

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE AMBASSADOR ISMAEL A. GASPAS MARTINS ON THE ROLE OF
DIAMONDS IN FUELLING CONFLICT

December 11, 2008

Your Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency the President of the **Kimberley** Committee (India),
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of my Government, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate India and Namibia for assuming the presidency and vice-presidency of the Kimberley Process. Our congratulations are extensive to the European Union for the success of its presidency of the work of this important committee .

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has been in place for five years. The campaign to stop the circulation of conflict diamonds has been successful for the most part, although there are still some challenges for African Countries that produce alluvial and artisan diamonds, particularly countries emerging from armed conflicts, whose post-conflict situation must continue to deserve our special attention until they consolidate their reconciliation and democratization process .

African Governments continue committed to the objectives that guided the creation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which were to halt the flow of rough diamonds used by rebels to finance armed conflicts with the purpose of subverting legitimate Governments. This commitment on their part has significantly contributed for the promotion of regional and international peace and security .

The protection of the lawful diamond industry, on which several countries depend for the implementation of sustainable economic and social development programs, will continue to be one of our most important priorities .

Angola is part of the 75 Governments currently represented in the Kimberley Process, where it has been giving its contribution in the different Working Groups that compose this process, and in particular as Chair of the Working Group on Artisan Alluvial Production .

In this context, Angola has been encouraging African countries that produce artisan alluvial diamonds to constantly improve their internal controls through the recommendations foreseen in the Moscow Declaration of 2005 .

Mr. President,

This year, the Angolan Government invited the non-governmental organizations "Partnership Africa-Canada" and "Diamonds for Development Initiative" through its Ministry of Geology and Mining to work with the national entities that are involved in the Kimberley Process in Angola, with a view to stimulating coordinated actions focused on the normalization of the artisan alluvial activity .

Several seminaries have been organized with the participation of local NGOs, with subjects such as small-scale mining and human rights, and the relationship between great societies and small-scale artisan activities.

The current politico-military situation in the DRC is of great concern, as this country is one of the greatest African diamond producers, where more than 80% of its national production comes from small scale artisan alluvial explorations.

Efforts at the regional level, especially in the Great Lakes region, as well as SADC, and at the international level through the United Nations, must prevent the war from assuming greater proportions that may endanger this country's achievements in the context of the Kimberley Process .

Also, we hope that the elections in Côte d'Ivoire culminate with the conclusion of the reconciliation process, and that this country will again benefit from lawful diamond production to serve the reconstruction of the economy.

Angola will continue to provide the means necessary to the Working Group on alluvial production that it chairs so that the Group can fulfill its obligations, while also counting on the solidarity of international organizations and the civil society in the search for alternative solutions that will improve the internal controls in diamond-producing countries .

The Government of the Republic of Angola will remain committed to the strengthening of the activity of the Association of African Diamond-Producing Countries and in the organization of the Worldwide Diamond Summit, which will take place in Luanda during the month of November of 2009, under the central theme of "the reputation of diamonds".

The Summit, which will be held for the first time in Angola, will seek to congregate distinguished members of diamond-producing countries, as well as leading companies and specialists in the industry for a discussion around the concept "diamonds—the commodity of many emotions".

The Summit will provide a transparent platform for interactive dialogue on the technical and human aspects that characterize diamond mining activities around the world .

Mr. President,

Angola has been a regular participant in the Kimberley Process and was one of the pioneers of its launching, as it had suffered the consequences of a war where diamonds were used as the main source of funding. The launching and efficient application of the Kimberley Process has greatly contributed to end the armed conflict in Angola.

Therefore, I would once again like to use this occasion to express my country's commitment to working with all the relevant actors, particularly the members of the Kimberley Process, countries that produce and import diamonds, private diamond companies and non-governmental organizations to fight this scourge.

To conclude, I urge the Governments of African diamond-producing countries, specially those with artisan alluvial and small-scale production to devote special attention in their national mining development plans to the internal controls in order to eliminate the entrance and exit of diamond production that is not in compliance with their national legislation and with the standards of the Kimberley Process. In this connection, combating the traffic of diamonds, in particular transnational traffic, must not only constitute a permanent action by all countries affected by it, but also by the entire international community through bilateral, sub-regional, or regional cooperation in order to eradicate this crime.

We have great appreciation for the leadership of India in the Kimberley Process during the mandate that has just ended and we wish to salute Namibia for its election to the presidency of the Kimberley Process of 2009 .

Thank you