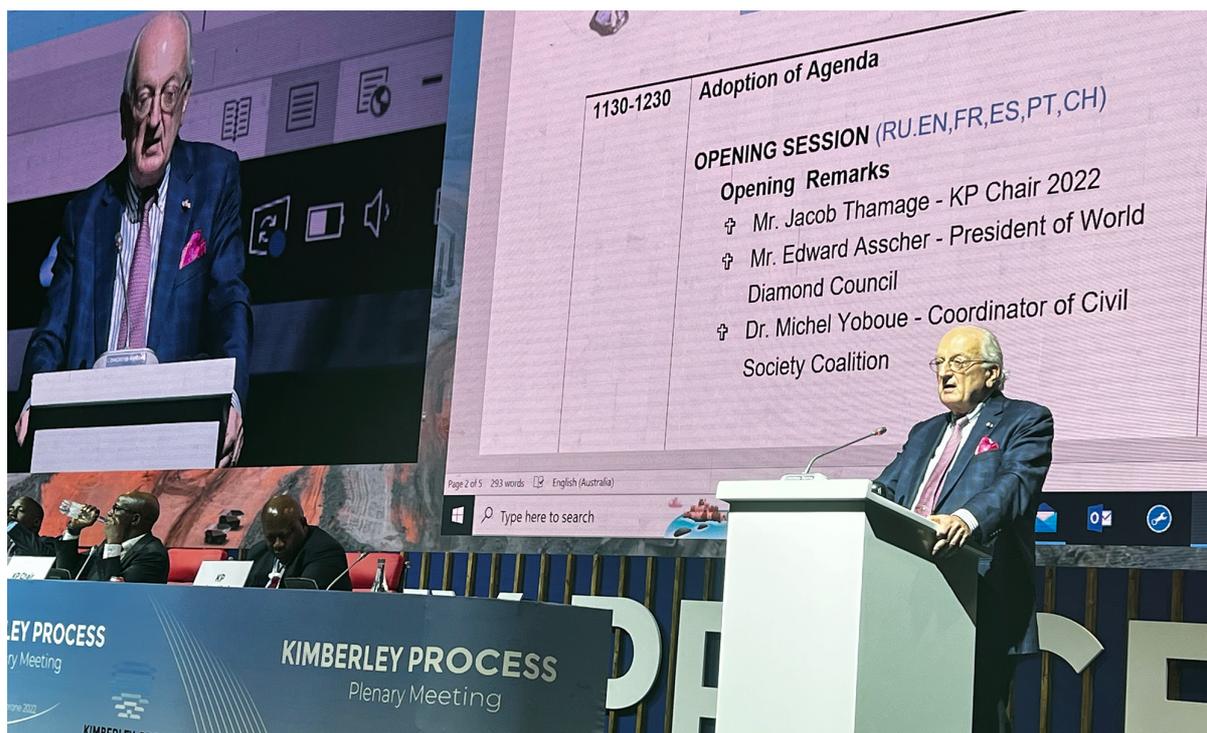


Reform of Kimberley Process essential to ensure relevance, WDC President tells Opening Session of 2022 KP Plenary



WDC President Edward Asscher addressing the opening session of the Kimberley Process' Plenary Meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, on November 1, 2022.

GABORONE, BOTSWANA: NOVEMBER 2, 2022 – With the Kimberley Process about to mark the 20th anniversary of the launch of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) in January 2003, it is important that the international forum not rest on the laurels of its early successes, WDC President Edward Asscher told the Opening Session of the KP Plenary in Gaborone, Botswana. If it does not adopt the reforms necessary to ensure that the KPCS remains relevant in a changed world, natural diamonds could lose relevance with the new generations of socially conscious diamond consumers, he stressed.

“The KPCS today offers incomplete solutions, for the current definition of ‘conflict diamonds’ is ineffective in preventing all instances of systemic violence,” Mr. Asscher said.

The 2022 KP Plenary is expected to approve a new Ad Hoc Committee to oversee the next Review and Reform Cycle, which is undertaken every five years. The conflict diamonds definition, which has remained unchanged since 2003 and applies only to rough diamonds financing civil war, will be at the top its agenda.

“We were unable to reach consensus in the previous Review and Reform cycle about how it may be possible to reference violations of human rights in the conflict diamonds definition,” the WDC President said. “But in the past two years the centrality of human rights has been formally recognized by the KP Plenary.”

At the previous Plenary meeting in November 2021, the KP ratified Frame 7, which defines the key requirements for responsibly sourcing rough diamonds in the supply chain. It specifically cites the protection of human rights.

“Frame 7 was an important step in the right direction,” Mr. Asscher said. “It also fell in step with the WDC’s revised System of Warranties, which was launched in 2021. But we now need to close that circle, and that means finally amending the conflict diamonds definition.”

The 2022 KP Plenary is taking place in the shadow of the war in Ukraine. “As I stated publicly, irrespective of what I or my colleagues may feel personally about the dreadful events in Central Europe, a war between two sovereign states clearly falls outside the current mandate of the KP. That is fact, and we would be compounding a tragedy if we allowed the war in Europe to damage what we are able to achieve in Africa,” he said.



The Kimberley Process Plenary in session during the first day of the meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, on November 1, 2022.

“For the World Diamond Council our neutrality is an iron-clad rule,” the WDC President continued. “The industry we represent covers the entire globe.”

“Nonetheless, while we are neutral, we are not morally indifferent. We have clear guidelines. All people should be able to operate safely and securely, without fear of violence or suppression. All law-abiding members of our industry should be granted access to the distribution chain and be allowed to earn fair value for their efforts and ingenuity. Furthermore, the people and communities of all countries fortunate to be blessed with natural diamond resources, and the countries where polished diamonds are processed, should be able to realize the full economic and social benefits that these natural diamonds are able to provide,” Mr. Asscher said.

The WDC representative is the only nominee for the next Chair of the key Working Group of Diamond Experts (WGDE), to serve from 2023 to 2026, having been unanimously endorsed by the working group’s current members. Mr. Asscher thanked them for their support.

At this current KP Plenary, the Technical Expert Team, or TET, which is coordinating the establishment of a Permanent KP Secretariat, will formally recommend a host country for the Permanent KP Secretariat, from an original group of five prospective candidates. TET also is chaired by WDC.

“The KP continues to face major challenges. A permanent and reinforced secretariat should contribute to a positive dynamic within the organization and ensure that we as a KP are able to cope with these challenges ahead,” Mr. Asscher said.

Turning to the Central African Republic, he reiterated WDC's support for the principle that the country be able to gain fair benefit from the diamonds responsibly mined in areas under government control. But he expressed concern about the presence of rebel forces in the sub-prefectures of CAR that are considered KP compliant.

"Since 2021 KP Plenary, no written report has been received by the CAR Monitoring Team from the UN Panel of Experts regarding the political and security situation on the ground," he said. "For those reasons we cannot recommend approving the requests for any new compliant sub-prefectures that were submitted by the CAR Government for approval. That will only be possible when the newly appointed Panel of Experts has completed its work on the ground and a Review Mission has taken place, under safe conditions for all participants."

[CLICK HERE](#) to download a full transcript of the WDC President's address during the closing session of the 2022 Kimberley Process Plenary meeting.

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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 to learn more.