



2022 Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting Botswana, Kasane

Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition Closing Remarks

24 June 2022

Dr. Michel YOBOUE, Coalition Coordinator

Mr. Jacob Thamage, Chair of the Kimberley Process;
Mr. Vice-Chairman of the Kimberley Process;
Mr. Edward Asscher, Chairman of the World Diamond Council;
Chairmen of the Kimberley Process Working Groups;
Focal Points of the participating countries;
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen in your respective capacities.

We wish to express our appreciation to Botswana. The kindness of the people we met here in Kasane and the memories we made will remain in our hearts forever. Thank you for your kind hospitality.

We are leaving this Intersessional meeting with big questions on which purposes this body still serves. It has a mandate to break the link between rough diamonds and armed conflict but cannot even engage in a discussion on whether and how it is doing that.

On Monday, during the opening session, Botswana's Minister of Mineral Resources Lefoko Moagi, called on all of us to engage in even the most uncomfortable discussions. This body has failed to follow his guidance. A small group of Participants have blocked all others from discussing the elephants in the room. These elephants are not only whether the Kimberley Process (KP) can keep certifying Russian diamonds as conflict-free, but also more generally how this process and its certification scheme can be made fit for purpose in breaking the link between diamonds and violent conflict.

As all of you know, the KP CSC is the longest-standing demander for KP reform. However, we are very concerned that diving into a review and reform cycle, without being able to discuss why reform is so pressing or why the previous reform cycle was such a failure, is a distraction. It is a façade to pretend to the outside world as if the KP has matters under control and is addressing them. But the truth is that it doesn't. The KP has no control. The ship is rudderless, or actually sinking. As long as the KP is not able to address its demons, it would be a waste of our precious time and resources to invest in a demanding reform process that would have no chance of success.

In order to break the veto stalemate, we yesterday took the initiative ourselves to invite Participants and Observers to a discussion on the shortcomings of the KP. It is unfortunate that so many Participants did not take the opportunity to engage, but we thank those who did, including our fellow observer of the World Diamond Council.

The opposition we faced in getting this simple discussion organised was a sobering reality check of how the KP gives substance to the tripartite arrangement. Of how fearful some in this process are to give a platform to civil society that allows it to express its views and concerns. All those who participated agreed however that such exchanges are meaningful, needed and useful. It should be normal to have open discussions like these. In the light of this good experience, we call on the current and all future KP Chairs to provide a slot in every Intersessional and Plenary meeting to allow Observers, from civil society and industry, to expand and engage on the points they raise in their opening and closing speeches.

We commend the Botswanan Chair's choice of topic of this Intersessional of 'Diamonds as a Catalyst for Sustainable development'. We would have loved to engage more on this important issue. The KP was established in order to get rid of and prevent conflict associated with diamonds but also to use these diamonds as assets for sustainable development. The greatest recipients of the troubles of mining, the ones who should see its benefits most are the local mining communities. But where are they in the discussions at KP meetings? Why do we continue to talk about them in their absence? Why can't they be at the table to share with us their stories, to know whether we are making progress or not?

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

We cannot continue to ignore them and still claim to be doing well. Let the communities be at the centre of KP events at all levels, starting with the upcoming November Plenary meeting.

Thank you.



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