



Press Release

World Federation of Diamond Bourses

Zimbabwe Diamond Conference November 2012:

- Ernie Blom, WFDB President

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate those responsible for the organisation of the Conference. It was extremely informative, constructive and the honesty by all speakers and participants was refreshing and appreciated. I extend my praise and admiration to Africa and the Kimberley Process (KP) that a conference of this nature could be hosted in Zimbabwe and be attended by such key politicians and luminaries of the diamond industry from across the world. It was a huge success.

No one has ever said that all problems will be resolved by opening up the diamond fields in Zimbabwe and allowing the citizens of the country the opportunity to share in the wealth creation so desperately needed on the sub-continent. But during the past 10 years, with the assistance of organisations like the KP, great strides forward have been made and this must be recognised by the industry and the markets it serves. If this phase is seen as a starting point, then we need to support the development in the next phase and make it possible for diamond producing countries, like Zimbabwe, to take its legitimate place on the world diamond stage. Only by including all role players in the process can we work out a system that is transparent and serves the demands of the consumers with confidence while the producing countries also share in the benefits and wealth creation. By including all parties in plotting the future together with beneficiation and the development of downstream industries, the entire industry stands to garner from the most precious gem that Mother Earth gave us and blessed the African continent with such substantial reserves.

Let us take this opportunity to start building a reliable supply chain with all the checks and balances needed by all role players, as our destinies are linked like the facets we find on diamonds. At the concluding session on the conference's second day, Eli Izhakoff, President of the World Diamond Council announced that he was going to approach the WDC board for approval to engage the United States Treasury and the European Community to lift sanctions on diamonds from Zimbabwe' to preserve the integrity of the KP system. The WFDB supports Eli Izhakoff in his approach to the Board of the WDC as the WDC is the official body representing the WFDB at the Kimberley Process.

We should not dwell on past wrongs but rather embrace the future as universal diamond people with a linked destiny to bring diamonds to the market, for only if we all succeed can we truly develop this great industry.

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