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**Address to ECOSOC Meeting**

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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Kimberley Process – established in 2000 – created the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which was launched at the start of 2003. Implemented independently by each Participant government, its purpose is to prevent conflict diamonds from accessing the legitimate supply chain. By so doing, it's meant to preserve the peaceful and secure environments necessary for countries and communities to leverage their natural resources to achieve sustainable development.

How successful is it? That depends on your terms of reference.

The KPCS Core Document narrowly defines conflict diamonds as rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments. In that context, the certification scheme was demonstrably effective. Within just five years of its rollout, the incidence of such goods in the trade fell from 4 percent of output to less than two-tenths of 1 percent.

But, while it addressed civil wars in Africa, the Kimberley Process never covered all systemic challenges to safety and security in the mining regions. This became more obvious when the Covid pandemic started. We soon realized that it offered only limited solutions for protecting human rights, and that complementary tools would need to be developed.

Covid had a very negative effect on miners in Africa and polishing centers in India. The KP can only help to improve the mining and working conditions if the definition of conflict diamonds is expanded, which should include violations of labor and social rights, and not be limited.

The diamond industry did not wait for governments to act. We developed a self-administered system that includes three open-source layers of protection, starting with the WDC's self-regulatory mechanism, the System of Warranties. That was recently upgraded to explicitly cover human rights, labor rights, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering.

The second layer is the Responsible Jewellery Council's Code of Practices, which also requires compliance with internationally-recognized human rights standards, as well as a wider set of business integrity, social and environmental benchmarks that can be monitored, audited and certified.

The third layer is made up of due diligence systems and criteria created by industry leaders. Each is customized to the respective company's supply chains and clients, and all are grounded in fundamental human rights principles.

We were encouraged last year by the KP Plenary's agreement to accept, as best practices, seven principles for responsible diamond sourcing. They include support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, protection of human rights, labor rights and the environment, and industry standards of self-regulation.

For all of the above reasons the industry is so adamant that the KP expand the conflict diamonds definition. What we want to avoid is a two-tier diamond industry, where the upper tier is able to meet consumer expectations, and so ensure a growing market share. The lower tier, which would struggle to meet minimum consumer-requirements, could see its market share diminish.

Our proposals about the definition are based on ethical and moral convictions. It is also a necessity for a sustainable business environment.

The beneficiaries of a strengthened Kimberley Process would be those same stakeholders. Providing safer working environments, they would be better equipped to optimize the potential of their natural wealth, building sustainable economies and societies.

In this way the KP will not leave any stakeholder behind.

SDG 16 calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, equal access to justice and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. An upgraded Kimberley Process has the potential to meet that goal.

Thank you