



## PRESS RELEASE

# KP's diversity should be the source of its strength, says WDC President in her inaugural speech to forum

Speaking at the 2023 Kimberley Process Intersessional, Ferial Zerouki says that her own journey is reflective of how far the diamond industry has traveled.

### VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE: MAY 23, 2023

– In her first speech to the Kimberley Process as President of the World Diamond Council, Ferial Zerouki has stressed that the diversity of opinion and background of the KP's members – Participants and Observers alike – should be considered not a deficiency but rather a source of strength. She was speaking during the Opening Session of the organization's 2023 Intersessional Meeting, which began yesterday in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.



*Ferial Zerouki, President of the World Diamond Council, addressing the Opening Session of the 2023 Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, on May 22, 2023.*

"I appreciate that there are national and business interests at stake, and that we all are committed to faithfully representing the countries and organizations that we represent," she said. "But my own lived experience has taught me of the inability to predict people's opinions or positions based on where they come from, and that a diverse group ultimately enables more successful and stable outcomes, as long as we constantly seek to recognize each other's positive intentions. After all, we all stand behind one objective, and that is the success of the KP."

Describing herself as “a proud African” and noting that she is the first women ever to head an international diamond association, Ms. Zerouki referred to her personal journey, from a child of Algerian heritage to a senior executive at De Beers, stating that “It takes courage, and it’s not easy to go against the grain, but people like you and I can be the architects and the implementers of change.”

“One of the features I have observed during my time with the Kimberley Process – indeed, something that quite likely occurs with any international body – is a tendency to organize into camps, where the underlying trend is that history, politics, economics and geography dictate the group to which you should belong,” she said. “While this is entirely understandable, unfortunately it also runs the risk of engendering an attitude of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ potentially entrenching the belief that the other side does not fully understand where you are coming from. It can also lead to an assumption that interests are inherently divergent, and that common ground is difficult to find. This can of course have a devastating impact on progress, as it becomes the victim of this separation.”



*The leadership of the WDC in Zimbabwe, from left: Udi Sheintal, Secretary; Elodie Daguzan, Executive Director; Ferial Zerouki, President; and Ronnie VanderLinden, Vice President.*

The WDC President expressed her belief that it is possible for the Kimberley Process to build consensus around two cardinal principles. The first is that natural diamond resources need to provide fair and equitable benefit to the people and countries from which they originate, and this includes enabling those people to utilize those resources for their own wellbeing and long-term development. The second is that the success of the natural diamond economy is dependent upon the product maintaining its status as an aspirational purchase from a consumer perspective.

“These principles are not independent of one another. If the one is not met, it’s unlikely the other will be,” she stated.

Ms. Zerouki said that the WDC is fully committed to a positive outcome from the KP’s current Review and Reform Cycle, noting that she is heartened by the constructive atmosphere that has characterized discussions thus far and the wise leadership of the Angolan Chair and South African Vice Chair. She added that the multi-faceted leadership of the Review and Reform Committee’s sub teams, which includes Botswana, South Africa, India and the World Diamond Council, “is

the type of heterogenous family I had in mind when talking of how diverse groups can deliver more successful and stable outcomes.”

“Ultimately, the success of the Review and Reform Cycle will be judged by the degree to which we are able to progress in providing a more germane definition of conflict diamonds, reflective of the challenges that exist in 2023. We have the ability to get there together,” the WDC President said.

Ms. Zerouki prefaced her remarks by expressing the appreciation of the WDC to the host of the Intersessional Meeting, the KP Chair, Winston Chitando, who also is Zimbabwe’s Minister of Mines and Mining Development. Paying tribute to him and his government team for selecting the spectacular setting of Victoria Falls for the gathering, she remarked: “How fitting a place it is to consider the potential offered to society by nature, and to discuss what we need to do in order to ensure that this potential is realized in a responsible, comprehensive and equitable way.”

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To download the full transcript of WDC President Ferial Zerouki’s address to the 2023 KP Intersessional Meeting, please [CLICK HERE](#).

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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](http://www.worlddiamondcouncil.org) to learn more.