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Will the Diamond Industry Live up to Its Promises to Stop Conflict Diamond Trading?

In the lead up to a major diamond industry meeting next week, Global Witness is calling on key organizations within the diamond sector to live up to promises made to eradicate the trade in conflict diamonds. The conflict diamond issue will be taken up at the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) and the International Diamond Manufacturers Association (IDMA) biennial President's Meeting to be held in Sun City, South Africa, from 29 June 2003 to 2 July 2003.

In October 2002, the WFDB and IDMA passed a resolution declaring their commitment to combat conflict diamond trading. The resolution requires all members to implement self-regulatory measures to prevent conflict diamonds from entering the legitimate diamond trade. This includes a system of warranties requiring that members buy diamonds only from companies that provide guarantees that their diamonds do not come from conflict sources.

Effective implementation of the self-regulation is crucial to the success of the Kimberley Process, an international agreement to eliminate the trade in diamonds that fuel conflict and human rights abuses.

“At this meeting, it is critical for the WFDB and IDMA to evaluate how its members have implemented the self-regulation and whether it is stopping diamonds from financing conflict and terrorism.” said Corinna Gilfillan, Campaigner with Global Witness. “Without adequate monitoring, the self-regulation is nothing more than a rubber-stamping exercise with no credibility behind it.”

Global Witness is calling on the WFDB and IDMA to take the following actions:

- Survey and monitor members' implementation of the self-regulation and efforts to educate the diamond industry about the Kimberley Process and relevant regulations.
- Assess efforts by member organisations to expel any company in violation of the self-regulation and to publicize this information in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the resolution.
- Press for regular, independent monitoring of the Kimberley Process to ensure that the process works and is not open to abuse.
- Take actions to prevent diamonds from funding terrorism, including by pressing governments to implement anti-money laundering initiatives as is being done under the USA Patriot Act.

Editor Notes:

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, launched in January 2003, requires governments and the diamond industry to implement import/export control regimes on rough diamonds to prevent conflict diamonds from fueling conflicts and human rights abuses. The KPCS was negotiated by governments, civil society organisations and the diamond trade, in response to civil society campaigning against the trade in conflict diamonds. The Kimberley Process urgently needs to be strengthened to include regular, independent monitoring of all national diamond control systems.