



**Opening Ceremony - 2009 CIBJO CONGRESS
MAY 3rd, 2009, Istanbul, Turkey**

ELI IZHAKOFF, WDC CHAIRMAN

Your Excellency, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the prime minister of Turkey; CIBJO President Dr. Gaetano Cavalieri; Turkish Jewellery Association Chairman Mr. İmam Altınbaş; fellow members of the world jewellery, gemstone and diamond industries.

It is a great pleasure to be in Istanbul today, and to be able to join you once again at what is always a hallmark event for our industry. We are indeed honoured to be joined today by Mr. Erdoğan, whose presence underscores the way in which the Turkish government values its jewellery sector, and also reflects Turkey's support for the the principles upon which CIBJO stands -- namely ethical business, transparency and responsible corporate behavior.

In the World Diamond Council we have long known about Turkey's commitment to proper business principles. The country is a member of the Kimberley Process, and as such has declared its resolve in ridding the world of conflict diamonds. It is thanks to the readiness of governments like Turkey's that, in the six years since the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme was first launched, the incidence of conflict diamonds in the pipeline fell from more than 4 percent to less than two-tenths of 1 percent.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a not realized through a single act. It is a way of life. We cannot ever assume that, because the incidence of certain activities has been reduced to the degree that they are almost imperceptible, we can rest on our laurels. Good corporate governance, like good medicine, is best managed through preventative care.

This certainly has been the policy of the Kimberley Process, which despite the dramatic reduction in conflict diamonds continues to operate with the same commitment that it did in 2003, when the humanitarian crisis in Africa was at its height.



**Opening Ceremony - 2009 CIBJO CONGRESS
MAY 3rd, 2009, Istanbul, Turkey**

Problems do raise their head. In 2007, reports were received about a diamond rush in the Marange mining region of Zimbabwe that threatened the integrity of that country's Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The situation was monitored carefully throughout 2008, and in March 2009 a High Level Envoy of the Kimberley Process visited Zimbabwe and strongly urged the authorities to establish control in the area and to put an end to the violence. Right now, a Kimberley Process Review Mission is being planned, and when it completes its work it will issue its recommendations to the Kimberley Process.

It should be noted that there are other diamond areas in Zimbabwe at which business is conducted by the book. The Murowa deposit is not only a viable and properly managed venture, but it is KP compliant and is an important source of employment and social development for the local population.

The World Diamond Council strongly believes that, while on the one hand it is important that our industry continues to play a positive economic role in the countries in which we operate, it is imperative that we do all that we can to prevent the violation of human rights in diamond rich areas, wherever they occur. We condemn any such violations most strongly and demand that proper action be taken.

Ladies and gentlemen, we deal in beautiful objects that have much more than great aesthetic value. They also have economic value, and this must be used with care. Our mission is not only to do no harm, but also to act as a positive force for change. This is our objective.

I wish us all a successful congress.