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Press release Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition

For immediate release

“All eyes on the Kimberley Process for desperately needed reform on conflict diamonds”

Civil society calls on KP Participants to take their responsibility in preventing diamond-related conflict

This week saw the end of the 2019 intersessional meeting of the Kimberley Process (KP) chaired by India. The week-long conference was the scene of discussions among delegates on the possibility of expanding the Kimberley Process' scope to ensure that the scheme addresses modern day conceptions of what consumers see to be “blood diamonds”.

In his closing speech to delegates in Mumbai, Shamiso Mtisi, coordinator of the KP civil society coalition, commended the keen efforts of the EU Chair to progress debate on the expansion of the KP's scope in the sub-team on that issue. Numerous Participants and Observers, he highlighted, had contributed ideas, concerns and expectations for expanding the mechanism's scope. This, it was hoped, might ground an emerging consensus on the need for the KP to adapt to the evolving nature of conflicts affecting diamonds.

However, the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KP CSC) went on to express its concern about certain interventions seemingly aimed at hampering the progress of talks. “It remains cynical that the KP claims to stop the flow of ‘conflict diamonds’ but continues to struggle in taking responsibility to define and monitor what conflict actually is”, said Mr Mtisi. This will be a sobering message to bring to our communities, our civil society partners and ultimately to consumers. Having opened the week warning that continued violence in diamond production threatens both KP relevance and long-term African diamond revenues, the KPCSC's closing remarks emphasized that the KP had been entrusted with protecting the narrative of love and beauty that diamonds are intended to embody. Failure to address violence, it pointed out, would betray that mission.

Only a few months are left before the KP is supposed to close its 3-year review cycle at the November Plenary in New Delhi. This leaves only some months to finally stop the ongoing flow of diamonds affected by all kinds of conflict that currently fall outside the KP's narrow focus on rough diamonds financing rebel movements against legitimate governments. This excludes diamonds that are the result of systematic violence, widespread abuse by public or private security services, torture and inhumane and degrading treatment. The civil society coalition calls on all Participants and

Observers to cooperate constructively in addressing these serious gaps in the current functioning of the Kimberley Process. Only in this way can we restore the image of diamonds and turn it into a driver of peace and development.

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