



**WORLD  
DIAMOND  
COUNCIL**

**Feriel Zerouki, WDC President**

Address to Opening of 2024 KP Intersessional Meeting

Dubai, UAE  
13 May 2024



Your Excellency, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates, Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi

Kimberley Process Chair, Mr. Ahmed Sultan Bin Sulayem,  
Coordinator of the Civil Society Coalition, Mr Jaff Bamenjo

Excellencies here present,

Salamou Alaykoum

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the WDC, I wish to thank the UAE KP Chair and his team for making all the arrangements to host us in one of my favorite places in the world.

The United Arab Emirates holds a special place in my heart, as I was born here, in Abu Dhabi, and I am extremely proud to be standing here today holding a position of responsibility, which I do not take for granted.

Dear Colleagues,

We gather here against the backdrop of devastating humanitarian and geopolitical events. Let us unite in our prayers for peace for all.

We also meet at a time when many of our businesses are feeling the pressure from the wider economic landscape that currently prevails.

Global events outside our control have dampened demand for diamonds and diamond jewelry in many locations around the world. However, it's important to remember that this is a long-term and cyclical business.

While working through these cycles is undoubtedly challenging, we must also trust that eventually, the cycle turns, and we will experience an upswing.

The industry's upswing hinges on consumer demand.

Across our WDC membership, there is a shared commitment to ensure that responsible sourcing practices are upheld and championed, driven by the obligation we have towards the communities that are impacted by diamonds, as well as improving the ethical credentials that inspire consumers' desire for natural diamonds.

Consumer trends, particularly regarding provenance and sustainability, are growing in importance, and we must be ready.

This is why I am pleased that the Chair has organized a special session on Provenance, Traceability and Technology during this week.

I am also thrilled that we kicked off the Intersessional with the expert and communities panel.

In this regard, I would like to thank Angola and South Africa as Chair and Vice Chair of the Ad-hoc Committee on Review and Reform, as well as the Sub-team Leads Kele and Linda for delivering such insightful sessions that brought together a diverse range of experts and communities representing the diamond pipeline.

The insights from communities were moving, and we would like to see more of these engagements moving forward.

These insights will not only enrich our discussions on the expansion of the definition of conflict diamonds but also on critically important issues of development, and will help us appreciate a fuller and more compelling natural diamond story.

The KP's reviews are essential, as they provide an opportunity to assess our methods and impact while seeking new ways to advance our crucial mandate of eliminating the trade in conflict diamonds.

At the half-way mark of the 4th Review and Reform Cycle, we wish to express gratitude for the continued support of KP Participants and Observers for the WDC's leadership of the Sub-team on the Definition, and we look forward to robust engagement at this Intersessional meeting.

Dear Colleagues,

The KP Chair has taken the initiative to arrange a Special Session of the Plenary at this Intersessional. This is significant because, for the first time in the history of the KP, it will be possible to make decisions mid-year and, thereby, push for progress during this important "Year of Delivery".

We must, therefore, welcome this opportunity to firmly acknowledge and promote the best practices of the KP.

At the WDC, we strongly believe in the best practice of maintaining the original country of mining origin on KP certificates. The information is available and should be highlighted and disclosed to maintain and secure confidence in diamonds.

Simultaneously, digitalization is going to be vital, to enable far greater transparency and security for the KP.

The industry is also moving forward with traceability and will complement these efforts by pioneering the technologies we have invested in.

For the WDC, reform signifies the growth and development of the Kimberley Process, and we want to congratulate the KP family and the Government of Botswana for delivering the long-awaited KP Secretariat.

The establishment of the Secretariat strengthens the KP and serves as recognition that the KP is crucial to advancing global governance and development goals.

We wish to express our best wishes to Mr. Bojun Tang for being our first Executive Secretary. We are indeed in good hands.

In conclusion, it's important that we remember what our beautiful product represents. Natural diamonds are billions of years old and the strongest mineral on Earth. They represent love, commitment, strength, and endurance.

Our industry, just like our diamonds, is not only long-term but also resilient—as we have proven time and again.

So, in a world full of uncertainty, we have unwavering confidence in our ability to navigate through challenges together. One thing is for sure: with increased transparency at the KP, the future of diamonds is bright, Inshallah.

Shoukran and thank you.

