



**WORLD  
DIAMOND  
COUNCIL**

**Feriel Zerouki, WDC President**

Address to Opening of the KP Plenary 2023

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

6 November 2023



Your Excellency, Minister of Local Government and Chair of the Kimberley Process, Hon. Winston Chitando,

Your Excellency, Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Hon. Zhemu Soda,

Your Excellency, Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy of South Africa, Hon. Gwede Mantashe,

Mr. Ahmed Bin-Sulayem, Vice Chair of the Kimberley Process,

Dr. Michel Yoboue, Coordinator of the Civil Society Coalition,

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

At this critically important 20th Plenary of the Kimberley Process, we find ourselves gathered under the backdrop of devastating humanitarian and geopolitical events.

We are confronted daily, with news of many innocent lives that have been lost, across nearly all continents of the world, while opposing world views threaten to tear down the social fabric of society.

Let us unite in our prayers for peace, so that the next generations, our children and theirs, may look forward to a safer, peaceful and more equitable world for all.

Today, I stand before you more determined than ever to participate in the ambition of the Kimberley Process to continue to foster peace, security and create sustainable benefits for all those who rely on it.

I would therefore like to thank the Republic of Zimbabwe for their dedication to the Kimberley Process, and for their stellar arrangements to host us again in this beautiful setting, Victoria Falls.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, the diamond industry, and indeed the KP, is no stranger to external shocks and the impact of factors outside of our control. And so, as a pillar of this tripartite initiative, the WDC has continued to play the important role of protecting the integrity and credibility of the industry and promote confidence in natural diamonds, including outside of the KP.

As such, in its capacity as the representative of the global industry, when the G7 countries announced their intention to introduce further import restrictions that will apply to all natural diamonds, regardless of their origin, the WDC responded positively to invitations to engage the G7 countries and other industry bodies to gain and provide insights into the upcoming restrictions and how best the industry could support their implementation in a manner that is effective and inclusive.

My visionary predecessor, Mr Edward Asscher, stood before you in 2021 and warned against the emergence of a two-tier diamond industry, where the upper, more established tier is able to meet consumer expectations. But the lower, less established tier, which does not meet minimum consumer-requirements, will see its market share diminishing, through no fault of its own.

I stand before you today, not only with the same warning but also to highlight that, as industry, we are experiencing the start of this shift. The victims of this shift will include all involved in the Natural Diamond Category, Governments, industry- large and small- and the communities that rely on natural diamonds.

Responsiveness, collaboration, advocacy, adaptability, and open dialogue have been the industry's strength in challenging times. The WDC has, therefore, leaned on those same strengths to enlighten the G7 about the complexity of the natural diamond value chain and possible unintended consequences, while raising awareness of our commitment to ensure that no one is left behind.

The result of these multiple consultations has been the WDC-facilitated G7 Diamond Protocol, a proposal submitted to the G7 by industry, which respects and builds on the role of Government Diamond Offices that carry out the Kimberley Process work. Additionally, the WDC-facilitated G7 Diamond Protocol represents a solution that is **EQUITABLE** and accessible for ALL, including Artisanal Miners, small and medium players in the informal and formal sector, as well as large players in the formal sector that have technological and other pragmatic solutions at their disposal, that could also be used for these purposes.

It is innovative, it is effective and, most importantly, it is equitable.

We cannot talk about equality if we do not address equity.

The WDC is ready to engage and invites further engagement with all parties, bilaterally and otherwise, on these key issues that affect us all.

Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year we embarked on the 4th Review and Reform Cycle of the Kimberley Process. Much progress has been made to advance issues that will contribute to a stronger and more adept Kimberley Process, for now and into the future.

In the discussions on the expansion of the definition of conflict diamonds, the active engagement by all shows our shared commitment to the mandate we have been given by the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted on the 29th March 2023: to explore and present to the Plenary a definition of “conflict diamonds” which captures the evolving nature of conflict and realities on the ground. Maintaining momentum on this issue is vital, especially as we continue constructive negotiations on the draft text and, in the near future, discussions with relevant external stakeholders.

I am also pleased with the progress made towards establishing the Kimberley Process Permanent Secretariat. Formalizing the KP in this way has been a long process and we are proud of the leadership of Wim Soons, the Task Force members and, of course, the Republic of Botswana, who are finalizing the details for a 2024 launch.

I would also take this opportunity to give special thanks to Elke Ceulemans, who has carried out her work with humility and a high level of professionalism for almost 10 years.

To Elke, I want to express heartfelt gratitude for your impeccable service and invaluable contribution to the KP. We thank you!

Mr. Chair,

The Compliance and Governance Sub-team, led by India, is also progressing steadily. At this Plenary, the WDC has come prepared to share a draft AD for Co-Chairmanship. We invite a constructive review of the draft to create opportunities for all Participants to lead the KP in an accessible and equitable manner.

The codification of the Core Document, led by Botswana, is also progressing at a steady pace, with the Sub-team taking a consistent and precise approach. The Core Document we adopt following this exercise will live on for another 20 years, and beyond.

Lastly, the Sub-team on Technical Assistance and Development of Mining Communities will breathe new oxygen into the KP with its objective of fostering sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships that lead to real

sustainable development wherever there is diamond-related activity. This work, led by South Africa, is vital for the future outlook of the KP, as we focus on harnessing positive impact on communities.

Mr. Chair,

For many years, we have all been working to support the Central African Republic, and there is no doubt in my mind that all parties have one shared objective – which is for CAR to be able to manage its mineral resources, free from conflict and rebel activity, in support of a strong economy and thriving people.

How we get there requires commitment and dedicated work from all sides.

We, therefore, support the CARMT's consistent call for accurate and timely data from the government that will ensure effective monitoring, and for us to advance the shared objective that supports the Central African Republic towards full compliance with the KP.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The WDC is a member of all the working bodies of the KP through active participation and leadership and considers the agenda of each Working Group and Committee to be vital work.

As we commence this week, trust that the WDC believes in the relevance of the Kimberley Process, but also trust that this is threatened if we do not move forward together.

Trust that in every meeting and every dialogue, we come from a place to strengthen the KP, protect the KP and secure its future in a challenging world that is changing faster than ever.

Once again, thank you to the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Chair of the Kimberley Process and his team for hosting us in their beautiful home.

Thank you!

