



PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

on the occasion of the ECOSOC Special Meeting on “Natural resources, peaceful societies and sustainable development: Lessons from the Kimberley Process”

(18 March 2022)

I convened a Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council on “*Natural resources, peaceful societies and sustainable development: Lessons from the Kimberley Process*” on 18 March 2022. I am pleased to share the key messages and recommendations that emerged from our discussions:

- Sustainable management of natural resources plays a critical role in the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The issue of natural resources cuts across the pillars of the work of the United Nations and collaboration on sustainable management of natural resources among the intergovernmental bodies can foster economic and social development and promote peace. The linkages between natural resources, conflict and wider governance and human rights issues need to be addressed simultaneously to promote better impact and outcomes.
- Given the complexities involved, sustainable management of natural resources requires a whole-of-society approach. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, with its tripartite arrangement, has been instrumental in reducing the trade of illicit diamonds and promoting legitimate rough diamond trade. The establishment of a separate Working Group on Statistics was considered a critical part of the effective implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. More work, however, is needed to make it more relevant for addressing today’s challenging. The Kimberley Process could benefit from other similar processes to adapt to today’s circumstances to remain relevant and be more effective in stopping the trade in conflict diamonds. One such process is the Regional Certification Mechanism of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), which was inspired by the Kimberley Process. This Regional Certification Mechanism of ICGLR is a tool to provide a sustainable, conflict-free supply chain and aims to enhance miners’ livelihoods and increase government taxes because of improved data management along the supply chain.
- Calls were made to strengthen the Kimberley Process’ tripartite structure—Governments, industry and civil society. There is a need to strengthen institutions and build capacity to foster compliance. In this regard, transparency and accountability throughout the industry would be important. Capacity-building for Governments can help enhance the transparency and traceability of critical minerals, and improved revenues from these sectors. The narrow definition of conflict diamonds as rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments remained a concern for civil society.
- Small and medium enterprises need to be included in the Kimberley Process and in the management of critical minerals more generally and have accessible framework for their inclusion. Artisanal and small-scale miners must be supported to participate in and benefit from the trade in responsible minerals. This support could include practical standards aligned with global norms; local capacity-building and training and post-mining restoration to help communities restore abandoned mining pits to create farmland and other uses.

- Gender dimensions of natural resource management require urgent attention. Women, who play a critical role in artisanal mining, often work in extremely hard conditions, earn less than their male counterparts, face health issues and suffer from gender-based violence and sexual violence. To promote gender equality within this sector, it would be important to create health centres near artisanal mining sites, offer capacity-building in negotiation and legal instruments, help women join cooperatives and promote science education for women and girls.
- Women, indigenous peoples and young people can offer solutions for sustainable management and equitable benefits from the proceeds of natural resources. Young women and men must be included as key stakeholders in the mining sector, including in capacity-building, technology transfer and training opportunities.
- The principles and objectives driving the Kimberley Process are not only applicable to diamonds and other mineral resources, but they can also be adapted to non-mineral resources, such as fertile land, forests, oceans, flora and fauna. Sustainable management of natural resources should entail the promotion of value addition, which would be instrumental for addressing inequalities within and between countries. In this regard, foreign direct investment and international partnerships would be instrumental.
- The green energy and digital transitions are increasing demand for the mining of metals and minerals. This requires collective focus on improving the integrated governance of the extractives sector; reinvesting revenues generated by mining industry in local communities and SDGs; helping countries diversify their economies; aligning revenues with the Paris Agreement; and supporting countries to integrate circular economy approaches. Use of digital technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence can help improve the traceability of critical minerals.
- Along with the Kimberley Process, other initiatives were highlighted as models for economic diversification and transformation as well as addressing the root causes of conflict in Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region, as well as other geographical regions. These initiatives included the Secretary-General's initiative on Transforming Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development, the Regional Certification Mechanism of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR); the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); the African Union's African Mining Vision; the OECD-UNDP Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative; the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures initiative and 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.
- As countries continue their efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and address the climate crisis as well as other crises, it is more important than ever to share lessons and good practices in sustainable management of natural resources to unleash their potential for peaceful and inclusive societies and for achieving the SDGs. To this end, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies will continue to support countries' efforts to attain an SDG-driven recovery from the pandemic, including through sustainable management of natural resources.