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TESTIMONIAL

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15 August 2006

Diamonds have always been a part of my life and that of my family. I was born in the north of Namibia, where I also went to primary school. My father worked for Consolidated Diamond Mines of South West Africa (CDM), now known as Namdeb, for many years, first as a supervisor and then in charge of recruitment. Since the very beginning, diamonds provided for me and my family.

After finishing primary school, I went to high school at the Roman Catholic Church in Windhoek, Namibia's capital, and then to South Africa to continue my studies. Upon my return from South Africa, my father organised a summer job for me at CDM. While working there, I applied and won a CDM scholarship to study mineral engineering at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom for three years. The experience and education I received during my three years at Leeds were invaluable and I owe this to diamonds.

I then returned to Namibia to join CDM as a trainee. I spent 21 years at CDM, rising through the ranks to become the Assistant General Manager of the mine. The skills and training I gained while working there were crucial to obtaining my new role as Managing Director of Telecom Namibia, Namibia's national telecommunications company. My diamond story is not unique but it is true for many Namibians.

From my own experience I can say that diamonds are central to the economy of Namibia since the country's independence and are a major contributor to GDP through employment, royalties, which are paid to the Namibian government, and taxes.

Diamonds not only play a central role in the Namibian economy, but also in its society. Throughout the years, Namdeb has invested in education through its own in-house training programme and by building training colleges and secondary schools across the country.

Many professionals in Namibia have been trained by the diamond industry and are bringing their expertise to other sectors, thus benefiting the economy as a whole.

Namibia has benefited greatly from the diamond industry and continues to do so; diamonds are a pillar of the Namibian economy.