Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the outcome of the Plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process in Washington

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"High Representative Catherine Ashton welcomes the positive progress that the Kimberley Process has made this year to strengthen controls on the global trade in rough diamonds. The EU believes that the Kimberley Process certification scheme (KPCS) remains a unique tool for conflict prevention and plays an important role in supporting Participants to ensure good governance and transparency. The decision to lift the special monitoring measures under the Kinshasa Administrative Decision with respect to the Marange mining area in Zimbabwe is a positive step forward. This recognises the significant progress that Zimbabwe has made to improve KP compliance. The EU appreciates the contribution of the Civil Society Coalition representatives and welcomes Zimbabwe’s renewed commitment to allow them access to Marange. The EU also welcomes Zimbabwe’s willingness to sustain efforts on KP compliance and to enhance revenue transparency.

The EU welcomes the progress that has been made by Guinea to improve KP compliance, as well as Liberia’s commitment to address current shortcomings. The EU notes with appreciation Cote d’Ivoire’s programme to work towards re-integration into the KPCS. The EU chairs the “Friends of Cote d’Ivoire” group which supports this aim. The EU’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) is helping to develop a common methodology for satellite monitoring of diamond mining in Cote d’Ivoire, and supporting projects in the artisanal mining sector to improve chain of custody through the Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development Project (PRADD) which is co-funded by the EU’s Instrument for Stability."
The EU affirms the importance of the KP’s work on reform in order to address the challenges of the future. The EU warmly welcomes the ongoing work to improve implementation of KPCS and congratulates South Africa on its appointment as Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2013. The EU looks forward to working closely with the South Africa Chairmanship to bring renewed impetus and strength to the KPCS.

Note to editors:
The Kimberley Process (KP) is a voluntary and international certification scheme which requires governments to certify that shipments of rough diamonds are conflict-free. The KP, established in 2003, currently has 51 members representing 76 countries (the European Commission represents all EU Member States).

The EU Chairs the KP Working Group on Monitoring and in that role oversees issues of KP Participants’ compliance, together with members of the Working Group.

Participants of the KPCS are working to further strengthen KPCS through enhancing arrangements to ensure compliance. The EU is also working tirelessly in support of the more ambitious aspects of the KPCS reform agenda, including proposals to expand the KP mandate to cover situations of violence related to diamond sector.

The EU appreciates the important contribution of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre to the KP in provision of administrative support through provision of the KP website.

Final communique of the 2012 Kimberly Process Plenary [www.kimberleyprocess.com]