



**Edward Asscher  
WDC President**

**Closing Statement to KP Plenary – Gaborone, Botswana**

**5 November 2022**

Chair of the Kimberley Process, our dear friend Mr. Jacob Thamage;  
Dr. Michel Yoboue, Coordinator of the Civil Society Coalition,  
Your Honorable Excellencies, Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen;  
All protocol observed.

Years ago, I had a very good customer who regularly bought large diamonds for his wife and many daughters. One day his eldest son called me for a nice stone for his daughter, who was going to be married. So, I sold him a stone and after a few weeks I called him up with a question all diamond people have to ask now and then: "Where is the money?". He answered: "I already paid through my father, because he knows how to remit the money to you". Then I called his father, and I asked again: "Where is the money?" He answered me: "Edward, what is in it for me?" I was surprised and said: "But it is your own son, you cannot make money out of your own son". He answered me with the famous last words: "Edward, family is family and business is business". I thought a lot about this this week when many spoke about the KP family.

We have reached the end of what has been an intensive week of discussion and deliberation, and we all will begin our journey homeward in a relatively positive mood.

I would like to thank the KP Chair and the government of Botswana for their hospitality, hard work and thoughtfulness in organizing and managing this meeting. Welcoming, gathering and providing a conducive working environment for delegates flying in from all four corners of the globe, not to mention the many others that joined us virtually, is a massive task in and of itself. But 2022 presented an even greater challenge, because it was the first KP Plenary to take place in what is being called the post- COVID world. It also was held under very difficult political circumstances, the like of which we had never seen before.

Let me repeat here what I said at the opening: The World Diamond Council is not morally indifferent. We have clear guidelines. All people should be able to operate safely and securely, without fear of violence or suppression. All law-abiding members of our industry should be granted access to the distribution chain and be allowed to earn fair value for their efforts and ingenuity.

Visiting Botswana is an inspiring experience. This country was fortunately spared the trauma of conflict that has been suffered by other nations. Botswana is the model for what we ultimately are trying to achieve in the Kimberley Process. It is a shining example of what can be done when you get things right – deploying diamond deposits for the benefit of all of a country's citizens – through the development of national infrastructure, the educational system and health services. As we were told this week, when Botswana achieved independence in 1966, it was ranked one of Africa's least developed nations. Today, primarily because of diamonds, it has one of continent's highest GDPs per capita.

A special word of thanks to the current KP Chair, Mr. Jacob Thamage. For reasons we are well aware of, this Plenary could have been a non-event, paralyzed by events occurring on the other side of the globe. Quietly and with polite diplomatic skill, he managed to get and keep the meeting on track, helping ensure that those who depend on the work we do, will see that the KP is developing into a new direction. Jacob certainly was the right person at the right time. We

have to admire his perseverance during the long night, at the end in which the WDC made a considerable contribution to concluding the discussions.

Fittingly the Plenary dealt with the Administrative Decision that outlines the purpose and structure of new Ad Hoc Committee for the upcoming Review and Reform cycle starting in 2023. It was the first of several such sessions, and the level of interest shown by all delegates must be considered a good sign.

While we appreciate it is early days yet we all are most gratified that there is broad agreement that the updating of the “conflict diamond” definition will be a key task of the new committee. I have spoken at length about the shortcomings of the existing definition, and the degree to which it threatens to render the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as irrelevant among diamond consumers. I do not expect the coming debate to be easy, but it is an area in which **failure is not an option**. I felt here that all countries present accept the need for change.

It is important to point out that the conflict diamond definition is not only the subject that will be dealt with during the Review and Reform Process. Among the others are the strengthening of KPCS implementation, conducting a structural review of the KP to address challenges facing communities in diamond mining regions, greater use of technology to reduce the costs of hosting KP meetings, and the strengthening of KP governance. The latter includes a WDC proposal to enable co-chairmanship and co-vice chairmanship of the KP, so as to expand the number of countries that may submit themselves as candidates.

A definite milestone was achieved when, after four years of work, the tripartite Technical Expert Team, or TET, delivered its recommendation for the host country and budget for a Permanent KP Secretariat. WDC is doubly proud, given that for all four of those years it chaired the TET. A special thank you for Wim Soons and his predecessors.

Appropriately, considering where this Plenary is taking place, Botswana was the country recommended to host the Permanent Secretariat, and it significantly has received broad support.

Work now will begin on physically establishing the Permanent Secretariat in Gaborone, and appointing its staff, with the goal being to begin operations on January 1, 2024. Until then, WDC will continue the work of the ASM, or Administrative Support Mechanism, which has been assisting the KP Chairs and working group heads for many years already. In this respect I would like to recognize Elke Ceulemans, who has been a fixture and mainstay of the ASM, and consequently the KP for most of this period.

WDC also chairs the Working Group of Diamond Experts, who I would like to pay tribute to for its single-minded focus on bettering the KP and the diamond industry. This year has been notable for the contribution its Scientific Subgroup, and its work on fingerprinting. It may well prove to be critical to the future of the KP. I urge all Participants to contribute both diamond samples and finances required to move this research forward.

I would like to commend the unsung members of the Diamond Experts Team for their continued dedication to applying the CAR footprint to all shipments sourced in the green zones of the Central African Republic. I would also note that the new Technical Guideline, TG 17, on how to deal with potentially diamondiferous samples, ending a long-standing irritation for exploration companies.

We look forward to its current Chair, James Evans Lombe, continuing to lead this effort for years to come.

The Central African Republic remains an area of grave concern, with little progress being made during the Plenary. The CAR government earlier had requested that five new sub-prefectures be approved as KP-compliant, in addition to the eight that are already approved. Before that could occur, the newly-appointed Panel of Experts would need to submit a report to the CAR Monitoring Team regarding the political and security situation on the ground and a Review Mission completed.

The Terms of Reference for the Review Mission, which were agreed to in Moscow at the 2021 Plenary, first and foremost call for an assessment of current KPCS implementation in CAR's eight approved "Compliant Zones," in which there have been reports of rebel activity. They also require assessing progress with implementation of the Revised Operational Framework for Resumption of Exports of Rough Diamonds from CAR, under which exports from the country continue for the time being.

Prior to the Plenary, the KP Chair approached the CAR government, the Head of the UN mission in CAR and the Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR, or MINUSCA as it is known, to gauge the possibility of conducting a Review Mission without compromising the safety and security of the review team. Simultaneously, the CAR Monitoring Team Chair approached the United Nation Panel of Experts on CAR for its recommendation.

To date, no replies have been received, meaning that we effectively remain in limbo. Until such time as a Review Mission takes place, it will be impossible to approve any new KP compliant zones.

In less than two months' time, Botswana will pass the KP Chair to the neighboring country of Zimbabwe, which will hold the position in 2023.

We wish Zimbabwe the very best of a luck, knowing of course that success as KP Chair is not simply about luck. It also requires hard work, wise counsel, diplomatic skill and a deep understanding of the diamond industry, the countries in which it operates and the people and communities that are its stakeholders. With the eyes of the world upon it, we hope that its term as KP Chair will be as good for Zimbabwe as it will be for our industry.

In conclusion, may I thank and congratulate all of you – Participants and Observers alike – for contributing your time and effort to the Kimberley Process.

This is my last KP Plenary as a WDC President and it has been an honour to be part of this community. We come from different places and cultures, speak a multitude of languages and have varied life experiences. We also have different political views, which became clear when those present here present the policies of their governments. But to be part of the KP is to share a common belief in the potential of natural diamonds. If managed responsibly, they can be a force for good, positive change and sustainable development.

I wish you all not only good luck but the wisdom needed to fulfill our responsibility, now after 20 years, to bring the KP into the future.