



Opening Remarks by KP Civil Society Coalition

Kimberley Process, Intersessional Meeting

June 17 – 21, 2019

Mumbai, India

Kimberley Process Chair,
President of the World Diamond Council
Chairs of KP Working Groups,
Distinguished guests,
Kimberley Process colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

On behalf of the KP Civil Society Coalition, let me start by thanking and congratulating India for chairing and hosting this 2019 KP Intersessional Meeting. We hope India will guide and steer the KP towards sustainable and positive change in tackling new and emerging issues confronting the KP. The KP CSC looks forward to seeing both issues of reform and routine KP business discussed at this meeting in a genuine, frank and open manner.

KP reforms

Chair;

This year is the KP's last in the current reform cycle – it's last chance to cut the diamond sector's ties to what is considered by both consumers and communities to be blood diamonds. Despite two and a half years since KP reform discussions started in Australia, there has still been no substantive discussion on proposals or content regarding expanding the KP's scope, nor on mechanisms to enable it to address emerging issues, like violence and conflict in an impartial and effective manner, except haggling on procedural matters. However, as CSC we would like to acknowledge and appreciate the work done the by European Union, both as KP Chair in 2018 and Chair of the Sub-theme group on Consolidation and Scope in laying the foundation for discussions on three content related elements on scope that include nature of conflict, actors involved and involvement of the UN.

As an African civil society representative concerned with the betterment of my country and the whole African Continent – with justice, transparency and economic opportunity for all, I know that where properly managed, diamonds have the potential to be a positive development driver. This potential is what the KP CSC strives for. We understand that this development potential can only be truly achieved in the right conditions. This is why we raise our voices.

Ladies and gentlemen,

consumer resistance to unethically mined diamonds and millennial demands for clean diamonds is real and not imagined. Where diamond production involves conflict or violence, it threatens both KP relevance and long-term revenues – that is, sustainable development for producer states. It does so by fueling ethical concerns about the sector as a whole. The damage here is not limited to those countries where these issues arise.

In having the most to gain from the development potential of diamonds, African producing states are likewise the ones that stand to lose the most. They must understand the threat posed to their production by (1) the failure of the KP to address serious ethical issues, and (2) the rise of synthetic diamonds. This last threat is growing.

Responsibility for KP reform lies with governments. So far, many participants have been shielded or benefited from the impact of consumer preferences for ethical stones. Changing dynamics in the luxuries market and for the jewelry sector suggest that this will not last. The KP CSC has been calling for reform for years now. But since the start of this reform cycle you have also heard the World Diamond Council (WDC) and the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI) supporting a broader conflict diamond definition. The KP's observers are there to ensure this mechanism's – and by extension, the diamond sector's - health. They are the canary in the mine. We caution you to listen.

A number of contributions have been made by participants and observers on the issue of scope. These provide a rich basis for further deliberation, and it is the KP CSC's hope that ADPA will sit at the table and likewise contribute ideas as they await approval from the African Council of Ministers. Their input is vitally important and should not be ignored. In this regard we encourage ADPA to reach out to different groups including civil society on this matter if the need arises. We will be happy to discuss the benefits of redefinition to African states and ideas on how capacity challenges in implementation of expanded scope can be addressed.

Ladies and gentlemen;

As my final word on the issue of KP scope, I would like to underline that discussions on this matter should not raise anxieties about adverse impacts on trade. Rather, the reverse is intended. Indeed, it is you that hold the reigns to ensuring that.

KP observers have made it clear that any new KP mandate would need to be applied in a fair and impartial way that can support rather than penalise states. Civil society for example is not looking for the imposition of nationwide embargoes or sanctions. We recognise that this is not always the most effective intervention. It is precisely

through the KP that states facing cases of violence or other forms of abuse should be able to seek the support needed to address them.

There are a range of possible interventions, including better formalisation of artisanal mining and training for security forces. For example, in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Mining Company (ZCDC) on its own accord, has so far organised three Diamond Security Conferences that brought together communities, civil society, Government, mining companies and State and private security forces to discuss the situation in Marange. ZCDC has also been planning to seek support for training of its staff and private security personnel on human rights. In Sierra Leone, Government has been working closely with civil society groups through a tripartite system to address problems in the diamond sector, including on internal controls. This openness is increasingly stimulating interest in sourcing from the country. The KP can innovatively seek to apply such tools in dealing with situations of violence or human rights abuse including inviting relevant human rights bodies or other relevant agencies at the national, regional or international level to assist.

It is important to understand therefore, expanding the KP's scope does not necessarily mean imposing more embargoes - it means helping states to create conditions that can make diamonds free from ethical issues and attract discerning millennial consumers.

Of course, scope is not the only reform issue on the agenda this week. The KP CSC looks forward to working with you in driving forward progress on the other highly significant issues of reform. Here we look forward to advancing progress on the enhancement of the Peer Review process, the establishment of an effective, impartial and Permanent Secretariat and the positioning of a Multi-Donor Fund capable of supporting KP implementation among those who find the burden the most difficult to bear.

The KP CSC also particularly looks forward to contributing to discussions in the Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production. It is keen to advance follow up to last year's successful Artisanal Diamond Mining Forum, as well as April's launch of the KP regional approach for the Central Africa region. It also intends to closely follow discussions on how the issue of confiscated diamonds is to be addressed by participants in the Working Group of Diamond Experts and the Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production.

Let me turn to Central Africa Republic

Chair,

The KP CSC is still concerned with the situation in CAR and ongoing trade in illicit CAR diamonds, which helps to mask conflict diamond flows, as well as robbing the country of much needed revenues. We would support further communication and dialogue

with CAR authorities on how best the KP can assist it to tackle the issue of illicit flows both through the current operational framework, as well as through the Regional Approach. Expert advice on challenging illicit flows should be sought in this context. The KP CSC emphasises that mutual cooperation between participants, KP working bodies and the CAR authorities is key to helping the CAR to move forward.

On this point, indeed, the KP CSC encourages and supports the Central African Regional Approach. Whilst we appreciate that there are notable differences in context, we look forward to input from West African delegates on how their experience in implementing the Mano River Union Regional Approach might be brought to bear on some of the issues faced in Central Africa.

Conclusion

Finally, ladies and gentlemen the CSC, looks forward to robust and constructive debates and contributions that can lead to adoption of much-needed reforms by Plenary.

Thank you

Shamiso Mtisi

KP Civil Society Coalition Coordinator