

Brussels, 11 June 2007

## **Kimberley Process: key players meet to strengthen efforts against conflict diamonds**

***The European Commission, as current Chair of the Kimberley Process (KP) – the international scheme to end trade in conflict diamonds – is hosting a meeting in Brussels on 12-14 June to discuss ways to strengthen the scheme. Diamond experts, governments and representatives of industry and civil society will take stock of progress in implementing reform measures agreed last year. This is the first time Liberia attends a Kimberley Process meeting as a full member.***

*“Diamonds are no longer a rebel's best friend,” says Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy. “Kimberley has succeeded in making a difference, based on its inclusiveness, transparency and flexibility. We want our chairmanship to strengthen the Process further. I am thinking particularly about improving the peer-review mechanism and strengthening the co-operation with the international community, in particular with the United Nations, with a focus on conflict prevention and development.”*

At the last Kimberley Process meeting in November 2006 in Gaborone, Botswana, members discussed a report reviewing the scheme after three years of operation, and agreed on a number of recommendations to improve its effectiveness, including increased transparency, publications of statistics, and better co-ordination of technical assistance. The Brussels meeting provides an important opportunity for stocktaking on the implementation of those recommendations, most of which are well under way.

The meeting will also discuss efforts to prevent illicit Ivorian diamonds from entering the legal trade. Following concerns over the possible smuggling of Ivorian diamonds, the KP agreed with Ghana an action plan to improve its controls.

Experts will also consider measures to improve the peer-review mechanism, which is on track to complete the first round of ‘review visits’ assessing KP member countries’ implementation of the KP rules. Strengthening the links between the KP activities and the broader international community is another ongoing objective: the close co-operation between the KP and the United Nations on diamond sanctions is one example.

Liberia has recently been admitted to the Kimberley Process, following three KP expert missions to advise and assess its system for controlling diamonds, and considerable support and technical assistance from the KP community.

In the coming months, the KP will work on bringing together existing scientific expertise on identifying the origin of diamonds, to see whether this can strengthen the certification scheme.

The Kimberley Process 2007 Annual Plenary will be held in Brussels from 5 to 8 November 2007.

## **Background**

The Kimberley Process grew out of discussions in May 2000 in Kimberley, South Africa among interested governments, the international diamond industry and civil society as a unique initiative to combat 'conflict diamonds'. The Process is backed by the United Nations.

In November 2002, an agreement was reached on the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS): an innovative system imposing extensive requirements on all Participants to control all imports and exports of rough diamonds and to put in place rigorous internal controls over production and trade to ensure that conflict diamonds could not enter the legal diamond trade. In four years, the Kimberley Process has helped to reduce the amount of conflict diamonds to a tiny fraction of world trade.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme now has 46 Participants (representing 72 countries, with the European Community counting as a single Participant). It includes all major diamond producing, trading and polishing centres, and counts on the active participation of civil society and industry groups. Its most recent addition was Liberia, admitted on 4 May 2007, following the positive assessment of Kimberley Process experts and the decision of the UN Security Council to lift diamond sanctions.

The Kimberley Process has developed a number of tools to enable assessment of implementation and to address any issues which may arise. These tools include regular statistical reporting, annual reports and other compliance verification measures, such as review missions to participants where 'credible indications of significant non-compliance' have been detected. In October 2003, the Kimberley Process members agreed a comprehensive system of peer review. Since then, virtually all Participants have now invited peer review visits. To date, nearly 40 review visits have been carried out, in addition to a number of ad hoc monitoring missions, expert missions to applicant countries and review missions in cases of suspected non-compliance. Peer review teams are composed of representatives of governments, industry and civil society.

The Kimberley Process Chairmanship rotates annually. The EC is the current Chair.

For further details, please see:

The EU & the Kimberley Process:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/kimb/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/kimb/intro/index.htm)

[www.kimberleyprocess.com](http://www.kimberleyprocess.com)

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