



CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE KP CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION

2021 KP INTERSESSIONAL MEETING: HOSTED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

25 JULY 2021

KP Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,

We have come to the end of the 2021 KP Intersessional meeting, and as usual with a heavy heart.

The KP inaction and pretence of things being normal was again at play. We observed the discussions on the definition of conflict diamonds and the Principles on Responsible Sourcing. Despite the efforts of the Russian Federation (together with Botswana on the Principles) to put the issue on the agenda and the good effort of the European Union in leading discussions on definition, we saw a shameless repetition of the scenario of the past years, with Participants invoking procedural concerns to block these important discussions. This is making the KP guilty by inaction, since without an update to the definition, and promoting responsible sourcing standards, the KP continues to falsely certify diamonds affected by widespread or systematic violence as conflict free.

As per tradition, and expected, China, India and Angola most outspokenly, but also South Africa, DRC and Zimbabwe variously raised non-substantiated points about *the KP being about trade and thus not able to discuss human rights, or the KP not having a mandate to discuss its own conflict diamond definition*. We believe these arguments are only meant to selfishly hide the real concerns these participants are not willing to talk about. I wonder what you would feel if it is your child, your family and relatives who are maimed, drink contaminated water and have their land and sources of livelihoods destroyed and decimated. How would you feel if in **China** your health facilities do not have adequate medical facilities to fight off the COVID-19 pandemic due to corruption and poor management of revenues from natural resources. **South Africa**, the fact that the people are still camped and digging for quarts in Kwazulu Natal (*which they thought are diamonds*) shows the desperation of the people. It is the same level of desperation we are talking about in other diamond producing countries that should be addressed through a human rights approach by the Kimberley Process. **Angola**, the historical wars fuelled by diamonds and rebel movements should have taught you about the importance of human life and the need to protect people. It is the same thing we are encouraging you to look at in your own country and other countries through the Kimberley Process. **India**, buying diamonds cheaply and cutting them - which we assume you call a "trade issue" should not cloud your humanity and need to protect the people. Do the right thing.

Our next course of action on definition as CSC, is to approach the United Nations ourselves, within our limited resources and influence. We will ask the UN to help the Kimberley Process to redefine conflict diamonds since the KP has failed to do so. It is time the UN directly intervenes in this important matter and prescribe the KP what to do. We will also rapidly and significantly increase our efforts outside the KP to sensitise diamond consumers and retailers on the failings of the KP and on the alternatives.

In approaching the UN, we will draw its attention to **hotspot** areas where diamond mining companies, state actors and private security and trading states are complicitly violating human rights for profit. As we stated in our opening remarks, the following countries and situations are of particular concern:

- In the **Central African Republic** conflict diamonds are being mixed with those from compliant zones. Mercenaries, in complicity with the national army, and rebels on their own are killing, raping and torturing people in diamond and gold mining areas.
- In **Tanzania**, a private security company at Petra Diamond's Williamson Mine is reported to have shot, killed and injured dozens of locals in the past years.
- In **Zimbabwe's** Marange diamond fields, private security guards set dogs on people and locals live under constant fear of raids by state and private security agents. Use of torture as a means to punish artisanal miners persist since 2009.
- In **Angola's Lunda Norte province**, community protests against the destruction of villages and livelihoods because of diamond mining continue to be violently suppressed.
- In **Brazil** and **Venezuela**, criminal groups mine for gold and diamonds in the Amazon and in the process destroy the environment and assault indigenous groups.
- In **Lesotho**, communities around **Letseng mine**, live in constant fear that the mine's tailing dams will burst, and that their drinking water is polluted.
- **Murwa** diamonds in **Zimbabwe**, is violating the rights of children to education by drilling and exploring for diamonds close to schools.
- In **Sierra Leone**, at **Koidu**, communities report to have been forcibly removed from their homes, their farmland destroyed and their water sources polluted by the company **Octea** that refuses to provide any compensation.

If I can go back to the issue of **Central Africa Republic** Chair, the CAR Government should do more to implement the existing Operational Framework. However, the problem of conflict diamonds from CAR cannot be addressed by them alone, it should take KP members and non-KP members to help. In this respect, DRC and Cameroon should take measures to help curb smuggling of diamonds into their territories and not pretend to be blind to what is going on. Non-KP members around CAR, **Sudan** and **Chad** in particular, should be actively engaged by the KP to help address the situation. Most importantly trading countries such as **UAE** and **Lebanon** should improve and strengthen their systems to curb illicit flow of conflict diamonds that are entering their market. Depending on the COVID-19 situation, we encourage the KP to continue getting and gathering information from the ground using existing sources which include the UN Panel of Experts, MINUSCA, Embassies and programmes run by European Union and USAID, including our civil society partners on the ground in CAR.

Chair, to enhance in-country implementation of the KPCS, the establishment of national tripartite bodies is key. In this light, we support the adoption of an Administrative Decision on the creation of a National Multistakeholder Working Groups to strengthen to help consolidate the tripartite nature of the KP.

With those remarks I thank you.

Shamiso Mtisi (On behalf of KP Civil Society Coalition). 25 June 2021.