



**KIMBERLEY
PROCESS
CIVIL SOCIETY
COALITION**

Closing speech

Dr. Michel YOBOUE

Coordinator of the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KP CSC),

KIMBERLEY PROCESS PLENARY MEETING

BOTSWANA, GABORONE NOVEMBER 04, 2022

Honourable Lefoko Moagi, Minister of Mines and Energy of Botswana; Mr Jacob Thamage, Chair of the Kimberley Process;

Mr Edward Asscher, Chairman of the World Diamond Council;

Honourable chairs of the Kimberley Process working groups;

Focal Points of Kimberley Process countries;

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen in your respective capacities.

On behalf of the Civil Society Coalition (CSC), we express our gratitude to the Republic of Botswana and Mr Jacob Thamage for hosting the KP plenary and expertly managing the contestations which threaten the credibility of the certification scheme.

The coalition is grateful to Botswana for an apt theme for this year's plenary, "Diamonds, a catalyst for sustainable development". Making diamonds a catalyst for sustainable development demands political will and actions. We call on participants to act on this well-articulated challenge rather than hiding behind so called politicisation, just to maintain the status quo which is not beneficial to diamond communities.

Our thanks also go to the Central Focal Point of the Administrative Support Mechanism, for the efficiency with which she has served and continues to serve the Kimberley Process by providing logistical support to all participants and observers with great professionalism. Ms Elke Ceulemans, thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 2022 Plenary of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) came to an end this morning of 5 November 2022, at exactly 4:30am. The meeting dragged on from the evening of 4 November to the following day because the Certification Scheme continues to apply 20-year-old conflict resolution strategies to today's global conflicts. The implications of aggression by one participant against another is an emerging KP flashpoint and is causing a rift within the Kimberley Process family.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The KP Civil Society Coalition is disappointed that the diamond trade mechanism is today held to ransom by the very participants who have benefited immensely from it at the expense of the communities affected by the extraction and trading of diamonds. Some participants continue to object to the discussion of emerging conflicts in diamond producing and trading countries citing politicisation of the KPCS.

We would like to remind the Plenary, and especially the participants who are jumping on the bandwagon, that the KP CS was set up to solve a political problem, fuelled by diamond trade, which was ravaging Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Rebel groups used revenue from diamonds to fight legitimate governments. The failure by the KPCS to discuss today's conflicts and violence which includes aggression and war against fellow KP members using diamond revenues, erodes the credibility of the certification Scheme. In as much as the KPCS is a trade mechanism, it is even more so a platform to resolve political and non-political conflicts sponsored through diamond revenues. The very functioning of the KP is in essence political, for non-governmental voices have no decision-making power and, as far as civil society is concerned, are brushed aside and even ignored.

We call on all participants not to shy away from explicitly and firmly denouncing all forms of violence brought to communities affected by diamond mining. That includes human rights violations and violations of International Humanitarian law and the attack on a fellow KP Participant by Russia. It includes the environmental damage suffered by communities affected by diamond mining and governments sponsoring rebel groups to access natural resources.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The coalition is disappointed that decision making is not listed as an item for discussion in the reform agenda. Participants have hijacked the KP, making it difficult for the certification scheme to move forward as they use the consensus decision making to block any progress.

The KPCS' failure to reform is rooted in the consensus decision making model which is abused by anti-progressive participants who are keen to entrench the status quo. The consensus decision making model was never designed to block progress, but to eliminate legitimisation crisis.

Historically the consensus decision model is grounded in the ethical belief in the collective responsibility of all for the welfare of the communities, not the irresponsible manner in which the KPCS now applies it. For us, the design of a genuine consensus model for KP CS decision making merits discussion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Progress within the KP is also held back by the silent majority. Silence in times of crises like the ones the KPCS is facing, makes them complicit in rendering the certification scheme into an

irrelevant body. An irrelevant KPCS that does not guarantee peace and security in producing and trading countries will harm consumer confidence and impact communities negatively with loss of livelihood.

We urge the incoming chair, Zimbabwe, to organise a ministerial meeting on Kimberley Process reforms to take stock of the political will of all participants to achieve reforms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Civil Society Coalition members continue to be target for attacks, intimidation and insults from some participants, further jeopardising the tripartite platform on which the KP is anchored. We want to re-emphasise that while Civil Society Coalition has Observer status, the KP is standing on three pillars. We remind the plenary of the explicit recognition of the principle of equality in the KP core document preamble. Attempts to pull down one pillar will invariably collapse the certification scheme.

The views of the civil society matter. In fact, they brought the very reasons for the establishment of this scheme to the attention of the United Nations while governments were in denial and defensive mode about conflicts sponsored through diamond revenue in their countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year's plenary has come to an end.

We are pleased with the efforts by Botswana to set the tone and the agenda for the Review and Reform of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. Reform is more than necessary because the Certification Scheme continues to apply 20-year-old conflict resolution strategies to today's global conflicts.

The KP Civil Society Coalition also applauds the plenary for progress made in identifying the host for the permanent secretariat, the launch of the reform agenda and quick turnaround of reports by review visit teams. We commend South Africa and Zimbabwe for setting the bar. The Coalition calls upon the KP to maintain the standard or even push the bar higher in the numerous upcoming peer review visits.

Whilst thanking the outgoing chair, we call on the incoming chair to be firm and protect the integrity of the KPCS by upholding high standards and applying rules and procedures to the latter.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, remember that the KP Civil Society Coalition will always remain upright and critical, always dynamic in its diversity of members, and always independent. The Coalition will always demonstrate its ability to act freely, intelligently and competently so that the expression "diamonds, a catalyst for sustainable development" becomes a reality, especially all African diamond producing countries.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Dr. Michel YOBOUE

For the KP CSC