



Speech of Hilde Hardeman, KP Chair –

Opening of the Intersessional meeting, Antwerp, 19/06/18

Mister Deputy Prime Minister,
Mister Mayor,
Excellencies,
Dear Kimberley Process Participants and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

I would like to warmly welcome you to this 15th Kimberley Process Intersessional.

The European Union, as Kimberley Process Chair, is happy and proud to organize the 2018 Kimberley process intersessional in Antwerp, a city with a diamond tradition that goes back for centuries. We are grateful to Belgium, to the city of Antwerp, to the diamond community and the representatives of the civil society coalition in this wonderful city, for their hospitality and support in organizing this session.

It is a privilege to welcome you here, and it is a privilege to have with us His Excellency Mr Kris Peeters, Deputy Prime Minister of the Belgian Federal Government; and Mr Bart de Wever, Mayor of the City of Antwerp. Thank you for being with us this morning!

Excellencies,
Dear Kimberley Process Participants and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

Many of you have travelled from far to be here, some of you from the other side of the globe. Thank you for being with us.

There are major tasks ahead of us.

Taking on this Kimberley Process Chairmanship, we set out to deliver results that matter on the ground, that contribute to conflict prevention, that help ensure sustainable livelihoods for producing communities.

As European Union Kimberley Process Chair we have sought from the start to engage with all of you, Participants and Observers, member states, business and civil society.

The cooperation among the three pillars of the Kimberley Process tripartite structure, the daily work of the different Kimberley Process Working Bodies and the Kimberley Process Focal points, is what makes this process work and deliver. Coherence is crucial for results.

I am happy to say that since we last met in Brisbane, cooperation and coherence has been stepped up, at all levels, working towards a common goal. This is one of my key points of action as Kimberley process Chair.

I am delighted that the civil society coalition has risen actively to its task, engaging with great commitment in the Kimberley Process working bodies. Thank you Shamiso Mtisi for the leadership!

I am also very happy to note the active outreach between business and civil society, civil society and governments. More cooperation and coherence make for a stronger Kimberley Process. The recent multistakeholder meetings in Zimbabwe, bringing together government, industry, local communities and civil society, show how important this is in real life.

Bringing together different perspectives, exchanging and further developing best practices has been at the basis of the meetings of Chairs of the Kimberley Process Working Bodies I have organised over the past months. We met in New York in March, have been in close contact since then, and had another meeting yesterday in Antwerp. Working together, we can achieve more than the sum of what each of us can deliver alone. You will hear from the Chairs of the Different Working Bodies later this morning. I look forward to hear their updates.

Bringing together different perspectives, exchanging and further developing best practices is also what makes the added value of regional cooperation. Yesterday, experts from western and central Africa met to reflect and exchange experiences on regional cooperation. The countries of the Mano River Union have achieved a lot lately for their mining communities, for sustainable development, by working together.

We welcome and encourage the intention of the Central African group of countries to step up cooperation along similar lines, bearing in mind that contexts and situations are different. We thank all those who are working hard to make this happen. You have our full support.

Let me now come to the issue of review and reform, which is at the core of the EU chairmanship, and at the centre of this intersessional.

The Brisbane plenary set out a broad mandate. Together with the Indian Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Reform and Review, with the Chairs of the Kimberley Process working bodies, with all of you, we are actively working to move this process forward. This intersessional meeting marks the first concrete steps forward in this regard.

The Kimberley Process can count since 2013 on a performing administrative support mechanism. Thank you Elke and colleagues for your highly appreciated support. Time has now come to identify the next steps. In line with the Brisbane conclusions, the European Union accepted to contribute to the debate on a dedicated Secretariat and a voluntary Multi Donor Fund, by tasking independent experts to prepare a needs assessment. You should have received their report. This work was only possible thanks to your inputs. Thank you for that. The independent experts will present later today their findings. Under the chairmanship of Joint-Secretary Manoj Dwivedi, the Ad Hoc Committee on Review and Reform and the relevant sub-teams will reflect on the different models that are presented, each accompanied by an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengthening the effectiveness of the Peer Review system is another central aspect of the review and reform process, where we look forward to significant results, based on the extensive work that has already been taken forward by the Working Group on Monitoring.

The Brisbane plenary finally tasked to consider how to make the Core Document as clear and concise as possible, to consolidate administrative decisions into the Core Document, and to see how to strengthen the scope of the Kimberley Process in the Core Document.

Consolidating the Core Document will be high on the agenda during the upcoming expert meetings. We expect to see significant progress during this Intersessional.

Excellencies,
Kimberley Process Participants and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

Since its creation, the Kimberley Process Certification System has had a tangible impact in stemming the flow of conflict diamonds, or “rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance conflicts”, as they are defined in the Kimberley context. In the 15 years since its creation, the share of what can be identified as conflict diamonds in rough diamond trade is estimated to have come down from some 15% in 2003, to well below 1%. That is meaningful.

The Kimberley Process has also helped to change global and local attitudes. It has helped to spread the idea that natural resources belong to mining communities, not militias. This is a big change in mindset.

More needs to be done. The sense of urgency remains.

There remain non-compliant zones. We must work to overcome such situations.

Looking to the future, we must make sure that the Kimberley Process remains fit for purpose.

The Kimberley Process was launched to stem the flow of rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance conflicts. This focus has allowed the process to deliver.

We must maintain it and further consolidate it, and at the same time be ready to look beyond it.

We need to reflect on how in this review cycle we can move forward to address fundamental issues that affect the lives and future of the mining communities, that go to the very core of their very existence.

Mining communities need to be able to enjoy the benefits of their natural resources in peace, in confidence, in full respect of their fundamental rights and their environment.

The position and livelihoods of mining communities are key.

This is part and parcel of the reform agenda under EU chairmanship

I am confident that, working together, we will be able to set tangible steps forward, with the principles of sustainability, inclusiveness, responsibility and dialogue as points of reference.

Before concluding, let me thank again our high-level guests today for their interest in the Kimberley Process. My gratitude goes further to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the city of Antwerp, the World Diamond Council, the Antwerp World Diamond Centre, the Kimberley Process Administrative Support Mechanism, the European Commission's SCIC, our interpreters, and all those who are contributing in one way or another to the set-up of this organization.

I wish the Chairs of the seven Working Bodies success for their meetings.

I wish you all a fruitful, effective and enjoyable week.

I look forward to significant results. You can count on my commitment, my availability, my full support.