

**Remarks of Mr Karel Kovanda, Chair-Designate of the Kimberley Process
Gaborone, 9 November 2006**

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday, Mr Chairman, I was learning from you, to speak often. I will also learn from you to speak briefly, although today is an exception. I will also try to learn from you to speak wisely.

Mr Chairman, thank you. Let us just look what this magician has done in three days! During the run-up to the plenary, the KP was under attack from various sides. Dire warnings were being issued that the KP might actually collapse. The world press was feasting on the supposed impotence and internal strife of the KP. But today, the final communiqué which we are about to adopt and of which we have all seen a draft speaks for itself. An awful lot of work has been done in 2006, and at this plenary, and is being acknowledged in the communiqué. All of this under the Chairman's magical and magisterial leadership. Thank you, Chairman, for all the work that you have done and all the work you have inspired, as well as for Botswana's exemplary hospitality.

But of course, of course: The Chairman could not have managed without all of us here. And this is where the unique strength of the KP lies and I use the word "unique" advisedly: for ours is the only multilateral organization I know of that includes government authorities, industry and the civil society, the NGOs. We argue, for sure. We would all have wanted our results to be skewed a little more this way, or a bit that way. In the end, no one here is completely, utterly satisfied with our results. But that's the magic of the word "includes". Our ship is large enough to fit us all in, yet tight enough to keep us moving along.

Allow me a personal note. The bottom line of what the KP is all about is for me Human Rights. Of course we have to focus on the open wound of Cote d'Ivoire where some of the last conflict diamonds come from. We possibly could have done more in that respect, we possibly could have been faster. But overall since the inception of the KP, the percentage of conflict diamonds reaching the world markets has dropped 20 times; or, if we take NGO estimates, 300 times. No doubt several other factors were at work as well. Choking off the flow of conflict diamonds is not enough to stop civil wars, and God knows there are plenty of civil wars even where there are no diamonds. But who would deny that KP has played an important, perhaps even central, perhaps even decisive role in limiting human suffering stemming from illicit diamond trafficking?

Conflict diamonds are almost criminated and it will be up to us to keep it that way. Other human-rights issues are now more visible. We have for example had important discussions of the plight of alluvial diamond workers. NGOs and others have been instrumental in pointing out their conditions. A dollar a day, we hear. Well, let me tell you about my dream; colleagues in my delegation may be shocked for I haven't consulted

this with them. My dream is this – that future KP membership be further enriched by representatives of the miners' cooperatives of other organizations of theirs. This will hardly happen during our chairmanship anyway. But helping the destitute miners should, I feel, certainly be an objective of ours.

What, conversely, we would like to see happen under our chairmanship is the natural outgrowth of Botswana's chairmanship and of our plenary. Call it "continuity through consolidation", if you wish. And this is a good place to thank all my colleagues from my delegation, from the EV and from EU member states, without whose help I simply wouldn't be sitting here today.

We want to have the KP continue with all the good work it has been doing to-date. That means, let's not rest on our laurels.

We want to implement as fast as possible as many as possible of the 40+ recommendations from the 3-year review – and let me again thank Canada for her role in coordinating and summarizing that work.

We want to focus especially on the vexing issue of internal controls and on the transparency of statistics. Technical issues, but critical to our success.

We will resolutely deal with the festering problem of Cote d'Ivoire's conflict diamonds and on treating Ghana's internal difficulties, not losing sight, however, of the broader West African picture.

We will seek to resolve the question marks raised over Venezuela and her North-Eastern neighbors, unless all of this happens even under Botswana's chairmanship.

We will follow through with further expanding KP membership, as appropriate and as recommended by the Participation Committee. In this context, however, let me also mention that we will lose two members, as Romania and Bulgaria join the EU on the first of next year. They will then be represented by the European Commission.

In the context of membership, a special word about Liberia. In our dealings with Ghana, we're aiming at throttling the last significant flow of conflict diamonds we're aware of. In bringing Liberia into the fold, KP is manifesting its other face; namely that once a country does emerge from the terror of civil war, the KP is there to help it find its bearing. So I am particularly looking forward to welcoming Liberia in our fold in the next weeks and months.

As we look forward, let me also give you a preview of organizational issues. Pencil into your calendars the following dates: 19-21 June for the next intercessional, 5-8 November for the next plenary. Both are planned for Brussels, so it's unlikely that we'll have the weather Botswana managed to fix up for us at the next plenary.

We welcome the Vice-Chair-elect. We are looking forward to working with India, learning from India and seeking support from India. It is important that the constantly rotating leadership of the KP be in the hands of active members, of members who have their own house in order. It is also helpful, though there is no written rule on this, that the leadership rotate both geographically and in terms of a country's place in the mine-to-market chain. We therefore warmly welcome India to this new role.

In this context let me thank Botswana once again. The EC has learned a lot during our cooperation, which we merit as having been excellent. But thank you all in this room. The nature of our disagreements is such that the KP emerges from them stronger. The nature of our points of agreement is unparalleled, and thank to them, we're changing the world.

Thank you, merci beaucoup, molto obrigado, spasibo bolshoe, muchisimas gracias a todo el mundo.