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World Diamond Council welcomes agreement in Kinshasa enabling export of rough diamonds from Marange region

KINSHASA, DRC: NOVEMBER 1, 2011 – The World Diamond Council has welcomed the agreement ratified today by the members of the Kimberley Process at organization's Plenary Meeting in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The agreement will enable the immediate export of rough diamonds from two KP-compliant operations in the Marange region, as well as exports from other mining operations in the area following the KP Monitoring Team's verification of compliance.

"This is a real milestone, and demonstrates categorically that the Kimberley Process provides the framework through which the integrity of the rough diamond chain of distribution can be protected, while at the same time enabling producing countries gain benefit from their natural resources," said Eli Izhakoff, President of the World Diamond Council, at the meeting in Kinshasa.

He noted the valuable contribution of the KP Chair, Mathieu Yamba, in facilitating the agreement. "His patient commitment to finding an equitable solution and his readiness to persevere in the face of difficulty were critical components in achieving success," Mr. Izhakoff said.

"Congratulations and thanks are due to the European Union, for the critical role it played in proposing the agreement and bringing it to fruition," the WDC President continued. "Credit also is due to Zimbabwe, the African nations led by the South Africa, the United States, and a host of individuals and delegates who put in long hours in negotiating the arrangement, which has escaped us for more than two years. It has been a long time in coming, and I fervently hope that it allows us to move both the KP and the industry forward."

In ratifying the new agreement, the Kimberley Process Plenary endorsed, with immediate effect, the export of rough diamonds from the mining operations of Marange Resources and Mbada.

The Plenary furthermore agreed that exports may take place from other mining operations in the Marange diamond fields, following verification of their compliance according to KPCS minimum requirements by the KP Monitoring Team, which will receive full access to the mining sites.

Within 14 days of the Plenary Meeting, the KP Monitoring team will visit Zimbabwe to examine whether a third mining operation in the area, Anjin, is KP compliant and permitted to export diamonds. The team will pay similar visit to any other new mine within 14 days of receiving an invitation.

Transparency of operation is a key element of the agreement, with compliant mining operations in the Marange region being required to share mine level data with the KP Monitoring Team on an ongoing basis. As part of the agreement, the KP Civil Society Coalition representatives in Zimbabwe will have access to the Marange area so as to allow continued reporting on KPCS implementation.

According to the agreement, the KP monitoring team will include Abbey Chikane, a former Chair of the Kimberley Process, and Mark Van Bockstael, Chair of the World Diamond Council Technical Committee. In the event that the two are unable to reach agreement, the issue will be referred to the Working Group on Monitoring for recommendation to the KP Chair.

For its part, Zimbabwe has committed to uphold the KPCS minimum requirements and will report to the current KP Plenary and the KP Intersessional Meeting in 2012 on issues related to identification of further investors, the regulation of artisanal mining, the fight against illicit digging and smuggling.

The new agreement will remain under constant review and will remain in force until the KP plenary Meeting in 2012.

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