

## Speech Opening Photo Exhibition "Questoes de Diamantes"

Cha de Caixinde, Thursday August 11, 2005

Dear Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you so much for coming.

Desculpem não poder discursar em Português, o que seria um desastre tanto para minha língua como para os vossos ouvidos.

My name is Kirsten Hund, and, like my colleagues Tchitula Teuns, who is so kind to translate, and Bas Zwiers, I work for the economy programme of the Netherlands institute for Southern Africa (NiZA), mainly on natural resource extraction. Together with West Africa Witness (WAW) and the photographer Kadir van Lohuizen we are the initiators of the exhibition Diamond Matters.

Africa is rich. But the population is not always benefiting from this wealth. Therefore, together with a large number of African NGOs, we try to promote the contribution of the natural wealth of this region to sustainable development.

It is a pleasure to be back here in Luanda. One and a half years ago I was here, together with the photographer, Kadir van Lohuizen, who unfortunately cannot be here tonight, to organise our visit to the Lundas. We have spend a lot of time in Luanda, trying to organise the trip and to get the paperwork done; especially to get the support of Endiama and Ascorp for taking the pictures there.

We were to present this exhibition at Endiama as well, in order to start a dialogue with the Angolan diamond industry, unfortunately they decided a few days ago they had other priorities.

Therefor we are very pleased that today, here in Chá de Caixinde, there are so many people present to whom we can show the final result of this trip and the rest of the great quest: following the trail of Artican diamonds over four different continents, all the way from the mines to their final destination: the glitter and glamour of the jet-set.

The exhibition as you can see it here was opened in Amsterdam this March. At the moment it is running in Antwerp, Sierra Leone and the DRC, where is has been travelling the country. In Lubumbashi it attracted 12.000 visitors in the last 2 weeks. It is clear that people on both sides of the diamond trail are interested in both the origin and the destiny of ' their' diamond. Western consumers realise how important diamonds are for the lives of so many people, and get to think about their own responsibilities in a globalised world. Here, people can see all facets of their rough stones and get inspired to improve their situation.

I 'm sure you will agree that the people in Angola's mining areas, like the miners in Koidu, Mbuji Mai and Tchikapa, should also get the opportunity to see these pictures. We hope we will get the support of both the Angolan diamond industry and civil society in getting the exhibition to the Lundas and other diamond areas.

The photos of the mining pits you can see here were all taken in former conflict areas. As you all know, The reputation of diamonds coming form these areas has been severely damaged these

last years. The introduction of the Kimberley Process certification scheme for rough diamonds, and the ending of violent conflict in all three countries, has changed this.

But to what extent has it changed the lives of the people in the diamond areas? Diamonds can contribute tremendously to prosperity and stability. This new found peace offers a great opportunity for the diamond industry to make a big difference, and turn the former conflict diamonds into real 'peace' - or 'development' - diamonds. We would like to work on that, together with civil society organisations here. But a lot of work remains to be done.

Thank you very much for being here and allowing me to address you. Angola is blessed with an incredible wealth, and today faces huge challenges as on how to use it. Now, I would like to open the floor and start a brief discussion with you on how to close the gap between the glamour in the West and the reality on the ground.

Thanks to Blanca Diego, Chicito, and René, partners, Chá de Caixinde, and to all the others that helped.

Thanks to you all for coming here today.