



**ECOSOC Special Meeting on  
"Natural Resources, Peaceful Societies and Sustainable  
Development: Lessons from the Kimberley Process"**

New York, USA 3:00 p.m. (NY Time) , Friday, 18 March 2022

Speech by the Coordinator of the Kimberley Process Civil  
Society Coalition (KP CSC),

Dr. Michel YOBOUE

His Excellency Ambassador Collen Vixen Kelapile, Senior Officer of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs ;

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear participants present in New York or online, to all of you who are following this special ECOSOC meeting on the theme "Natural Resources, Peaceful Societies and Sustainable Development: Lessons from the Kimberley Process;

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, in your respective capacities;

I am honoured to have been invited to this high-level meeting and privileged to speak in my capacity of Coordinator of the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition.

The Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KP CSC) is a coalition of NGOs that have come together to raise the voice and visibility of communities affected by diamond mining and to align the diamond sector with standards of good governance and responsible business conduct. We currently have 15 member organisations from 11 countries, 10 of which are from the African continent (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe) and one organisation from Europe, specifically Belgium.

In order to understand the lessons to be learned from the Kimberley Process, it is essential to understand what it is and what it is not, not the least because it is often being misrepresented.

The Kimberley Process is in the first place a tripartite discussion forum where governments, industry and civil society engage on diamond governance. This is in our view also its key added value that should inspire other initiatives. Even though industry and civil society are only observers, without decision-making power, the Kimberley Process offers us an international forum to have our voice heard, and magnify that of communities affected by diamond mining, with whom we work daily.

Being a member of the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition moreover gives us legitimacy to engage government and industry in our countries as well as some form of protection in doing the often dangerous work of monitoring the human rights impact of natural resource exploitation.

Since 2003, the Kimberley Process operates a certification scheme that has brought some structure to the previously disordered diamond trade. It requires the 85 KP member countries to implement a number of minimum requirements, which consist of adopting or amending national legislation, having appropriate institutions in place and conducting import and export controls. Thus, the KP is a tripartite discussion forum that operates a certification scheme that structures the global diamond trade. But this is not how the Kimberley Process is usually presented.

You often hear that the Kimberley Process is a conflict prevention mechanism. But in fact, it only intervenes in a context of civil war, when conflict has escalated so much that there is nothing more that can be prevented. It defines conflict narrowly as situation where rebels seek to overthrow legitimate governments and does not deal with any other forms of widespread or systematic violence that are today still associated with diamond mining in a number of countries.

The probably most persistent narrative is that the KP assures the conflict-free nature of the diamond trade. The problem is not just that the KP's definition of conflict is so awkwardly narrow, but also that these assurances are not backed up by decent control systems or independent monitoring.

With the exception of the Central African Republic that is since 2013 subject to a KP embargo, all other KP member countries can basically certify any diamond with hardly any oversight or control on the circumstances in which it was mined or entered their jurisdiction.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;

While the KP certification scheme (KPCS) may have been rather innovative 20 years ago, its consensus-based decision-making process has since then proved resistant to any change. The calls for reform resonate ever more loudly today. To avoid deceiving

diamond consumers that rely on its assurances the KP basically has two options today: revoke its certification scheme or back it up with the required controls and oversight that cover conflict in the broadest sense.

Thus, in our view, the question is not so much what can be learned from the Kimberley Process, but what the Kimberley Process can learn from other initiatives where time has not stood still over the past 20 years. Noteworthy examples are the OECD responsible minerals guidance or the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;

To conclude my remarks, I would like to say here that diamond mining continues to cause violence and conflict in several diamond producing countries. These diamonds are still circulating and being sold to jewellery consumers who rely on guarantees from the KPCS.

Given the difficulties in ensuring the traceability of diamonds, it is all the more important to sufficiently and efficiently improve and monitor social, environmental and human rights standards in mining, especially small-scale mining.

Thank you for your attention.

Dr. Michel YOBOUE  
For the KP CSC