STATEMENT BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE PLENARY MEETING
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 31:
"ROLE OF DIAMOND IN FUELLING CONFLICT"

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Please check against delivery
Mr. President,

1. Thank you for convening this annual briefing and for allowing my delegation to contribute to the topic under discussion.

2. We welcome the report of the 2014 Chair of the Kimberley Process (KP), China, and wish to express our satisfaction with the excellent work carried out by China during this year’s deliberations.

3. We are profoundly grateful for the hospitality they provided during both the intersessional and the plenary as well as for the leadership role they played.

Mr. President,

4. As a founding member of the KP and a consummate dependent on the sparkling stone we call diamonds, Botswana places a very high premium on the legitimate exploitation, sale and trade of rough diamonds.

5. A blessing to our nation and a precious natural capital, diamonds have played an important role in transforming the lives of our communities, bringing food to the table, sending young people to school, providing free health care for all and building infrastructure.

6. For this reason, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the integrity of the diamond industry and to preserving this wealth for posterity.

7. Informed by our long-term national interests and an overall strategic vision to harness natural capital, we commit to doing good with diamond while using the industry to invest in our people.

8. To this end, we will continue to work with the international community as well as stakeholders, while putting the welfare of our people first, to curb the illicit flow of rough diamonds. Simply put, our diamonds are for development.

9. We recognize however, that in many parts of the world, the so-called conflict diamonds have been used to fuel conflict, while undermining the rule of law and disrupting governance.

10. We stand ready to share lessons, experiences and best practices with those producers and manufacturers who are willing to.

11. Mr. President, we wish to reiterate our strong support and faith in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and the Kimberley Process as an important framework between governments, the industry and civil society to promote the integrity of the industry, while finding ways to avoid conflict.
12. Over the years, we have had an excellent relationships underpinned by mutual respect and cooperation with key actors in the KP especially the Civil Society and the industry.

13. We are committed to continuing this strategic partnership and to working together for the good of humanity.

14. We are very proud of the KP mechanism and we believe that it has been instrumental in helping implement Security Council measures aimed at combating the illicit trade in rough diamonds.

Mr. President,

15. We welcome the report of the KP Chair for 2014. We believe it clearly demonstrates progress made so far while underlining the urgent need to reform and strengthen the KP. We believe it is only in this way that the process can effectively respond to existing and emerging challenges of today.

16. As we move ahead, we wish to welcome and engage potential participants who wish to be a part of KP family.

17. Pursuant to Security Council resolution S/RES/2153 of 29 April 2014, we are delighted to welcome Cote d'Ivoire back into the KP family and look forward to seeing this great country resume the sale and trade of diamond as mandated by KPCS.

18. We have been encouraged by the resilience of the Ivoirian people during the period of sanctions and are happy to see them back on their feet. To this end, we look forward to seeing them implement their Post Sanctions Strategy.

19. On the other hand, we continue to be deeply concerned about the ensuing conflict in the Central African Republic. We are worried that the prolonged conflict as well as the instability and insecurity brought about by militias, has already had a negative impact on socio-economic life of citizens. We are aware that in the affected areas, thousands of women and children remain displaced while going to school and access to health care is a challenge.

20. We know that the Central African Republic leadership has every intention to see this conflict come to an end in order that they can resume their normal lives including diamond sales. We appreciate the openness and candour with which the government engages the KP as a whole and we wish them well as they face these challenges.

21. For our side, we will do whatever we can work within the KP process in order to help bring normalcy to the Central African Republic.

22. Finally, we wish to congratulate Angola as the incoming Chair for 2015 and look forward to working with them as we carry the KP forward.

I thank you.