



Photos by George Coakley, US Geological Survey

# ENDING THE TRADE IN CONFLICT DIAMONDS

## *Multilateral Diplomacy and the Kimberley Process*

*“Diamonds are critical to the economic growth and development of African and other countries, so preserving their legitimate trade is an important foreign policy objective.” – President George W. Bush*

Conflict diamonds are diamonds used by rebel movements and their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments. This illegal trade in diamonds financed atrocities in several African countries including Sierra Leone and Angola in the 1990s. The use of diamonds to finance conflict remains a problem in Africa, particularly in Cote d’Ivoire and regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### DIAMOND FACTS

- Many of the world’s most fragile states are diamond producers.
- African countries produce roughly 65% of the world’s diamonds.
- Diamonds play a major role in African economic development.
- An estimated 10 million people globally are directly or indirectly supported by the diamond industry.

Nations General Assembly approved a resolution on December 4, 2006, recognizing that continued action to curb the trade in conflict diamonds is necessary. Kimberley Process countries met in Gaborone, Botswana in November 2006 and agreed to strengthen government oversight over the diamond industry in countries that produce, trade, cut, and polish diamonds.

### THE KIMBERLEY PROCESS

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme was launched by the international community, the diamond industry and civil society groups in 2003 to control and monitor the trade in unpolished diamonds and prevent the violence financed by the trade. The Kimberley Process now includes 71 countries and covers more than 99% of the world’s diamond production.

Under the Kimberley Process, rough diamonds must be shipped in sealed containers and exported with a forgery-resistant certificate that certifies that the diamonds are from conflict-free areas. The Kimberley Process monitors diamond trade through a system of peer reviews and by analyzing diamond trade and production data, which is submitted quarterly by participating countries.

### History of Regulation

The United Nations Security Council first endorsed Kimberley Process efforts to control rough diamonds in Resolution 1295 in April 2002. Most recently, the United

### U.S. Government Actions

U.S. Government agencies are strengthening controls over the U.S. diamond industry in response to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) review of the 2003 Clean Diamond Trade Act. U.S. agencies will inspect rough diamond imports and exports, provide confirmation of shipments to foreign exporting authorities, and improve data collection on diamond imports and exports.

### AID TO AFRICA

The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development have allotted \$7.6 million since 1999 to programs to strengthen government controls in the diamond sectors in Sierra Leone and Liberia. New U.S. programs totaling \$4.2 million to provide geological assessments and address land tenure issues will begin this year in Guinea, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

*For more information see: <http://www.state.gov/lebl/diamonds/>  
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