

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

On 1.1.2008 India assumed the chair of the Kimberley Process Certificate Scheme (KPCS) for the period 1.1.2008 to 31.12.2008. In November 2006, during the plenary of KPCS in Botswana, India was unanimously selected to hold the Vice Chair of the Scheme for 2007 and therefore, Chair of the Scheme for 2008. Namibia is the Vice Chair for 2008.

India is sixth in succession to hold the Chair of KPCS after South Africa, Canada, Russian Federation, Botswana and European Commission. As the current Chair of the Kimberley Process India is hosting the 5th Intersessional meeting of the Kimberley Process from 17 to 19 June 2008 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

All the Working Groups of KPCS meet at the Intersessional meeting to take a half-yearly stock of the implementation of the Scheme and for planning for the year ahead. The Intersessional is structured around working group meetings and does the background work for the decisions to be taken in the Plenary.

Under the aegis of United Nations, KPCS is a joint Government, industry and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds – rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments. KPCS imposes extensive requirements on its members to enable them to certify shipments of rough diamonds as 'conflict-free'. As of June 2008, KPCS has 48 members, representing 74 countries (with the European Community and its Member States counted as an individual participant).

Kimberley Process Certification Scheme was adopted in a Ministerial meeting held at Interlaken, Switzerland, on 5th November, 2002. India is a signatory to the Interlaken Declaration and is a founder member of KPCS.

Delegates from about 35 countries will be attending the Intersessional meeting and participate in the various joint sessions which will be held during 17-19th June, 2008 to take stock of the progress made in implementation of KPCS and discuss ways to strengthen the Scheme.