

**Remarks given by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
at the UN General Assembly debate on
the Role of Diamonds in Fuelling Armed conflict
Wednesday, March 13, 2002**

Monsieur le Président,

The Assembly meets today to signal its continuing, deep concern with the role of the illicit trade in rough diamonds in fuelling armed conflict in some parts of Africa.

It also meets both to recognize the progress achieved to date through the Kimberley Process in developing measures to curb the trade in conflict diamonds, and to encourage the Process to conclude its deliberations as soon as possible.

Our goal is nothing less than the full implementation of effective measures to eliminate the role of diamonds as a driver of conflict, and there is important work yet to be done.

Comme d'autres États représentés dans cette salle, le Canada sait que la grande majorité des diamants bruts produits dans le monde provient de sources légitimes et représente une ressource précieuse pour le développement économique et social de plusieurs pays du monde.

En même temps, le petit pourcentage du commerce que représentent "les diamants des conflits" continue à avoir un impact disproportionné et dévastateur sur la paix et la sécurité humaine, en particulier en Angola, en Sierra Leone, et en République démocratique du Congo (RDC).

This Assembly and the UN Security Council have played a key role in identifying and monitoring the trade in conflict diamonds, and in sanctioning its violators.

While the devastation of this exploitation may be concentrated in a handful of countries, it must be recognized that resolving this problem is a global responsibility which demands a continuing commitment by all Member States, in cooperation with other important stakeholders.

Cependant, les gouvernements ne sont pas les seuls à avoir prouvé leur engagement à trouver des solutions.

L'industrie internationale du diamant et les organisations de la société civile l'ont aussi fait.

Through the World Diamond Council, the diamond industry has over the last year further developed and refined its proposals for a system of voluntary self-regulation of the diamond trade, which would complement and reinforce the efforts of governments.

Civil society is of critical importance in this partnership, not only in the generation of creative ideas and awareness, but also in galvanizing the political will necessary to deal with this problem.

Since the adoption by this Assembly last December 2000 of resolution 55/56, the Kimberley Process has made significant progress in developing detailed proposals for an international certification scheme for rough diamonds.

Given the complexity of the challenge, the importance of this achievement should not be underestimated.

However, while we are close to reaching our goal, we are not there yet.

At its ministerial meeting in November, the Kimberley Process agreed that the proposals developed provide a good basis for the envisaged certification scheme.

There are, however, some significant points left to be resolved - including issues related to verification, administrative support, and the collection, accessibility and comparability of statistics.

It is our hope that the next meeting of the Kimberley Process in Ottawa will make substantial progress on these concerns.

It is important that this Assembly re-affirm its support for the efforts of the Kimberley Process to finalize its proposals and to move quickly towards implementation of the necessary measures.

The Process must move from deliberations to action at the earliest possibility, to address the urgent humanitarian situation in countries most affected by the trade in conflict diamonds, and to ensure that the legitimate diamond trade, which makes a critical contribution to economies worldwide, is not damaged.

Canada is pleased to join others in this Assembly in co-sponsoring this resolution. We remain committed to working in cooperation with others to address this problem.

As the world moves forward, we in Canada believe that the Kimberly Process must remain focussed on solutions that are effective, pragmatic, credible and inclusive.

Effective, because those involved in profiting from and perpetuating armed conflict must be brought to account, and because the actions of a criminal minority must not be allowed to undermine an important and legitimate industry.

The Kimberley Process needs urgently to develop a certification scheme that closes loopholes and promotes transparency and accountability within the diamond trade, and which is supported by appropriate and effective verification measures

Pragmatic, because the progress of the Kimberley Process and the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed certification scheme will be enhanced over time where and when it is possible to build upon existing national systems and experiences, and to meet the international minimum standards identified as necessary for keeping conflict diamonds out of legitimate markets.

Credible, because the success of the proposed certification scheme will depend both on the confidence that participants and other stakeholders have in its effective implementation, and also on its contribution to the confidence of consumers that the diamonds they purchase are from legitimate sources.

Inclusive, because the effectiveness of the certification scheme will depend on the involvement of all key participants and stakeholders in the international trade in rough diamonds.

It is of key importance that maximum participation in the certification scheme be encouraged and facilitated, and that gaps through which conflict diamonds might otherwise flow are closed off.

In conclusion, I take the opportunity to express Canada's gratitude to the Government of South Africa for its far-sighted, steadfast and continuing leadership of the Kimberley Process.

Canada is pleased to be working with South Africa and others in preparation for the next meeting of the Process in Ottawa next week.

There we aim to achieve further decisive progress on implementation of the proposed certification scheme for rough diamonds.

Bearing in mind the importance of our efforts to the protection of people whose lives have been devastated by the trade in conflict diamonds, we strongly encourage the full endorsement by this Assembly of the resolution before us today.
Thank you, Mr. President.