

Conflict diamond scheme makes progress—but work remains

Spotlight now on India to strengthen Kimberley Process

Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition PRESS RELEASE

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Progress was made this week at the fifth Plenary session of the Kimberley Process to further combat the trade in conflict diamonds. The session closed today with action taken on Venezuelan non-compliance, and on strengthening controls over rough diamond trading and manufacturing.

Venezuela agreed to a visit led by the KP Chair, to take place during the first quarter of 2008, to review Venezuela's controls and make recommendations for strengthening them.

NGOs welcomed a Brussels declaration adopted by Plenary, calling on countries with trading and manufacturing to carry out effective enforcement measures to ensure adequate government oversight over the trade of rough diamonds.

“Weak controls and enforcement in major trading and manufacturing centres are undermining the effectiveness of the KP and allowing conflict and illicit diamonds to enter the legitimate trade,” said Annie Dunnebacke of Global Witness. “Countries should move quickly to strengthen internal controls as outlined in the Brussels declaration.”

A record number of NGOs attended the Plenary session. This coalition of civil society groups from 16 countries called for the Kimberley Process to meaningfully engage and consult with civil society on Kimberley Process implementation at the national level, particularly during review visits and preparation of annual reports.

“Many KP member governments are not meaningfully engaging civil society organisations in KP implementation in their home countries. The KP has everything to gain from broadening, deepening and financing civil society participation,” said Alfred Brownell of Green Advocates in Liberia. “We in West Africa are a long haul away from prosperity diamonds.”

NGOs are calling on India, as incoming Chair of the Kimberley Process and the world's largest diamond cutting and polishing centre, to demonstrate strong leadership in strengthening the Kimberley Process and to build on ongoing efforts to close loopholes in cutting and polishing centres.

Signed by:

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Note to the editor:

The Kimberley Process is a government-led rough diamond certification scheme that was created to prevent the trade in conflict diamonds. Member governments are required to pass national legislation and set up an import/export control system to implement the Kimberley Process.