

## WDC President expresses cautious optimism at close of 2021 KP Plenary, citing the KP's progress in welcoming the Principles for Responsible Diamond Sourcing



*The 2021 KP Plenary in session in Moscow, Russia, on November 12, the final day of the event.*

MOSCOW, NOVEMBER 15, 2021 – WDC President Edward Asscher struck a positive tone in a statement made at end of the Closing Session of the 2021 Kimberley Process (KP) Plenary on November 12, noting that he was encouraged by the KP's constructive discussions and its welcoming of a Declaration on Supporting Principles for Responsible Diamond Sourcing as Best Practices.

“This is a positive step that further highlights the important role of the KP in stemming the flow of conflict diamonds,” the WDC President said.

While the WDC would have preferred that the KP make concrete decision about the expansion of the conflict diamond definition, Mr. Asscher said “we always seek to support journeys of continuous improvement, and so we will continue to push for progress.” He added that the WDC will place the conflict diamond definition as a priority item, when the KP begins its next Review Cycle.



While it continues to encourage the KP to make the progress that is necessary both to protect the security and wellbeing of all individuals working and living in diamond producing regions, and to satisfy consumer confidence, the WDC has selected to move ahead on its own, introducing its revised System of Warranties, the WDC President said.

“This holistic approach is imperative for all of us in the business of selling diamonds, because who today wants to buy a pair of sneakers, a t-shirt, coffee beans or chocolate – let alone emotionally symbolic jewelry – if there is any doubt about the conditions in which its components were sourced and the impacts they had on society,” Mr. Asscher stated.

“The System of Warranties is only the beginning,” he continued. “As, I said, our guiding principle is that we are on a journey of continual improvement. And we will do so in such a way that two principles are maintained at all times: (1) we must be fair to all concerned, which in practice means moving

*The WDC will “always seek to support journeys of continuous improvement, and so we will continue to push for progress,” WDC President Edward Asscher told the Closing Session of the 2021 KP Plenary.*

forward in the spirit of the Declaration on Responsible Sourcing; and (2) we do not want to leave anyone behind.”

In his address, the WDC President expressed the industry’s support for suspending the expansion of green zones in the Central African Republic, from where rough diamonds can be legally exported, until such time that it can be verified that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme can be reliably implemented in currently non-compliant parts of the country.

Addressing the delegation from CAR directly he stated: “It is our fervent hope that your entire country will be considered a ‘green zone’ in the not distant future, and we will do whatever we can as the WDC to support progress towards that. It is an eventuality that your citizens and the communities in which they live deserve. But as I stated, the rules and procedures of the KP must take priority. They ultimately are what will make this happen. If we take shortcuts, we endanger the entire framework, and consequently the future of our product and your country’s wellbeing.”

Mr. Asscher praised the outgoing Chair of the Kimberley Process, the Russian Federation, for the “ingenuity and efficiency” it demonstrated in rising to the challenge of organizing a hybrid Plenary meeting.

He also expressed the WDC’s pride in having the opportunity the opportunity to continue heading the work of the KP’s Working Group of Diamond Experts. In this way, he said, WDC

will “continue to deliver our expert knowledge, just as we have done since the beginning of the KP.”

He concluded his address by paying special tribute to two KP stalwarts, for which the 2021 Plenary meeting will be last they attend in an official capacity. The first was Hilde Hardeman, the Head of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, who herself served as KP Chair in 2018 and then continued to head the EU delegation to the Kimberley Process, working tirelessly all the while to reach consensus on an expanded definition for conflict diamonds. “Your charm, untiring stamina, rock-solid consistency and Belgian flair have time and again driven progress in the KP. It takes an excellent diplomat to keep this family together, and over the years you have done so with grace. It has been an honor and pleasure to work with you and we wish you all the best for yourself and your new career,” Mr. Asscher said.

The second official to whom Mr. Asscher paid tribute was the long-time head of the American delegation, Pamela Fierst Walsh, Senior Advisor on Conflict Minerals at the U.S. Department of State, who will be moving to a private sector position. “This is a great loss to all of us here, but a win for her next position,” the WDC President stated. “Pamela, our best wishes will accompany you and your family in your next career.”

To download a copy of the WDC President address to the Closing Session of the 2021 Kimberley Process Plenary, please [CLICK HERE](#).

#### **About the World Diamond Council**

The World Diamond Council (WDC) is an industry organization focused on preventing conflict diamonds from entering the global supply chain and on preserving the value attached to natural diamonds. Formed in 2000, it is the only organization where the diamond trade is represented in full, from producer to retailer, and includes the most influential commercial businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and individual companies in the industry today. The WDC is the voice of the international diamond industry in a tripartite collaboration with governments and civil society known as the Kimberley Process (KP). The KP secures and manages monitoring processes that have virtually eliminated the trade in conflict diamonds to ensure that the world’s supply of diamonds is from sources free of conflict. Visit [www.worlddiamondcouncil.org](http://www.worlddiamondcouncil.org) to learn more.