable companies and from known, secure sources. However, we find it unacceptable that even a small volume is being traded illegally.

The international diamond industry has already taken action and is providing customs authorities, diamond bourses and the Chair of the Kimberley Process with expert instruction and photographic examples to assist in identifying the type of diamonds being illegally exported, and several parcels of rough diamonds have been successfully seized. However, we call upon these authorities and other governments to redouble their efforts and bring those responsible to justice.

In addition, leaders of the world's diamond bourses continue to instruct their members to exercise extreme caution and vigilance when trading in rough diamonds, and inform the authorities of any suspect parcels they encounter. Furthermore, industry organisations have reminded their members that they risk expulsion if they are proven to be trading in these illegal diamonds.

We believe that restoring peace and stability to Zimbabwe is one of the most difficult and urgent challenges facing Africa today. It will prove impossible, however, if governments and the United Nations fail to unite with civil society, and the private sector, in their efforts to bring this about.