

Mrs Ferrero-Waldner
Commissioner for External Relations
European Commission

22 January 2007
Our ref :B611

Dear Mrs Ferrero-Waldner,

Subject: EU Presidency of the Kimberley Process

In 2007, the European Union holds the Presidency of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. To date, this mechanism that was created to eliminate conflict diamonds from the diamond trade has not been enforced effectively enough, and conflict diamonds are still in circulation, as the new film 'Blood Diamond' highlights.

The United Nations recently reported that \$23 million in blood diamonds from the Ivory Coast are being smuggled over the border into Ghana and Mali, making their way into international diamond markets. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), violence and human rights abuses continue over control of diamond mines. As the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone shows, even a small amount of conflict diamonds can wreak enormous havoc in a country.

This trade continues because the Kimberley Process has serious loopholes that must be addressed to make the system effective. Current controls - from government and industry - are neither strong enough, nor enforced effectively enough, to ensure that rebel groups, terrorists, and other criminal networks do not use diamonds to finance conflict. Without strengthening these systems, the Kimberley Process may not be able to ward off a renewal of conflict in some parts of Africa.

2007 is a critical year for the Kimberley Process, during which all participating governments need to improve monitoring of the diamond industry. I am writing to ask you to use the Presidency of the Kimberley Process to :

- Require all sectors of the diamond trade to put meaningful systems in place to track diamonds from the mine to the retail shop. Most importantly, diamond companies should have transparent and responsible sourcing policies and independently verified systems of warranties;
- Ensure that the Kimberley Process develops a meaningful system to monitor industry compliance as a priority in 2007, including improving the accuracy of EC rough diamond statistics;
- Provide adequate financing to promote effective implementation of the scheme.

I look forward to your response on this issue, and to a strengthening of the Kimberley Process in Europe.



Dick Oosting
Director, Amnesty International EU Office

