



World Diamond Council

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WORLD DIAMOND COUNCIL PRAISES PASSAGE OF U.N. MEASURE TO FIGHT CONFLICT DIAMONDS

NEW YORK, NY: December 6, 2000 – The World Diamond Council today welcomed action by the U.N. General Assembly to eliminate conflict diamonds as a major milestone on the road to solving a serious humanitarian problem.

Eli Izhakoff, chairman of the WDC, said of the General Assembly decision: "This move, taken December 1 without dissent of a single member country, heartens us tremendously. It demonstrates the broad consensus to take comprehensive, effective action in a spirit of cooperation among all interested nations: those in which diamonds are mined, processed and sold. The agreement to move forward also underscores that a united front has been established between the nations and all segments of our industry."

The resolution, introduced by South Africa and co-sponsored by several nations, including the United States, is far more than a statement of intent. Rather it endorses the kind of "certificate of origin regime" needed to track legitimate diamonds from the time they are extracted in rough form through processing and distribution stages.

Industry leaders, together with several African governments, have been working since last spring to perfect a system that employs tamper-proof containers, counterfeit-proof warranties and electronic record keeping to secure the integrity of

legitimate diamond shipments. With all the relevant countries observing the same practices and rules, it will be possible to cleanse the worldwide supply of the very small percentage of conflict diamonds.

These are stones smuggled out of rebel-controlled territory in Sierra Leone, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Profits from this illicit

traffic underwrite continued fighting, often with terrible consequences for innocent civilians.

"While all parties of goodwill can be proud of the progress made," said Izhakoff, "we realize that there is more to be done." The WDC has commissioned a major Washington-based law firm to draft model legislation for consideration by all interested countries. That draft is expected to be completed around January 1. Meanwhile, representatives of involved countries will meet in Namibia later in January to consider several technical issues concerning implementation of the tracking system.

"This complex international problem that can be addressed only by coordinated international action," said Izhakoff. "We will not rest until this is accomplished."

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