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WFDB President thanks NGOs for their contribution to KP, Expresses disappointment at Global Witness' disengagement

Antwerp, Belgium, December 7, 2011 – Avi Paz, president of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) expressed the WFDB's appreciation for the vital contribution civil society has made to the Kimberley Process, and in particular singled out the NGO Global Witness for its efforts since the KP was founded in 2003. However, he expressed his disappointment with the decision by Global Witness to disengage from the KP.

"While the news of Global Witness' disengagement has made headlines, it is far more important to note the consistent and valuable input that the members of civil society, Global Witness included, have offered since the Kimberley Process was founded. In the nine years since the KPs inception, civil society has been an inseparable part of the efforts in successfully stamping out the overwhelming majority of rough diamonds originating from conflict areas and has actively contributed to the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification System (KPCS)," Paz said

"Therefore, this is really the time to thank Global Witness for the significant role it has played as a KP founder, for its pivotal role in improving the KP, and for helping in making 99.9 percent of rough diamonds in the market conflict free. We have come a long way together, during which Global Witness has become well acquainted with this fascinating industry and realizes and appreciates what is at stake," Paz commented.

"I also would have liked to thank Global Witness for thinking twice and for reconsidering carefully before stepping out and turning its back on a system it has played such an important part in creating. Unfortunately, with Global Witness leaving the scene, the most experienced and veteran NGO in the KP will no longer be able to guide the other members of civil society from a confrontational into a more cooperative direction," Paz concluded. "We're very sorry to see them leave at this critical point in time."

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