

**SPEECH BY THE INCOMING CHAIR OF THE
KIMBERLEY PROCESS CERTIFICATION SCHEME
(KPCS) – NAMIBIA**

**JOSEPH S. IITA, PERMANENT SECRETARY: MINES AND
ENERGY**

NEW DELHI, INDIA

6 NOVEMBER 2008

Hon. Minister of State for Commerce and Power – Mr. Jairam Ramesh
Your Excellencies High Commissioners and Heads of Missions
Distinguished head of Delegations
Hon Secretary of Commerce – Mr G. K. Pillai
Distinguished Chair of the Kimberley Process, Dr Rahul Khullar
Distinguished Chairs of the Working Groups and Committees of the KP
Distinguished Chairman of the World Diamond Council, Mr. Eli Izhakoff
Distinguished members of the Kimberley Process Family
Distinguished members of the media
All Protocols observed
Ladies and Gentlemen

First and Foremost, on behalf of the Namibian delegation, I wish to take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to our host for the wonderful hospitality that we have received in India since our arrival in this really incredible country. For us this came as no surprise as India was the first country in the world to accord SWAPO, the Apartheid and colonialism, diplomatic status and our first diplomatic mission here in Delhi, which became our initial diplomatic front in our country's fight for freedom, independence and self determination.

Before I go ahead, allow me to Congratulate the United States for the outcome of the recently concluded elections. In a time of economic crisis and dark clouds of gloom and doom, the recent developments in the USA bring much hope to a world that is thirsting for a strong and progressive leadership and I have no doubt that the diamond industry – of which my country is a major stakeholder – would benefit from the semblance of stability and optimism in the biggest market for diamonds – the USA.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, and on the occasion of our taking up the Chair of the Kimberley Process, I want to record that we are greatly honoured by the faith the international community has bestowed on us, and greatly aware, in equal measure, of the responsibility now placed on our shoulders.

We in this room all know that human institutions are, by definition, imperfect, and the Kimberley Process is no exception. That does not make it any less important, nor does it make it any less impressive the achievements under our predecessors as Chair – the Government of India since the dawn of 2008 up until now, and before then the Governments of the Republic of South Africa, Canada, the Russian Federation, Botswana and the European Union. Namibia wishes to commend each of those governments for their leadership, their commitment, and their accomplishments.

And we want to commend, too, our partners in this Process since its inception: civil society and the diamond industry. And it would be unfair to leave out the immense contributions from the chairs of the various working groups and committees. It is easy to forget how dramatically the landscape has changed since the turn of the century when military conflicts were raging in a number of countries, when diamonds were embroiled in those conflicts, and when there was widespread doubt about the ability and even the willingness of the Kimberley Process stakeholders to rise to the challenge.

Today, in west and southern Africa and elsewhere around the globe, diamonds are once more playing a constructive role in development. The diamond trade has attained a level of transparency which, while still falling short of our ultimate objective, is nevertheless unprecedented in the industry's history, and which, we would dare say, sets a high standard for other industries, particularly those in the resources sector.

And, at a time when it has never been clearer that the route to resolving the world's problems must be multilateral and inclusive, the Kimberley Process has remained faithful to its founding premise that progress comes through cooperation and consultation among all key stakeholders.

Of course, this is not to deny that many challenges lie ahead. Civil conflict remains a threat in a number of diamond-producing countries. Standards of reporting and accountability must be improved – no mean feat at a time when weakening economic conditions may tempt some to cut corners.

We must continue to bring more countries and relevant players into the fold, at a time when competitive other pressures, both economic and political, may pull in the other direction. In this regard, and as an aside, I should mention our encouragement with Venezuela. Commitment and participation are the keys to any collective effort; and during the coming year we must and will work to strengthen these twin pillars of the Kimberley Process.

And, in closing, let me also reiterate that these same two pillars – commitment and participation – will guide Namibia as we discharge those internal, institutional responsibilities that come with the position of Chair.

We will work together with all members, all nations, all stakeholders, in the various plenary, working groups, committees and other activities that together make the Kimberley Process. Namibia was present at the creation; present during the formative hours of the Kimberley Process when some among us conceived, and carried forth, an idea that first challenged the conventional wisdom of the day and then came to redefine that conventional wisdom.

On behalf of the Republic of Namibia, I can assure you that we fully recognize the value and integrity of what has since been created, and we will do our utmost best to preserve and advance it.

I thank you.