



**KIMBERLEY
PROCESS
CIVIL SOCIETY
COALITION**

Opening Remarks by KP Civil Society Coalition

Kimberley Process, Plenary

November 18, 2019

New Delhi, India

Kimberley Process Chair,

President of the World Diamond Council,

Distinguished guests,

Kimberley Process colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

On behalf of the KP Civil Society Coalition, let me start by congratulating India for chairing and hosting this 2019 Plenary meeting and the June Intersessional meeting in Mumbai.

This year, the CSC has again expanded its membership. I am pleased to introduce our new CSC member, *Action Mines Guinea*, here represented by **Mamadou Lamarana Diallo**. During the process of reviewing the application to join the CSC, Action Mines Guinea demonstrated a deep commitment, expertise and shared concerns on local and national governance of the diamond sector and protection of community rights. We are proud and open to bring new committed defenders of the rights of mining affected communities to our ranks from different geographical regions. This enlargement process will continue based on our due diligence and internal membership processes.

KP Reforms

This plenary provides the final platform and meeting of another 3-year **reform cycle**. We urge all participants to constructively work toward reaching a conclusion on all reform areas.

Scope: On Scope, I want to thank the chair of the sub-group and all those who actively contributed to seeking a way forward on this. In our view, it is self-evident that the KP must expand the conflict diamond definition. The KP cannot claim to stop conflict diamonds and issue certificates that guarantee the conflict-free provenance of stones without defining what conflict is. It cannot claim to be a conflict prevention tool without adequate measures to stop diamonds from funding violence and conflict. Today, it is failing to do this, and thereby it is open to abuse by those seeking to lubricate all kinds of illicit, violent and criminal operations. So any participating state that still seeks to obstruct discussions during this make or break moment for the KP, is not just escaping its responsibilities. It is wilfully seeking to keep in place this self-destructive loophole of the KP. They will be held accountable for that. Our proposals to make the KP work are straightforward. The bottom bar should be stopping major cases of serious violence across rough diamond supply chains, irrespective of the perpetrator or context in which these occur.

The days that the KP still attracted passionate public debate are clearly over. This is convenient for those seeking to cover up its many weaknesses, and frustrating for those still trying to make it fit for purpose. But rest assured, indifference never lasts. Gradually it turns into withdrawal, condemnation and eventually resistance. This holds all the more true for diamond governance. For one because diamonds still spark so much imagination, for another because the continuing abuses hold an enormous social interest factor. This means that it is only a matter of time before public interest will return to this scheme and consumers will realise they have been fooled when relying on KP assurance. This will undoubtedly raise the question of whether the KP, with its niche focus on rebels fighting governments, is worth all these resources. It will raise the question of how the KP is in fact preventing conflict and improving livelihoods of local communities. It will raise the question of why diamonds are so exceptional that they are not included in other evolving mineral governance schemes and legislation.

Peer Review: Discussions have been going on in the Peer Review sub-group. However, we are not happy at all with attempts by some participants to truncate and sever the tripartite nature of the KP by deleting references to the role of civil society and their linkages to communities in diamond mining areas. We understand that every national context is different, and different kinds of actors play different roles in different countries. We need proper drafting to cater for these differences, not just deleting references to actors that play a key role in this body, as well as in the diamond sector of many KP participating countries.

On this point, I want to remind you that the KP has from the start been a tripartite process. Everybody who joined the KP, voluntarily joined a tripartite system. It is alarming that some Participants are seeking to close civic space within the Kimberley Process. We call on all participants to actively value and protect the much-needed watchdog role of civil society. Again, those who seek to silence us, not only undermine the role of civil society, they undermine the existence of the KP as such.

Like I said earlier, this plenary provides a crucial opportunity to agree and adopt proposed reforms related to establishing a Permanent Secretariat, Multi-Donor Fund and improving the Peer Review System.

Central African Republic

The situation in the CAR remains of deep concern to the CSC. We regret that communities continue to suffer from conflict and benefit little from the country's diamond production. It is no secret that, despite the embargo and despite the still very fragile peace agreement, conflict diamonds from CAR continue to find their way to international markets and thereby finance conflict in the country. This problem goes to the essence of the functioning of the Kimberley Process. Failing to stop diamonds from funding conflict, is a failure of the KP.

Despite the many outstanding challenges in the country, the CSC would like to thank the CAR Monitoring Team and other supportive working groups for working towards a solution in the CAR. The CSC supports constructive proposals for changes to the Operational Framework of the CAR Monitoring Team. We however realise that this will only be a small part of the solution for a very complex problem.

To reach a more comprehensive solution, we first of all call on the CAR government to cooperate with the KP and take prompt action to enhance internal controls across the country. The CSC additionally calls for strong action to make the Central African Regional Approach work. We encourage all participants at this Plenary to develop a way forward with clear benchmarks and specific objectives to support the CAR government in its ultimate goal of normalizing diamond production and trade for the benefit of its people.

Conclusion

Finally, the Civil Society Coalition looks forward to robust debates that lead to clear and ambitious outcomes. We have all been doing a lot of talking the past years, now is the time for bold decision-making.