



## News Release

Contact: [secretariat@wfdb.com](mailto:secretariat@wfdb.com)

### **2015 Presidents Meeting Ends After Three Days of Discussions**

#### **'Processes Set in Place With Committees to Give In-Depth Consideration to Issues,' Says WFDB President Ernie Blom**

*Tel Aviv, Israel – June 16, 2015:* The 2015 Presidents Meeting in Tel Aviv came to an end on Tuesday, with World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) President Ernie Blom saying it had provided the opportunity for three days of intensive discussions on the main issues affecting the diamond trade globally. WFDB presidents, as well as their counterparts from the International Diamond Manufacturers Association, also traveled to Jerusalem on Tuesday where they were hosted by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu where they briefed him on the state of the diamond trade worldwide.

The joint working session of the WFDB and IDMA was addressed by Philippe Mellier, CEO of De Beers, and recently appointed Alrosa President Andrey Zharkov. The two men gave their perspectives on the current condition of the diamond markets.

"We have had three extremely useful and enjoyable days here," said Blom at a press conference which wrapped up the Presidents Meeting. "The hosts, the Israel Diamond Exchange (IDE) did a fantastic job in creating a wonderful atmosphere and social events that allowed us to network and create new relationships, as well as renewing bonds with colleagues, and that is also an important element of such gatherings.

"We held highly intensive discussions which allowed us to discuss issues in depth. As we all concurred, the main themes are the lack of profitability, banking and finance, synthetics and overgrading. I feel that we have achieved a great deal in precisely identifying the challenges that face us, and what we need to do to overcome them. We have put processes in motion and a number of committees will look at them in great depth and report back with proposals for how to deal with them."

Regarding the visit to Prime Minister Netanyahu, Blom said the Israeli leader was well aware of the issues facing the diamond business. "We had a very interesting discussion with the Prime Minister. We briefed on him the challenges we face on a daily basis. He told us about the state of the Israeli economy and the importance of the diamond industry to Israel's finances. He promised to give all assistance possible to the Israeli diamond trade."

Meanwhile, IDE President Shmuel Schnitzer said a great deal was accomplished during the Presidents Meetings. "We touched on the very serious issues confronting the industry. The most crucial part is lack of profitability. No business can last in such circumstances. We mentioned this to the diamond producers to see what they and we can do to improve the situation. We cannot go on ignoring this lack of profitability.



"Bankability and financing was the second issue that we identified. There are banks that do not want to work with our business. This is wrong because we have a lot more transparency in the trade now. Things are changing and it's a different trade now. The banks should draw the right conclusions. It is wrong for the banks to leave the industry. We also had lengthy discussions about the issue of overgrading and the recent color treated diamonds discovered by the GIA in Israel, and also debated the issue of price lists and how we can bring about consultation regarding changes in the Rap List," Schnitzer added.



WFDB President Ernie Blom presenting IDE President Shmuel Schnitzer with an award in recognition of hosting the 2015 Presidents Meeting.



Taking part in the press conference that concluded the 2015 Presidents Meeting: IDE President Shmuel Schnitzer, WFDB President Ernie Blom, IDMA President Maxim Shkadov, and Israel Diamond Manufacturers Association President Kobi Korn.