



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

**Statement by H.E. Gillian Bird
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations**

Thank you Mr President,

Let me begin by expressing Australia's deep appreciation to the United Arab Emirates for its efforts as Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2016. We thank the UAE for its generous hosting of Kimberley Process meetings and for organising additional special fora meetings.

We acknowledge the hard work of all stakeholders who have contributed to the outcomes of the Kimberley Process in 2016. In particular, we recognise the efforts of the six committees and working groups of the Process, as well as special bodies.

The Central African Republic Monitoring Team has undertaken important work in 2016 including through its ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with the Kimberley Process through designated compliance zones. We support continued collaboration by Mano River Union countries to address challenges in the West Africa region.

We also welcome the resumed participation of Venezuela and progress towards the implementation of the Kimberley Process by candidate countries in 2016.

Australia is honoured to Chair the Kimberley Process in 2017. We proudly support the Kimberley Process and the legitimate, transparent and conflict-free trade of rough diamonds. As Chair, we are committed to working with all stakeholders across governments, industry and civil society to ensure the continued effectiveness and integrity of the Process.

Australia congratulates the European Union for assuming the role of Vice Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2017, in advance of assuming the role of Chair and host in 2018. We also congratulate India on its preparedness to take over the role of Vice Chair in 2018, and Chair and host in 2019.

Our chairing will focus on strengthening the implementation of the Kimberley Process, including ways to further enhance the security of certificates and rough diamond shipments. We will also conduct a comprehensive review of the Kimberley Process to develop options to further strengthen the scope, integrity and implementation of the Process to ensure its continuing, central relevance.

As 2017 Chair, Australia will continue the practice of holding special fora to canvass broader matters pertinent to the diamond trade. Themes for such dialogues include sustainability reporting, alluvial and artisanal diamond mining, synthetic diamonds and valuation. We will also hold a special session to share lessons learnt from cooperation between the Indigenous community and the mining sector in Australia.

We look forward to engaging with all Kimberley Process stakeholders and welcoming delegates to Australia this year.

Thank you Mr President.