



**Edward Asscher
WDC President**

**Address to the African Diamond Producers' Association
(ADPA)**

7 April 2022

Mr. President, Honorable Ministers, your Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to address the opening session of this meeting of the African Diamond Producers Association. The World Diamond Council is pleased to see the ADPA revived and holding such a high-level meeting.

As you know the World Diamond Council represents the full breadth of the global diamond industry, from the mines to the polishing centers, and the wholesale, retail and the service sectors. We also are one of the three foundation stones of the tripartite structure of the Kimberley Process.

The KP was initially established in 2000 to protect governments against rebel movements. Indeed, the original definition of conflict diamonds is: “diamonds in the hands of rebel movements who sell them to overthrow the legitimate governments.” Today, almost two decades later, this definition remains unchanged—protecting governments and countries, but not always their people.

The people who work in the mining industries deserve the same degree of protection.

The value of diamonds depends on the level of demand in the marketplace, and that is directly influenced by consumer confidence in our products. In many countries, our customers are demanding to know whether the diamonds they are considering buying have improved the wellbeing of all the people involved in producing them. These days, they also ask about the provenance of these diamonds.

In Africa we have a positive story to tell. The rough diamonds being produced on the continent have the potential to contribute to improving the lives of millions of people involved in their extraction – be it small-scale or large-scale mining – as well as those who depend indirectly on the revenues of rough diamond production.

In the producing countries, diamonds are an essential component for socio-economic development, but for that to be optimized, consumer confidence is of paramount importance.

There is a direct link between consumer confidence in the marketplace and the current and future wellbeing of diggers, traders and wholesalers, as well as the contribution they are able to make to the countries in terms of economic infrastructure, social programs, education and healthcare.

Therefore, I am so proud to be able to address you today on behalf of the World Diamond Council.

Your governments are able to influence the outcome of the Kimberley Process meetings. They have an inherent interest in doing so, for you are the ones who will benefit in the end from a rise in the sales of diamond jewelry, but also will suffer most if consumer confidence evaporates.

To enhance the value of the Kimberley Process, one must also enhance the emotional value of rough diamonds, and therefore polished diamond jewelry as well.

As you know, over the last several years attempts to change the “conflict diamonds” definition have been hampered by various governments — mostly, but not only of non-producing countries.

We also are facing a second challenge in the natural diamond industry, and that is laboratory-grown diamonds. Over the long run, they can become a substitute for part of the natural goods we sell.

That laboratory-grown industry purports to be better and more ethical than we are, although we rarely know under what circumstances their diamonds are produced, what use of energy goes into their production, and under which conditions they are polished. Neither do they talk of the positive contribution made to the people in the countries where they operate.

But I am here only for the natural diamond industry, which is our common interest.

I trust that the issues of human rights and labor rights are high on the agenda of the ADPA members. That is where you and we can make progress.

At the most recent Plenary of the KP, a declaration was accepted which today is called the Frame 7.

Frame 7 defines the key requirements for responsibly sourcing rough diamonds in our supply chain. These are the protection of human rights and labor rights, community building, the protection of the environment, anti-money laundering, anti-corruption and differentiating between natural diamonds and synthetics.

I know that these subjects are as close to your hearts, as they are to ours. If and when the ADPA, as a prime beneficiary of a healthy diamond market, will support the development of a strengthened “conflict diamond” definition, you will find in the diamond industry your most loyal ally.

In the end, we collectively strive for the best of all the people in the diamond industry – in the widest possible sense.

I thank you for the honor and the opportunity to address your important meeting, and I wish you all the very best.