



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
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**UAE KP CHAIR ACKNOWLEDGES IMPORTANCE OF AND RECOGNISES PAC REPORT ON
CONFLICT DIAMONDS ENTERING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS VIA CAMEROON**

Ahmed Bin Sulayem reaffirms urgency to establish Permanent Secretariat for the KP

Dubai, UAE: In response to the report from Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) detailing the entry of conflict diamonds from the Central African Republic (CAR) via international markets into Cameroon, the UAE KP Chair, Ahmed Bin Sulayem, has recognised the findings and reiterated calls for more dedicated resources to look into and address these types of issues.

"We endorse the need for an 'on-the-ground' approach in countries which have been subject to sanctions," said Mr. Bin Sulayem. "As a result, this should not be limited to the area of generic policy-setting, but rather, there needs to be concrete push towards establishing workable structures through which issues can be managed in a sustainable way, such that it allows people in sanctioned countries to continue to make a living without not having to engage in illicit trade to survive. The PRADD (Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development) program of the USA is a good example of a hands-on approach, which I have witnessed during my visit to the CAR in June this year. In the same spirit, we have constantly been advocating for the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat in the UN for the KP."

In terms of the findings of the report, the KP Chair confirmed that the issue of conflict diamonds crossing into Cameroon is an issue that the CAR Monitoring Team - of which PAC is a member - is aware of and has been investigating for several months. With the scheduled upcoming Review Visit to Cameroon, the KP Chair encourages its participants to study the considerations brought forward by the PAC report in a constructive way, but at the same time, to recognise the realities on the ground.

"As the PAC study correctly notes, the actual rough diamond production of Cameroon is extremely small; 250 carats per month on average over the last 3 years," Mr. Bin Sulayem continued. "The larger picture is, of course, the illicit trade coming from CAR. In particular, when we consider that 1 out of 4 people in CAR live directly or indirectly from mining diamonds, we must ensure that we are not inhibiting or starving a population by making rules, procedures and guidelines that will prevent them entirely from being economically active."

According to the KP Chair, this is an issue, in particular, that was made clear by members of Civil Society of the Central African Republic who attended the 2016 KP Plenary in Dubai: including Placide Ngombe, President of the Organisation Centrafricaine pour le Développement Durable (CAR); Regina Toguera, President of 'Mines Arts et Ressources Centrafricaines' (MARCA) and a member of the KP Follow-Up Committee in Berberati; Ruth Laoubai, Head of Programmes and Projects at the Association des Femmes Centrafricaines pour le Développement Durable (AFCADD).

Mr. Bin Sulayem added: "One of the biggest problems we have seen relates to the rehabilitation of countries that had previously been found to be non-compliant. We have seen first-hand that the road back to normalization and re-entry into the KP takes too long and is very complex. In the case of CAR, it was a year between the announcement in Luanda in June 2015 that diamond exports could be resumed, and the first parcels of KP certified diamonds left the country. This kind of a delay in countries like CAR has a substantial impact on the local economy. It was through my visit here and in other countries across Africa, where we heard heart breaking testimonies of the people witnessing daily difficulties that encouraged us to take bolder steps and plead for institutional infrastructure to prevent these types of issues from happening again."

Last, but not least, the KP Chair confirmed full agreement with the PAC study recommendation to the Governments of CAR and Cameroon to revoke the trading licenses of individuals and companies that engage in any illicit trade; to make sure that the channels of authorised exports from compliant Zones are used to bring the CAR back to normalization; and to hold to account those who, until now, have been able to operate without impunity.



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In the case of the Cameroon-CAR issues, the KP Chair highlighted resolution number 6 of the KP 2016 Plenary Final Communique, which calls for the establishment of a Permanent UN Secretariat to address these types of cases. The resolution reads:

“The Plenary ‘welcomed’ a proposal received from the KP Chair aimed at strengthening the structure of the KP through the establishment of the KP Secretariat. Such a Secretariat could support the continuity and efficiency of the Kimberley Process. The Plenary decided that the upcoming review cycle provides an opportunity to discuss means to improve the Kimberley Process. The proposal states that such a Secretariat could potentially help facilitate the KP’s progress in advancing its goals and objectives; and among other possibilities, for example, serve as a sustained presence maintaining contacts in countries of concern; support the KP Chair in interactions with government officials and others stakeholders; assist the KP with regard to Participants who were suspended and are resuming participation in the KP. “

Mr. Bin Sulayem concluded: “As KP Chair, we hope that the first steps towards the implementation of this KP Permanent Secretariat can be carried out under our successor, Australia, and we continue to look forward to being actively engaged in this process and pledge to support in any way we can within our mandate.”

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About the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme is a collaborative initiative between governments, industry and civil society to stem the flow of conflict diamonds into the diamond trade. Started in 2000, the creation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) in November 2002 laid the foundation for the KPCS by setting out the requirements for controlling rough diamond production and trade. It entered into force in 2003, when participating countries started to implement the rules. There are now 54 participants representing 81 countries including the UAE.

In 2003, the UAE adapted its Federal Law "Union Law no.13 Regarding Supervision of Import/Export and Transit of Rough Diamonds" and became the first Arab country to implement the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The Kimberley Process office in DMCC is the entity authorised by the UAE Ministry of Economy to authenticate the ethical sourcing of rough diamonds traded in the country.