Kimberly Process
Statement delivered by
Ambassador David Roet
Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN
11 December 2014

Thank you, Mr. President,

Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the People's Republic of China for its Chairmanship and able stewardship of the Kimberley Process in 2014, and the important contribution it made to curb the trade in conflict diamonds. This year has seen many achievements, including the strengthening of the implementation of the peer review system, the enhanced transparency and accuracy of statistics, and the increased involvement by Governments, industry, and civil society in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

I would also like to extend Israel's welcome to the incoming Chair, Angola. We look forward to engaging closely in the coming year.

Mr. President,

Diamonds are formed in a particular context of chemical compounds and minerals, heated and crystallized over many years. Conflict diamonds, are also created in a specific context - poverty, oppression, and violence.

For decades, conflict diamonds were used as a tool of warfare and a source of cash flow for warlords. Just 14 years ago, diamonds obtained under the most terrible human conditions were being used to fund civil wars.

From Angola to Liberia and from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sierra Leone, blood diamonds undermined legitimate governments and led to the enslavement and death of millions of innocent men, women, and children.

Diamonds may be a luxury for millions of people around the world, but we - the international community - don’t have the luxury of ignoring gross human rights violations.

Eleven years ago, an alliance of governments, industry and civil society members united to address the crisis. Recognizing the need to responsibly oversee the mining, refining, and merchandising of diamonds, the Kimberley Process was born.

The idea was to create a process as transparent as the diamonds being certified. It would assure buyers that the diamonds they purchased were free from violence and human rights abuses.

Thanks to a global commitment matched by global action, 99% of diamonds sold today are certified conflict-free. This dramatic accomplishment proves that nations can do well by doing good. Consider the following - if we had this success in the mining industry, it means that we can replicate our success in the oil, energy, coffee, and other natural resource industries.

Mr. President,
As the world’s leading exporter of diamonds and the third largest trading center for diamonds, Israel was one of the first countries to raise awareness about conflict diamonds, one of the first countries to play a part in establishing the Kimberley Process, and the first country to issue a certificate when the Kimberley Process went into effect in 2003.

Today, we are just as committed to ensuring that each and every diamond is certified as “conflict-free” throughout its entire lifecycle – from the mine to the display case.

Israel would like to warmly congratulate Côte d'Ivoire for implementing the requirements of the Security Council resolutions and for moving towards an early resumption of the international trade of its rough diamonds. We will continue to follow Côte d'Ivoire's progress as it implements its plan of action and creates the necessary conditions for a significant export of the Ivorian rough diamonds.

Israel would also like to acknowledge the progress made by the Central African Republic in addressing issues of non-compliance with the Kimberley Process Certification requirements. We strongly encourage further cooperation with the African Union and relevant UN bodies as the CAR strengthens its internal control system.

Israel also reaffirms the importance of the tripartite nature of the Kimberley Process. Civil society must be fully involved in the Kimberley Process, particularly in monitoring implementation on the ground. The Kimberley Process must also enhance collaboration with diamond industry association, international organizations, and enforcement agencies. All of these stakeholders benefit from exchanging information.

Mr. President,

Millions of people – from small-scale miners to heavy equipment operators and from cutters to polishers – rely on the diamond trade for their livelihoods. When managed and traded responsibly, legally mined diamonds can accelerate development and improve living standards for millions of people.

And so we have a duty. We have a duty to the miners who depend on diamonds for their livelihoods. We have a duty to the nations blessed with natural resources to demonstrate that prosperity can replace poverty. And we have a duty to future generations to ensure that cooperation triumphs over conflict.

Thank you, Mr. President.