Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to thank the Chair and Vice-Chair, Mrs. Hardeman and Mr. Dwivedi, for their efforts in securing progress during this week.

On a lighter note, to the AWDC our appreciation for their amazing support and hospitality. We can agree that their Gala dinner was simply awesome.

I would now like to share with you the WDC perspective on the issues, work and progress achieved during this intersessional.

We must recognize that we have opportunities for improvement in assuring optimal implementation of our requirements and standards in part due to the very limited capacity of the present ASM.

We are therefore thankful for the now expressed support for the establishment of a permanent secretariat. It is a proposal we firmly believe is essential to deliver the long-term critical value and essential support to the reform and review proposals that will be considered and hopefully agreed upon.

As mentioned in my introductory speech last Tuesday, the WDC would like again to ask our KP member colleagues to join us on the process to provide a broadened mandate to the KP.

We will be looking to collaborate towards introducing new elements within our core documents pertaining to cases of systemic violence, environmental degradation and labor related abuses occurring in artisanal diamond mining communities.

In support of continued export from the CAR we are and will continue the support the sustained efforts from the CAR KP Focal Point and the KP Monitoring Team to improve the efficiency and integrity of its processes.

It is well understood and agreed that this improved process will be taking place within the agreed operational framework that provides the necessary data to ensure the traceability that prevents diamonds originating from non-compliant zones to be exported.

The regional approach being currently activated is an essential element in support of CAR in particular, and more broadly to ensure sustained support to combat illicit exports.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are heartened to hear that the KP membership together with us, are looking for a stronger implementation of our standards with adequate measure to enforce compliance.

Yesterday, I heard one of our colleagues from Africa say, that after these last few days of meetings, and I quote: “the KP is back!”

While the KP never left, the renewed passion for it we all experienced for it this week is not only a tribute to our Chair and the EU but a tribute to the entire KP family.

We are looking to meeting with you again in Belgium in a few months, this time in Brussels to ensure we are not only back but here to stay with a renewed spirit. A spirit of moving from conflict to contributing toward building a future for millions who have been the invisible participants and missing voices of the KP process no longer.

Thank you very much.