

STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON
AGENDA ITEM 11 – THE ROLE OF DIAMONDS IN FUELLING CONFLICT AT
THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
DECEMBER 11, 2008

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address the General Assembly today as Chair of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme for 2008. In this capacity, it is my privilege to present, in fulfilment of the request of this Assembly made vide para 21 of its resolution 62/11, a report on the progress made in implementation of the Kimberley Process during the year.

Mr. President,

Diamonds have played a particularly significant role in causing and prolonging conflict in several countries, as a result of the misuse of wealth generated from this resource. In addition to financing devastating armed conflicts, the illicit trade in rough diamonds also impacts negatively on the legitimate international trade in diamonds. Efforts to address the problem, through the perspective of an overall development agenda, must focus not only on the supply side, but also on all parts of the supply chain, including processing, trading, and purchase by the consumer.

It is in this context that the Kimberley Process [KP] has proved to be remarkably successful, in breaking the linkage between conflict and illicit trade in diamonds, thereby protecting the peace, livelihood and security of millions of people across the globe. This success has translated into an increase in legitimate trade in diamonds. Today, diamonds have emerged as a vehicle of economic progress and as a means to confront developmental challenges in many countries. Over these years, the KP has emerged as a model for multi-stakeholder effort, in which national governments, industry and civil society have successfully collaborated to prevent conflict and promote peace, stability and development.

Mr. President,

India was privileged to lead the KP during 2008, in its continued multi-pronged efforts to further its implementation. The inclusiveness of the Process is a key area of its success. Membership is open on a non-discriminatory basis to all those willing and able to adhere to the requirements of the Scheme. Today, a substantial number of the diamond mining, trading and processing countries are part of the KP. Mexico joined the Process in 2008, and approval was given for Republic of Congo to resume trading in rough diamonds. The inclusiveness of the Scheme is also reflected by the fact that almost all Participants are members of one of the many Working Groups of the Process. The commitment of the Participants has also been reaffirmed by their participation in review visits, in technical workshops designed to enhance knowledge and skill in the sector, and by their proactive extension of financial assistance to other Participants.

Mr. President,

During 2008, the KP engaged with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela by organizing a visit of Chair's nominees consequent to Venezuela's announcement during the June Intersessional in New Delhi to voluntarily separate from the KP for a period of two years and to cease certification for export of its diamonds. This visit has enabled the KP to arrive at a better understanding of the challenges faced by the country in its diamond sector. Venezuela no longer exports and imports rough diamonds. The KP has since decided that it will continue to engage with Venezuela in order to assist and support the country in developing appropriate internal controls over its alluvial diamond mining, consistent with the minimum standards of the Process. Venezuela will continue to be a Participant of KP, attend meetings of the KP and submit production statistics during the period of voluntary separation. This is yet another example of mutual inclusiveness inherent in the Scheme and stands testimony of the willingness of the KP family to stand together, learn from global best practices and proactively provide assistance as and when required.

Mr. President,

Transparency is another hallmark of the KP. The Process took a step forward in this regard by releasing the sub-annual data for rough diamond trade and production for 2004-2007. Statistics and Annual Reports submitted by Participants and reports of Peer Review Visits continue to be the key elements of monitoring. All Participants of the Scheme have submitted their respective statistics and Annual Report for 2007, which have also been analyzed to identify implementation issues and best practices. Statistical analysis for each Peer Review Visit has also been undertaken.

During the year, the Kimberley Process completed its ongoing work for finalizing the diamond production profiles for Côte d'Ivoire, Marange diamond fields of

Zimbabwe, and Togo. To complement this work, statistical protocols have been developed. An initiative was also launched for harnessing Information Technology for improving the quality of the data.

Artisanal alluvial producing Participants of KP continued to follow up on the recommendations of the KP regarding artisanal alluvial production. A consolidated matrix of inventories of these participants of KP was published for the first time. The inventories will be updated every six months. Technical assistance and training in support of KP implementation also continued.

Mr. President,

During 2008, the KP further deepened its engagement with the United Nations. KP experts participated in the joint UN-KP visit to Côte d'Ivoire. At the request of the UN, a KP expert visited Mali to examine a seized consignment of rough diamonds and confirmed its possible Ivorian origin. The KP will continue its close cooperation with the UN in Côte d'Ivoire, which continues to be the subject of UN Sanctions and is not trading in rough diamonds.

Mr. President,

During its Chairmanship of the Process, India's endeavour has been to strengthen the KP, particularly by building on the previous traditions and conventions, and by coordinating with the KP Working Groups and Committees for improved implementation of the KP decisions. In this regard, we express our gratitude to the past KP Chairs for their efforts. Our sincere thanks also go to the Chairs of the Working Groups and Committees, and to all KP Participants, industry and civil society, for all the cooperation and support we received during the year.

Mr. President,

As Chair of the KP, India also has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.52 titled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts". The support of the United Nations to the KP has been a key element of its success, and the UN General Assembly has traditionally adopted an annual resolution expressing support to the activities of the KP. As in previous years, this draft resolution highlights the important activities undertaken by the KP during the year.

The draft resolution also expresses satisfaction at the systematization of the work of the Kimberley Process with respect to continuing to develop transparent and uniform rules and procedures. It welcomes the guidelines endorsed by the

New Delhi plenary, recommending interim measures on serious non-compliance with Kimberley Process minimum requirements listing out the guiding principles for determination of serious non-compliance and an indicative list of escalating measures. The draft resolution also highlights the development perspective of the KP, by acknowledging that the diamond sector is an important catalyst for achieving poverty reduction and meeting the requirements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in producing countries.

We look forward to the support of all delegations in the adoption of this draft resolution, which will reaffirm the continued importance that the UN General Assembly attaches to the work of the KP.

There are two small corrections to the document A/63/L.52 as circulated to bring it in line with the text agreed during informal consultations.

In OP 10, line 5, the word 'urges' should be replaced by the phrase "led to the recommendation that". Further, the word "to" after Kimberley Process in the same line should be deleted.

In OP 13, line 7, the phrase "enabling Cote d'Ivoire to meet" should be replaced by the word "meeting". Further, in line 8, the phrase "imposed for" should be replaced by "on".

I thank you, Mr. President.

BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS