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President: Mr. Al-Nasser. (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 12.35 p.m.

Agenda item 33

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Letter dated 6 December 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the Kimberley Process (A/66/593)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Yamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor in this Hall, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

On behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which entrusted me with the daunting and challenging task of chairing the Kimberley Process this year, I would also like to submit to the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 65/137 of 16 December 2010, the report on the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for 2011 (A/66/593, annex).

Like all my predecessors who have spoken before the Assembly since 2004, I would remind everyone that the Kimberley Process is a joint initiative of

Governments, the diamond industry and civil society, aimed at preventing blood diamonds from finding their way into legal international trade channels. It implements mechanisms designed to break the link between the trade in blood diamonds and armed conflict, particularly considering the devastating effects that such conflicts have on the peace, security and safety of peoples.

The United Nations has earned the right to congratulate itself on the considerable progress that has been made thanks to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. Indeed, when this initiative was launched, many countries that were grappling with armed conflict whose financing was based on income from the sale of conflict diamonds have now returned to peace and stability. Having rid themselves of illicit diamonds, these countries have created conditions conducive to reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals by directing the income generated from the legal diamond trade to financing public programmes.

Regarding the contribution to peace and security, it should be noted that, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1980 (2011), the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire has been closely monitored by the Kimberley Process through its Working Group on Monitoring, its Working Group of Diamond Experts and the group of friends of Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, during the deliberations of the Kinshasa plenary meeting, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire made a presentation on the situation that has prevailed since the country's reunification and the efforts it has made to implement

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a framework that meets the Certification Scheme's minimum requirements.

Beyond this, the Kimberley Process, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1980 (2011), has worked in cooperation with the United Nations Group of Experts and the Security Council's sanctions Committees to continue to ensure vigilance in order to prevent Ivorian diamonds from entering the legal trade in neighbouring countries, particularly Ghana, Liberia and Guinea.

Regarding other technical issues connected to implementing the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in 2011, the report I am submitting today details the following. The Kingdom of Swaziland has joined the Kimberley Process. Mali, Mozambique, Cameroon, Panama, Burkina Faso and Kazakhstan have expressed interest in rejoining the Certification Scheme. The Participation Committee has been helping them to prepare their applications for membership. This is ample proof that the Certification Scheme remains open and inclusive.

Concerning monitoring and peer evaluation, I note that 45 participants, representing 71 countries, have submitted their annual reports; that the Kimberley Process plenary decided to entrust me with contacting those participants that have not submitted the required statistical reports in order to urge them to comply with the minimum requirements of the Certification Scheme; and that review visits were hosted by Lesotho, Botswana and Ukraine, after which reports were drafted on the state of implementation of the Kimberley Process in those countries.

I also highlight the establishment of a team of technical experts to consider how to supervise diamond transactions on the Internet, given both the increase in the volume of such transactions and the importance of exercising adequate control over them; and the improvement of the Kimberley Process Rough Diamond Statistics website so as to enable it to ensure the consistency of data at the time of recording.

Concerning the submission of annual reports, I note specifically that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, after having withdrawn from the Certification Scheme, has complied with the recommendations made for it by the Kinshasa plenary and is thus entitled to rejoin the Scheme.

Turning to the World Customs Organization, cooperation with that organization has been sustained

and productive, particularly through its assistance to the Certification Scheme in the area of strengthening strategies to combat fraud.

With regard to technical issues, traceability and strengthening internal controls, the relevant Working Groups for these areas are working with participants in formulating granulometric footprints for diamond-producing countries; to implement the methodology evaluation project for rough diamonds through a data evaluation matrix; and to implement the Moscow Declaration recommendations on strengthening internal controls and to assist participants in meeting the Declaration's requirements.

In 2011, the Kimberley Process has faced a number of issues that, due to the differences in approach on how to address them among the various participants, have hampered its work. These are, specifically, the issues of diamonds from the Marange region of Zimbabwe and the vice-chairmanship of the Kimberley Process. However, despite these differences, the participants at the Kinshasa plenary were able to overcome them by finding solutions in the interests of the Certification Scheme group as a whole. Besides the administrative decision authorizing the resumption of exports of diamonds from the Marange region in compliance with the minimum requirements of the Certification Scheme, the plenary approved the selection of the United States as Vice-Chair of the Kimberley Process. That country will therefore take over the chairmanship of the Process for 2012, assisted by the Republic of South Africa, which was also appointed Vice-Chair with a view to enabling it to organize the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Process.

It should also be noted that this year the ad hoc committee appointed to establish an administrative support mechanism began its work. In view of that, we have relaunched the review of the Kimberley Process entrusted to the committee. The Kinshasa plenary adopted two important decisions in that respect.

Beyond this, the non-participation of civil society at the Kinshasa plenary remains of concern to all participants. This is regrettable and I can only encourage the United States, which will take up the torch of the Kimberley Process chairmanship on 1 January 2012, to pursue the dialogue under way so that the Process can benefit from the contributions of participants and observers alike, as has been the case since it began. At any rate, I note with satisfaction the re-engagement of

civil society, which is looking to support the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme through implementation of the administrative decision taken at Kinshasa on diamonds from the Marange region of Zimbabwe.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all participants and the chairs of the working groups and ad hoc committees who, in their professionalism and sense of responsibility, have laboured unceasingly all year long to contribute to the success of my mandate. I urge them to do the same for the next Chair. In a departure from tradition, I will not be able to submit a draft resolution for the Assembly's approval, since consultations are still ongoing with all the parties in an effort to arrive at a text that meets with general approval. My delegation will remain in touch with the Secretariat regarding the date for submitting the draft resolution for introduction and adoption.

The President: I now call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Beviglia Zampetti (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding country Croatia aligns itself with this declaration.

The European Union, which participates as a single member in the Kimberley Process (KP), would like first to welcome the results of the Democratic Republic of Congo's chairmanship of the Process in 2011, insofar as they illustrate the Kimberley Process's capacity to effectively address new and important challenges. The EU notes with satisfaction that the tools that make the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme so unique have been further strengthened this year. The KP has ensured the statistical transparency of diamond production and trade and, through its peer review system, has continued to monitor the Scheme's implementation.

The EU, as Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring, encourages participants' continued commitment to scrutiny through KP review visits, as well as through the submission of substantive annual reports. The EU would like to express its particular appreciation to India, Botswana, Lesotho and Ukraine for hosting review visits in 2011 and to Canada, Thailand, Lebanon, Switzerland and the United States for inviting review visits in 2012. The EU is also promoting statistical reconciliation between participants and fostering the statistical analysis capacity of the KP as key elements in protecting the legitimate diamond trade.

The EU also actively supports the Process's efforts to develop and implement new tools for adapting to a challenging environment, such as international vigilance measures that make use of the footprints of certain diamonds. The EU firmly believes that the consistent use of such tools will strengthen the ability of the Kimberley Process to tackle illicit trade in conflict diamonds, and we call on all participants to step up their efforts in this area. The EU also supports Process actions aimed at addressing the challenges posed by the recent development of cross-border Internet trading.

The European Union also welcomes the enhanced cooperation on KP implementation and enforcement, which represents a significant step forward as it will foster greater collaboration between national enforcement agencies and international bodies, such as the World Customs Organization. At the end of the day, the Certification Scheme's credibility as an international process depends on effective implementation and enforcement by its participants; in that regard, the number of fake certificates detected, illegal shipments blocked and arrests made in 2011 is testament to the fact that the Process makes a difference on the ground. The EU looks forward to further progress in this area in 2012.

The EU also welcomes the work of the ad hoc committee tasked with review of the Kimberley Process core document. We strongly support the need to strengthen and adapt the KP to meet current challenges in the global diamond supply chain so as to provide necessary assurance for consumers.

Recent rebel activity in the Central African Republic, and the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, remind us of the continuing threat that conflict diamonds pose to regional stability and security. In that context, the Process's continued engagement and monitoring of diamond production in Côte d'Ivoire, as required by Security Council resolution 1893 (2009), is further illustration of the positive role that the Process can play in a crisis where diamond production and trading could affect peace and security. The EU is determined to support Ivorian efforts to participate in the Certification Scheme and to ensure that Ivorian diamonds will contribute to recovery and development rather than conflict. The EU also supports the Kimberley Process's dialogue with Guinea and its continued engagement with Liberia under Security Council resolution 1961 (2010), since regional cooperation remains key to ensuring stability in West Africa.

The most complex challenge to the credibility of the Process in 2011 related to implementation of the Certification Scheme in Zimbabwe's Marange mining area. The EU played an active and constructive role in promoting negotiations, and welcomes the significant progress achieved by Zimbabwe towards the goal of full compliance with the Certification Scheme in the Marange diamond fields. The EU strongly supports the Kinshasa decision offering a framework for KP-compliant Marange diamonds to be legitimately traded under the Process and to contribute to economic development in Zimbabwe, rather than to violence and human rights violations. The EU calls on Zimbabwe to continue to engage constructively with the Kimberley Process on the basis of the Kinshasa decision, and calls on all participants to collectively support the decision as a key element in the protection of the integrity of the Kimberley Process.

Before concluding, I would like to stress that one of the unique features of the Kimberley Process is its tripartite structure. Civil society is a key element of the Kimberley Process and has contributed much, both to its initial establishment and its subsequent operation. The EU therefore regrets the recent decision by Global Witness to withdraw from the Process. The EU remains committed to the Process and considers that certain recent KP decisions, particularly the Kinshasa decision on Marange, fully recognize and reflect the role of civil society in the Process. In that respect, we are encouraged by the decision of most non-governmental organizations to continue their engagement with the Process. We call on all participants to recognize the full diversity of opinions within and about the KP, and to work together to enhance its credibility.

In 2011, the international community has demonstrated its determination to act collectively and constructively through the Kimberley Process, as an innovative instrument for preventing diamonds from fuelling conflicts and, ultimately, for making a contribution to economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. The EU would like to express its gratitude to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its stewardship of the Process. We warmly welcome the United States as the incoming Chair, support the selection of South Africa as the 2013 Chair, and look forward to working with them on the priorities outlined in their joint statement at Kinshasa.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): I am honoured to address the General Assembly today on behalf of

Canada. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the United States as the incoming Chair of the Kimberley Process. We look forward to working with the United States over the coming year to improve the effectiveness of the Process.

(spoke in French)

Canada welcomes the excellent progress made this year on the reform agenda of the Kimberley Process under the leadership of Botswana, Chair of the ad hoc committee on reform. As Vice-Chair of the reform committee, Canada is very pleased that participants in the plenary endorsed proposals to advance discussions on two major priorities: the establishment of an administrative support mechanism and of an ad hoc committee to review the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds. We believe that an administrative support mechanism will bring much-needed continuity, consistency and stability to the Process. We also look forward to starting work on the review for the development and implementation of solutions to improve the Kimberley Process. This work is vital to enhancing the effectiveness of the Certification Scheme, and we are encouraged by the widespread support for such initiatives.

(spoke in English)

Such elements of progress notwithstanding, we are of the view that the Kimberley Process is facing a critical moment in its existence. For the first time in its history, the Process plenary meeting took place without the participation of the civil society coalition, which boycotted the meeting to indicate its lack of confidence in the Kimberley Process. The Process draws its strength from its multi-stakeholder nature. Without the participation of all three groups of stakeholders, the institution of the Process ceases to exist. In this particular context, civil society plays an important role in building consumer confidence in the diamond supply chain and in upholding the credibility of the Kimberley Process as a whole. The withdrawal of any non-governmental organization from the Scheme signals a critical need for all participants to work in earnest and collaboratively on the 2012 agenda towards building a stronger, more effective Kimberley Process.

Finally, the difficult debate on Zimbabwe exposed the fundamental inability of the Kimberley Process to address non-compliance in a timely and effective manner. Canada notes that a consensus outcome on Zimbabwe has been reached. We recognize the potential

benefits that the diamond resources of the Marange fields could have for the people of Zimbabwe, and strongly believe in the importance of transparency and ensuring that diamond revenues flow through public channels.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the Kimberley Process, it is undeniable that the scope of the conflict-diamonds problem has been significantly reduced. There is no doubt that the Process has enhanced the accountability, transparency and effective governance of the trade in rough diamonds. But it has also had its share of challenges. If the Kimberley Process wishes to remain relevant and credible in the eyes of all consumers, we must adapt to new realities, address new challenges and anticipate new opportunities.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its chairmanship and able stewardship of the Kimberley Process in 2011. I would also like to extend Israel's welcome to the incoming Chair, the United States of America. We look forward to engaging closely with the United States during the coming year.

From antiquity, diamonds have been deeply valued for their beauty, purity and strength. They have long been traded as the world's most precious commodity. They are integral parts of the most sophisticated machines in industry, medicine and science. They are symbols of love and devotion. Marilyn Monroe famously joked that diamonds are a girl's best friend. It is the international community's responsibility to ensure that diamonds are not the best friends of terrorists, warlords and others who spread conflict.

Conflict diamonds have led to the deaths of millions around the world. They fuel war, they lead to slavery and they have caused the ruin of entire countries. Eight years ago, the international community came together to stem the flow of conflict diamonds around the world, founding the Kimberley Process. Together, we have made great strides in confronting the danger of conflict diamonds. In the 1990s, such diamonds accounted for 15 per cent of the global market. Today that number has been reduced to less than 1 per cent. There is no doubt that the Kimberley Process has helped to bring about this progress. It shows that when there is a global commitment backed by collective action, we can achieve real results.

Israel has been deeply involved in the Kimberley Process since its inception. In 2003, Israel issued the

first certificate for a conflict-free diamond. In 2010, we served as the Kimberley Process Chair. This year, we chaired the Participation Committee, overseeing the membership process for four new countries. Israel sees that work as an expression of our most fundamental values. In Judaism there is a principle known as *tikkun olam*, which calls on us to mend the world and make it a better place for everyone. Those values extend to the products we buy and the commodities we sell. As the world's third-largest trading centre for diamonds, we recognize our responsibility for providing leadership on this issue. Israel is committed to making sure that each and every diamond is certified as conflict-free throughout its entire life cycle, from the mine to the display case.

As we gather here today, it is clear that the Kimberley Process has significant work ahead of it. The Process was intended to be a model for a tripartite partnership in which Governments, industry and non-governmental organizations worked hand in hand. Efforts must be made to strengthen civil society partnerships within the Kimberley Process; the broad participation of all relevant stakeholders is essential to the advancement of our collective work. To that end, we strongly support many of the suggestions now on the table for reforming the Process. In particular, Israel has called for the formation of a permanent secretariat to support the Process's work.

As the Assembly works to achieve consensus, let me express Israel's hope that in the days ahead we will not just adopt a new draft resolution, but also come together around effective solutions. The Kimberley Process is too important to fail. Our commitment to its cause must be even stronger than the diamonds we seek to certify. We must be vigilant, we must ensure that the process is implemented rigorously, and we must take bold steps to strengthen our partnership in the year ahead. We must extend a promise to all the people of the world that we will not rest until each and every diamond is conflict-free.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia greatly values the activity of the Kimberley Process, actively participates in its work and supports the dynamic development and growth of its authority internationally, considering it to be an effective tool for the collective prevention of entry into the world market of diamonds from areas of conflict — so-called conflict diamonds.

While we commend the work of the Process in carrying out the tasks set out in the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and in decisions of other United Nations entities, we believe that their effective implementation requires the further development of its legal basis. We believe that now is the time to step up the work of implementing the international Certification Scheme rough diamond, and to gradually craft a foundation of standards for the functioning of the Process and its working bodies that corresponds to its future development requirements.

We welcome the Kingdom of Swaziland as a new participant in the Kimberley Process, and we support the further involvement in the Process of those countries that have not yet become participants.

We welcome the decision to authorize exports from the Marange mining region of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

We believe it advisable to continue efforts to strengthen internal controls on the movement of rough diamonds in producer countries and in diamond-cutting and trade centres, to raise the level of transparency in Kimberley Process statistics, and to provide access to those statistics for all interested international entities. We commend the growing practice of cooperation between United Nations bodies and the Kimberley Process in implementing the requirements of the international rough diamond Certification Scheme and excluding conflict diamonds from legal trade channels.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 33.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.