



# Jewelers of America press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Retailers Speak at CIBJO in South Africa**

*Jewelers cite commitment to responsible business practices*

New York, NY – Vicki Cunningham, owner/manager of Cunningham Fine Jewelry, Tulsa, OK; John Hayes, owner of Goodman’s Jewelers, Madison, WI; and Bev Hori, vice president, Ben Bridge Jeweler, Seattle, WA; spoke on an Ethics Commission panel at CIBJO, The World Jewellery Confederation’s annual congress in Cape Town, South Africa, which took place March 12-15, 2007. Their topics were: “The Whole Supply Chain Needs to Face its Challenges Together” and “All Companies Can Be Responsible and Sustainable.”

Jewelers of America (JA) President and CEO Matthew A. Runci, who also serves as president of the CIBJO Ethics Commission, moderated one panel. CIBJO Ethics Commission Vice President James Evans Lombe, manager, corporate responsibility for De Beers Group’s Diamond Trading Co., moderated the second panel.

The jewelers, who serve as JA board members, are also all members of the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices (CRJP). They told world jewelry leaders gathered at CIBJO about their growing awareness of the ethical, social and environmental responsibilities the jewelry industry must shoulder in order to assure continued consumer confidence in the products they sell. Cunningham, Hayes and Hori said it was important for retailers to play a role, since they are the public face of the industry.

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Cunningham told the CIBJO audience of her efforts to help her supply chain partners understand that they must consider their ethical, social and environmental practices going forward. “From the miners who unearth gold and diamonds, to the manufacturers who cut gems and process gold, to the jewelry makers who craft designs from these raw materials – we are sending the message that responsible practices matter to us, here at the consumer end of the supply chain,” she said.

“With every transaction comes the responsibility to be accountable to our customers for the products they are buying,” said Hayes, when it was his turn to speak. “Our customers put their trust in us that everything we present to them is true, thus each of us has to do our due diligence, to see that the supply chain is never compromised by any sort of unscrupulous activities.”

Hori spoke about how jewelers can differentiate themselves to consumers through their public commitment to ethical, social and environmental best practices, and she showed a variety of pamphlets directed at consumers from other industries, in which they tout their own responsible practices. “As purveyors of a luxury product, we are learning that our customers in the U.S. increasingly expect us to become more conscious of our responsibilities to the wider world,” she said.

At CIBJO, the jewelers shared the podium with other trade members who are instituting responsible business practices, such as Nicky Oppenheimer, chairman of the De Beers Group, as well as government leaders such as South African Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka. Representatives of the United Nations also spoke, since CIBJO is the jewelry industry’s sole representative on the Economic and Social Council of the UN.

*For more information about Jewelers of America, visit [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org).*

***Images on Pages 3-4 are available in high-resolution by emailing Lauren Thompson at [lthompson@jewelers.org](mailto:lthompson@jewelers.org).***



Ben Bridge Vice President Bev Hori, who spoke about responsible business practices at the CIBJO Congress, chatted with fellow speakers, South African Minister of Minerals and Energy Buyelwa Sonjica (center), and Abbey Chikane (right), chairman of the Jewellery Council of South Africa, which sponsored the Congress.



Jeweler John Hayes met South Africa's Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, after her speech before the CIBJO Congress.



De Beers Group Chairman Nicky Oppenheimer (center) addressed the CIBJO Congress, and met afterwards with (L-R) JA President and CEO Matthew A. Runci, and U.S. retailers John Hayes, Vicki Cunningham, and Howard Cunningham. Hayes and Cunningham also spoke before the Congress.

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