

UN Praises Angolan Contribute to Blood Diamond Fight

New York 11/27 – The United Nations General Assembly Monday in New York highlighted the role played by Angola as chair of the Work Team on Artisan Production of Alluvion Diamonds, under the Kimberly Process.

This is contained in a resolution unanimously adopted as part of the analysis of the General Assembly's agenda on the role of diamonds in the funding of conflicts.

Among other aspects, the resolution notes with satisfaction the efforts made by the Work Team in the fight against the production and trade of blood diamonds.

The Work Team, set up in Gaborone (Botswana), in November 2006, has as its purpose to secure the accomplishment of the recommendations contained in the Moscow Declaration, concerning improvement of internal control over the production of alluvion diamonds of artisan and low scale character, as well as the promotion of exchange of good practises.

Presenting the annual report on the issue and the resolution, the European Union Commission assistant director, Karel Kovanda, who was speaking on behalf of the European Union that heads the Kimberly Process for 2007, made a retrospect on the progress scored in the process, with focus on its contribution in countries like Angola, DR Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

During the debate that preceded the adoption of the resolution, in a declaration from the standing representative, Ismael Gaspar Martins, released on the occasion, the Angolan delegation asserted that the methods adopted for the control of production and flow of diamonds in the international market weakened the rebels that had in that valuable mineral their main source of funding.

"The Establishment of the System of Certification of the Kimberly Process (KPCS) for raw diamonds, that became effective in January 2003, its enforcement by member countries and the sanctions adopted by the Security Council against the rebel groups in various African countries, were decisive for peace, including in my country, where the war was financed by the so-called blood diamonds", reads the document.

The declaration appeals for the need to protect and control the production and trade of diamonds, especially in Africa, that responds for approximately 65 percent of the global production of diamonds, in an estimate of Usd 8.4 billion a year, and where some countries have their economy based on this mineral resource that is the key to development of their infrastructures and social wellbeing of their populations.

Diamond trafficking fight, with stress to the trans-border one, should constitute a permanent action from all countries affected, opting for a bilateral, sub-regional or regional cooperation, with a view to the reduction, and if possible, the eradication of this crime, it is also said.

In the document, ambassador Ismael Martins states that should this matter remain in the order of the day of the UN General Assembly agenda, it would be a relevant contribution towards breaking the link between illegal transaction of diamonds and the armed conflicts, a goal he said is attainable, through sustained effort and concert of actions among member countries.

On the other hand, he defended that the KPCS, legally valid in more than 45 countries, must be supported by a mechanism of internal control in each country.

It was in this perspective that "Angola created the Special Group of Diamonds Security (CSD), a specialised force responsible for the protection of this product, from its transportation from the mining areas up to the country's capital city (Luanda) or other commercial centres, where its agents control the selection, evaluation and packaging for export, in addition to other duties".

Meanwhile, with a view to the constant improvement in the functioning of the KPCS and adjustment of the country's (Angola) industry to the dynamics of the world economy, Angolan Government created two Multisectoral Commissions. They are the Commission for Revision of Legislation and that for Diamonds Resources Protection, the note adds.

According to the ambassador, these measures have had a great impact on the progress of the diamond sector over the last five years of peace in Angola, as production rose from five million carats in 2002 to 9.5 million in 2006, whereas the gross revenue from diamonds trade was of Usd 638 million in 2002, against 1.2 billion in 2006.

At the international level, the note underlines the relevant role played by Angola in the creation, on November 4, 2006, of the Association of African Diamond Producing Countries (ADPA), whose purpose is to coordinate policies and strategies for the sustainable development of the continent's diamond industry.

The debate received contributions from Botswana, USA, India, Namibia, Canada, Russia and Australia, all highlighting the progress so far achieved in the Kimberly Process.

The UN General Assembly will again analyse the implementation of the Kimberly Process at its 63rd session, scheduled for 2008.

The Kimberly Process will be chaired by India from 2008, with Namibia taking the deputy chair.