



World Diamond Council

Eli Izhakoff, Chairman / 580 Fifth Avenue / New York, NY 10036 / USA

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Mr S Kelner
The Editor
The Independent
Independent House
191 Marsh Wall
London
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Dear Sir

Conflict Diamonds

The campaign by Amnesty International and Global Witness is to be commended, highlighting as it does an issue of concern to everyone in the diamond industry.

The World Diamond Council has been working closely with all sectors of the diamond industry, 70 governments and the NGOs (including Amnesty International and Global Witness) in the 'Kimberley Process' to end the traffic in conflict diamonds and to ensure that diamonds are a force for good in Africa. The very countries, such as Sierra Leone and Angola, that have suffered so much in recent civil strife, now desperately need their mineral resources for essential post-conflict reconstruction and development.

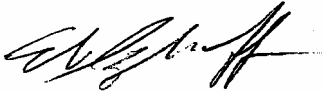
We are concerned that your coverage suggests that conflict diamonds are still prevalent and could unnecessarily alarm consumers.

Today, 99.8% of rough diamonds being provided to the jewellery industry are from conflict-free sources, and are certified as such by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, an international agreement mandated by the UN General Assembly and endorsed by the Security Council. A phenomenal feat that has been achieved through the efforts of industry and civil society working together with governments.

Diamonds are helping many stable African countries towards the goal of sustainable economic development, freeing their citizens from the cycle of poverty and dependence on aid. These countries, together with Russia, Canada and Australia, represent the overwhelming majority of diamond production in the world.

Yes, consumers should ask for assurance that their diamonds are conflict free, and retailers be able to provide that reassurance, but the impression should not be given that conflict diamonds are everywhere. This is an exaggeration which damages the diamond industry and could impact negatively where the benefit of diamonds is needed most – in Africa.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'W. G. H.', written in a cursive style.