



FIGHTING DIAMOND SMUGGLING AND POLLUTION: FINAL DECLARATION OF THE CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL WORKSHOP BY KIMBERLEY PROCESS CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION

We, delegates of civil society organizations and representatives of local communities in diamond mining areas of the Central Africa sub-region (Angola, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo) gathered for a **workshop in Kinshasa from March 28 to 30, 2024**. This was organized by the Kimberley Process (KP) Civil Society Coalition (CSC). We examined the current state of diamond governance in the region, mapped challenges and identified the potential for improvement.

Across the region, the implementation of internal controls, which provide the backbone of the KP certification scheme, remains as much a challenge as 20 years ago, when these controls were launched. Whilst generally looking good on paper, in practice the processes and oversight fail to capture the realities of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, which is very dynamic and remains largely informal. Consequently, mine-to-export **traceability is the exception rather than the rule and smuggling is rampant**. Large-scale mining is better regulated in the mining codes, but in practice, a **lack of transparency and persistent corruption** mean that local communities get little of the benefits to which they are legally entitled.

The KP stalemate on the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, which has been under a KP embargo since 2013 (with a partial lifting in 2016), remains a key concern to civil society. Years of KP discussions have been lost on blame games, while little to no effort goes to **mitigating the negative impacts of the embargo on artisanal mining livelihoods**. Meanwhile, the conflict drags on and attracts an ever more diverse set of **war profiteers** that exploit diamond mining and trading for their criminal undertakings.

We also note with concern that there has still been no remediation for the **enormous human and environmental toll of Angola's CATOCA mine tailing dam spill** that happened in July 2021. Communities living downstream of the mine in DRC, along the Tshikapa and Kasai river, testified that they saw no support whatsoever from the mining company, and the Angolan or Congolese government to this massive pollution that killed several people, made thousands sick, and destroyed ecosystems and livelihoods.

The challenges with internal controls, the CAR and pollution are complex and not easy to overcome. They require technical assistance, constructive cooperation and lesson-learning across borders and between governments, industry and civil society. The **KP Regional Cooperation for Central Africa**, which was launched in 2019, offers a framework to set this in motion. Yet, to become finally effective it needs the buy-in of political leaders, committed officials in all member countries and an actionable road map.

In view of the above, the participants make the following recommendations:

To the States of the Central Africa sub-region

- To organize tripartite platforms at the national and local level to build confidence and stimulate cooperation between government, industry and civil society stakeholders on improving diamond governance.
- To ensure political buy-in and ownership by dedicated officials that allow the the Regional Cooperation in Central Africa to genuinely take off and start addressing challenges of smuggling, as agreed in the high-level workshops of Kinshasa in 2019 and Yaoundé in 2021;
- To reinvigorate efforts of improving and adapting internal controls in line with the realities of the artisanal diamond mining sector, as agreed in the KP's 2012 Washington Declaration;
- To start making work of mitigating the environmental impact of diamond mining, and prioritize the compensation and remediation of the damage done by the 2021 Catoca tailing dam breach along the Tshikapa and Kasai rivers.

To the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition:

- To continue strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations in Central Africa and raising awareness of communities on the challenges and potential of the KP;
- To continue raising awareness among stakeholders at all levels, in order to guarantee responsible diamond supply chains;
- To strengthen advocacy for the participation of local communities in KP bodies in order to amplify their voices;
- To advocate the CATOCA diamond mine to compensate victims and remediate damage caused by its 2021 tailing water spill.

Done in Kinshasa, March 30, 2024

Participants