

PBC Chair's Remarks

Special Meeting of ECOSOC on Natural Resources, Peaceful Societies and Sustainable Development: Lessons from the Kimberley Process

18 March 2022

1. I would like to thank the President of ECOSOC for convening this timely special meeting [on *Natural Resources, Peaceful Societies and Sustainable Development: Lessons from the Kimberley Process*] and inviting me, in my capacity as the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, to deliver some address.
2. In its resolution 75/261, the General Assembly recognized the devastating impact of conflicts fuelled by the trade in conflict diamonds on peace and the safety and security of people in affected countries, and the systematic and gross human rights violations that have been perpetrated in such conflicts¹. In the last 60 years, at least 40 per cent of all intrastate conflicts had a link to natural resources, and this link doubled the risk of a conflict relapse in the first five years. Since 1990, at least 18 violent conflicts have been fuelled by the exploitation of natural resources. Farmer-herder conflicts, as seen in the Sahel, are examples of conflicts that are driven, among other things, by competition over natural resources.
3. In view of these important challenges, allow me to reiterate the Commission's full commitment and engagement in support of effective and comprehensive approaches to today's multidimensional challenges. The Commission, in its demand-driven country and region-specific engagements, has addressed different causes of vulnerabilities and instability including natural resources, while stressing the need for transboundary cooperation, economic diversification, good governance and for the full participation of women and youth. The Commission works in synergy with the Peacebuilding Fund which, between 2017-2021, invested \$161.7 million to tackle challenges, such as, farmer-herder conflicts, land tenure, competition over natural resources (including conflict and disputes over water), and to support climate change adaptation strategies and other related initiatives.
4. The Commission has recently endorsed the Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region. This includes proposed action to promote sustainable and transparent

¹ Verbatim from PP2, Resolution A/RES/75/261

management of natural resources, as well as trade and investment with a view to strengthening transparency, formal cooperation mechanisms, and compliance with regional and international instruments on natural resources. Additionally, the Commission has taken note of the recommendations of the High-Level Regional Workshop on Natural Resources in the Great Lakes Region, which took place in Khartoum from 31 August to 2 September 2021. The review and recommendations to ensure the effective implementation of the International Conference on Great Lakes Region Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR) include a) strengthening control of the international mineral market - as done with the Kimberly Process, b) facilitating access to the market to allow the mineral sector to contribute to the development in Member States, and c) distilling and including lessons learned from other existing mineral certification mechanisms such as the Kimberly Process for rough diamonds and similar initiatives.

5. The Kimberly Process has played a key role in depriving armed groups of illicit financing from the sale of conflict diamonds and helping participant countries address illicit exploitation and trafficking that may contribute to fueling conflicts. It is often cited as a model in many initiatives and outcome documents, such as in the recent RINR review outcome document. It is a critical complement to the Lusaka Declaration pertaining to responsible treatment of natural resources in Africa Protocol, the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas, and in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Given the shared objectives, complementarities between the various instruments could be further reinforced for achievement of the SDGs, and building back better from COVID-19 pandemic in conflict-affected settings.
6. Several certification frameworks have encouraged to promote due diligence [standards](#)² addressing broad-based risks that are related to environment, labour and conflicts, and the continuing need for increasing transparency and anti-corruption measures, with the support of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and the implementation and monitoring of existing environmental standards, and accountability.
7. Recurring and prolonged conflicts, growing populations, ever-dwindling natural resources, climate change, extreme poverty and inequity, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, have aggravated the challenges and hence rendered sharing of lessons and good practices among

these initiatives urgent and critical. This was demonstrated by the recent RINR review which recommended for inclusion of lessons learned from other existing mineral certification mechanisms such as the Kimberly Process in their work.

8. The Commission emphasizes the importance of supporting the members of Kimberly Process, especially in terms of compliance, capacity building and training through streamlined and efficient operational procedures. The Commission commits to supporting the Kimberley Process, particularly participating countries under PBC consideration, and other multistakeholder processes in unleashing the potential of natural resources for peaceful and inclusive societies, economic and social development and achievement of the SDGs.
9. Thank you.