

**Speech of Hilde Hardeman, KP Chair –
Opening of the Plenary meeting, Brussels, 12/11/18**

Mister Deputy Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Dear Kimberley Process Participants and Observers,
Dear guests,
Dear friends,

I would like to warmly welcome you all in Brussels – the capital of Europe – for this 15th Kimberley Process Plenary, the second Kimberley Process Plenary in Brussels. Many of you have travelled from very far to be able to be here with us. Thank you, and once again, welcome!

I am delighted to see such a high level turn out for this meeting. Among our Kimberley Process guests, allow me to welcome in person

It is a privilege to have with us today His Excellency Mr. Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister of the Belgian Federal Government, and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Prime Minister for taking the time to be with us. We are grateful for your hospitality and support. Our thanks to you and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting us in this beautiful palace, this landmark of history and art, the Egmont Palace. Our thanks also to the AWDC and the WDC and of course to the European Commission for their support.

Before inviting the Deputy Prime Minister to share his insights, I would like to especially welcome today two new, or not so new, members in our Kimberley Process family: Ms Rupa Dutta from India, our new Kimberley Process Vice-Chair and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Reform and Review, and Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring, and previously Kimberley Process Chair under South-African Chairmanship. I am delighted to have them on our team, with all their experience and commitment. They replaced respectively Joint secretary Manoj Dwivedi, and previous working Group on Monitoring Chair Sipho Manese, who moved on to other responsibilities, and for whose

contribution I remain immensely grateful. A warm welcome to both of them.

I would now like to invite Mr Deputy Prime Minister Reynders to the podium for his opening address. Mr Deputy Prime Minister, you have the floor.

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Let me now add some words from my side, as 2018 Kimberley Process Chair.

I am delighted to see you all back here in Belgium, after the intersessional in Antwerp.

It was a very rewarding intersessional, and since then, a lot of work has taken place. The chairs of the working groups will give you an update on where they stand after the Family photo and the Coffee break.

Let me share with you how I see things from the perspective of the Chair.

We have a challenging agenda ahead of us this week, with the aim to make further progress on implementing and strengthening the Kimberley process, and to deliver on the reform and review tasks which the 2017 Plenary in Brisbane agreed upon.

We can only achieve results if we work together. As 2018 Kimberley Process Chair, the European Union has sought to engage with all of you from the very start. I am very glad to see a growing Civil Society Coalition, and to note the active outreach between industry and civil society, civil society and governments, governments and industry. More

cooperation and coherence build trust, and make a stronger Kimberley Process.

The close cooperation among the three pillars of the Kimberley process, the daily work of the Kimberley process Working Bodies, and the very active information sharing, cooperation and coordination between them, have further increased since we met in Antwerp. This has helped to make progress towards common goals.

Thanks to the great hospitality of South Africa, I had the privilege of meeting with all Kimberley Process working bodies and our observers in Pretoria in early October. Since then, we remained in close contact, and met again this morning.

Our meeting of working body chairs in Pretoria was followed by a face-to-face meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Reform and Review. On that occasion, under the auspices of the Ad Hoc Committee, a first discussion took place on the issue of the scope of the Kimberley process, based on the Reflection Paper which the European Union Chair put forward this summer. Our colleagues will tell you more about where things stand on the different parts of the review and reform process later this afternoon.

Several events related to artisanal and alluvial mining took place, including a first ever artisanal miners' forum, giving small scale miners a direct voice in our discussions.

Regional cooperation in the Mano River Union continued with good results, and efforts to support regional cooperation among the countries of the Central African region are taking shape. A meeting of the technical team took place this morning.

All working groups and committees worked actively to deliver, peer review visits were held, statistics compiled, reports submitted, draft administrative decisions prepared.

In the Central African Republic, the arrangements that we agreed at the Intersessional meeting in Antwerp, were delivered, speeding up the assessment process of shipments from the compliant zones.

In short, we sustained and further stepped up the momentum that we had built up in the first months of this year, of this Chairmanship.

But: all these meetings, reports, statistics and discussions, are not a goal in themselves. They are just tools, to achieve the common objective which we, as Kimberley Family all share, ever since the start of the process in 2003.

What drives us all is to stop the flow of conflict diamonds, to make sure that this wonderful resource that diamonds are can benefit the communities that mine them, not warlords.

As European Union Kimberley Process Chair, working closely with the Vice-chair, we seek to deliver results that matter on the ground, that contribute to conflict prevention, that help ensure sustainable livelihoods for producing communities.

Fifteen years after the launch of the Kimberley Process, this Brussels Plenary marks the midpoint in the current reform and review cycle, which started under Australia's chairmanship, and will finish next year under India's Chairmanship of the Kimberley Process.

While much progress was made over the past 15 years, the sense of urgency remains. Fragility persists on several points. There remain non-compliant zones. Artisanal and alluvial mining continues to face considerable challenges. The Kimberley Process has to deliver and remain relevant for the future. That is also the call of the UN General Assembly.

The review and reform agenda is at the core of the EU's chairmanship. It is also in the spotlight this week. The Ad Hoc Committee on Review and Reform has four draft Administrative Decisions on the table. One of these concerns a Permanent Secretariat. Discussions on a possible

Assistance Fund are ongoing. Consolidation of the Core document is progressing.

First discussions on strengthening the scope of the Kimberley process in the core document took place in Pretoria. A dedicated session of the AHCRR to continue this discussion is scheduled for tomorrow. Sustainability, inclusiveness, responsibility, and dialogue are the principles that guide us in this process.

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Ensuring that the Kimberley process delivers on its mandate is a central priority of the EU Chairmanship. We have worked closely with the chairs of the WGM, CPC, and WGS, to help ensure that Participants live up to the minimum requirements. Our coordinated action has allowed catching up on areas on statistical and annual reports. A solid peer review system is vital for an effective and credible KP. I am glad to see a draft Administrative Decision on Peer Review on the agenda.

A more efficient and credible KP goes hand-in-hand with ensuring it contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Mining communities must be able to enjoy the benefits of their natural resources in peace and full respect of their fundamental rights and their environment. We will explore the latter on Wednesday, during the special Forum on Environmental Challenges in Diamond Mining.

The EU and the Chair of the Working Group on Artisanal and Alluvial Production jointly organised the first Artisanal Diamond Mining Forum, in Zambia this September. It created a platform to empower artisanal miners, helping them to connect with other actors in the supply chain.

We must now ensure follow-up to their concerns. We must implement the words of the Moscow and Washington declarations.

The increasing popularity of synthetic stones makes our action even more imperative. I highly appreciate the work carried out by the Working Group of Diamond Experts for a separate HS code for synthetic diamonds, which will be discussed at the World Customs Organisation on 29th November. This is another step toward further strengthening the KP's credibility and reaffirms the position of responsibly sourced *natural* diamonds.

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We must all embrace responsibility: Responsibility by governments to take legislative steps that support ethical diamonds, to implement and enforce them. Responsibility also by the industry, to defend responsibly sourced diamonds as a principle in line with the United Nations Guidelines on Business and Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

Together we have shaped the KP into a tool for conflict prevention and development. Together, we demonstrated that the KP can act decisively and provide oversight. And together, we can make a difference in the reform and review cycle to allow for an honest diamond trade.

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

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

Together with all of you, I look forward to meaningful results at this 15th Plenary that will prepare the future trajectory of the Kimberley Process.

You can count on my commitment, availability and full support.

Thank you for your attention.