



ELODIE DAGUZAN  
WDC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Speech to Regional Meeting on the Implementation of  
the Regional Approach on Artisanal and Small-Scale  
Mining (ASM) and Fight Against Smuggling of Precious  
Minerals and Stones in the Mano River Union**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2020**

Honorable Minister of Mines & Mineral Resources, Sierra Leone, Mr Foday Rado Yokie  
Your excellency, EU Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Mr Tom Vens  
Deputy Secretary General of the Mano River Union, Dr Abubakarr Tarawalie  
Chair of the KP WGAAP, Monsieur Maurice Miema  
Coordinator of the KP CSC, Monsieur Shamiso Mtisi  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to be addressing you in Freetown today, and to be provided the opportunity of participating in this important gathering.

Allow me to convey the best wishes of the WDC President, Stephane Fischler. He asked me to express our organization's strong support of the Mano River Union's unique approach to regional cooperation, particularly as it positively affects artisanal and small-scale mining. This includes the coordinated effort to prevent the smuggling of precious metals and precious stones, thus enhancing the Kimberley Process. WDC congratulates MRU and GIZ for the initiative, and also the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development for assisting in its funding.

This is a particular privilege for me personally, because it is the first official trip that I have undertaken on behalf of WDC since assuming the position of Executive Director, fewer than four weeks ago. In so doing I am walking in the footsteps of my very capable and experienced predecessor Marie-Chantal Kaninda, who many of you know personally. She set a high bar for the WDC in participating in forums like this one in the diamond-producing countries, and it is one that I am committed to maintaining. I intend to spend much of the next three days listening and learning, although our industry's goal is not to be a passive observer, but rather an active contributor to your efforts.

Within the Kimberley Process, there is a tendency to group participants according to their sector, whether they represent mining, manufacturing or consuming countries. This is not a distinction that we make in the WDC, because we are an industry body that bridges the entire length of the diamond supply chain, from the mine to the retail market. We need to be cognizant of the issues and concerns of individuals, companies and governments in the rough diamond producing countries, in the same way that we have to understand the demands and motivations of consumers in the markets where diamond jewelry is sold.

Just as rough diamond-producing countries contend that their nations should derive full benefit from their own natural resources, young consumers today demand that the products they buy must have social as well as monetary value. The natural diamond's capacity to contribute to the long-term wellbeing of people and communities in the producing countries should be considered an integral component of our product's value proposition, for it also addresses the consumer's aspiration for social significance. It should enhance the value of the jewelry in which diamonds are set, as well as the revenues that flow back to the producing countries, thus generating higher income for each of our individual nations.

The relationship between the rough-producing end of the pipeline and jewelry-retailing end should always be considered synergistic. And the structure which enables this is the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Countries like those in the Mano River Union, where diamond mining is predominantly artisanal, have posed specific challenges for the KP, but at the same time they are those in which the potential upside is the greatest.

In terms of volume, artisanal and small-scale miners account for about 15 percent of rough diamond production, but they comprise more than 96 percent of the individuals who earn their living from diamond mining. Regional initiatives that are designed to enhance the implementation of the KPCS should focus on allowing these communities to optimize the benefits they receive from their hard work, and their countries realizing the full potential of their natural resources. These include preventing the smuggling of goods across borders, better transparency and enhanced methods for monitoring the extraction and movement of diamonds, and improvements in the capacity to properly evaluate mineral output.

All of these are addressed in the MRU regional program.

As I stated earlier, as an industry our intention is not simply to offer moral support for these capacity-building efforts in the artisanal mining countries, but to play an active role as well.

WDC members are already involved in grass-roots projects that are designed to ensure that, not only will efforts like the MRU regional program bear fruit, but there will be practical means for KP-certified goods mined in your countries to reach the market, and for the miners to receive fair value for their work. We believe that they should be enabled to build a better future for themselves, their families and communities.

I will mention two such projects.

Launched in April 2018 in the Kono region of Sierra Leone, De Beers GemFair project, enables artisanal miners at 100 licensed artisanal sites, which have been certified as compliant with the Maendeleo Diamond Standards (MDS) by the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI), to safely access the supply chain. When artisanal miners recover a diamond,

they use an application on a tablet computer supplied by GemFair to register the stone. The miner delivers the diamond to the GemFair buying office where it is evaluated and a purchase offer is made. Miners are not obliged to sell their merchandise to GemFair, but even if they do not, they have been provided valuable information about the market value of diamonds in their possession.

The second project is called "My Fair Diamond." It was first launched by the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), together with CAP Conseil, in the Koidu region of eastern Sierra Leone in 2015. Diamonds were sourced from artisanal miners in areas certified by the DDI as being MDS-compliant, and then cut and laser-inscribed in Antwerp, where they were set in custom-designed and manufactured jewelry, created from fair mined-certified gold from Peru. AWDC is now repeating the effort in the Republic of Guinea, using artisanally mined diamonds from the Banankoro region. The project has received funding from the Government of Belgium and will be rolled out over the coming three years.

Grass-roots projects carried out by industry, supported by regional programs like those that will be discussed over the next few days in Freetown, will enable us to create the synergies that optimize the artisanally-produced diamond's potential as an economic and social force.

I look forward to sharing with all of you information about the WDC's new System of Warranties, which incorporates critical elements of responsible corporate practices to ensure the good provenance of diamonds flowing through the chain of distribution, thus complementing current KP standards.

We salute the efforts of the governments of the Mano River Union, together with their German and EU partners. We urge all participants to support their program to sustain and strengthen the Kimberley Process, to formalize the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, and allow their diamond resources to meet their full potential as providers of sustainable and economic opportunity.

I wish us all a fruitful conference.

Je vous remercie.