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THE DIAMOND INDUSTRY UNITES TO CREATE IMPACTFUL EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON CONFLICT DIAMONDS

The Kimberley Process: What the trade and consumers need to know

(New York, NY) – May 15, 2006 – In 1999, conflict diamonds- rough diamonds that are used by rebel movements in parts of Africa to finance wars against legitimate governments- represented roughly 4% of the world's rough diamond output. To stop this illegal trade, the diamond industry worked with the United Nations, over 45 countries and several NGOs, to help stamp out the atrocities and violence.

On January 29, 2003, the United Nations adopted Resolution 1459 - the Kimberley Process - endorsing a method of verification intended to stop the sale of conflict diamonds. The effort has been remarkably effective. Today, the number of conflict diamonds has dropped to considerably less than 1% with 68 countries adhering to this process.

However, despite the amazing strides that have been made, there is a continuing need to raise awareness of the Kimberley Process and how the issue of conflict diamonds has been tackled head on by the industry and governments around the world.

A recent focus on conflict diamonds in popular music and entertainment is raising questions and concerns among both consumers and the trade. In response, the World Diamond Council, in alliance with the American Gem Society, Diamond Dealers Club, Diamond Manufacturers & Importers Association of America, Jewelers of America, Jewelers Vigilance Committee, Jewelry Information Center and the Manufacturing Jewelers and Suppliers of America, is creating a forceful educational campaign to launch at the JCK Las Vegas trade show in June 2006.

The campaign will be two fold. First, the educational campaign will help the trade understand how the Kimberley Process can assure consumers that the diamonds they wish to buy are conflict-free. Second, the campaign will aim to educate consumers through a variety of initiatives to both highlight the beneficial effects that the diamond industry has on Africa and to explain the Kimberley Process. The latter is to insure that consumers can be confident that their diamonds purchases are conflict free.

“It is important for the campaign to highlight not only the deep emotional bond symbolized by a piece of diamond jewelry, but also the positive impact this industry has on the thousands of people in Africa who rely on the sale of diamonds for the stability and prosperity of their countries,” said Eli Izhakoff, Chairman of the World Diamond Council.

The World Diamond Council and industry leaders will showcase the campaign in June at JCK to better inform all members of the trade about this important issue. Highlights will include free confidence kits and a tactical seminar, giving members of the trade the tools to speak with complete understanding of the Kimberley Process, as well as trade advertisements, social responsibility brochures and a new website that will speak directly to consumers, trade and the media.

“In order for this campaign to successfully educate consumers about the swift and effective response to the trade of conflict diamonds, it is vital that the entire industry stand behind the Kimberley Process and the great work that is being done,” said Izhakoff. “Men and women around the world must be reassured that their diamond purchase is just as pure, magical and special as their eternal love, symbolized so well in the unique beauty of a diamond.”

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