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JEWELERS OF AMERICA APPLAUDS POSITIVE ACTION AT KIMBERLEY MEETING

New York, NY – Jewelers of America – the U.S. retail trade group representing 11,000 member stores – which last week called for Kimberley Process (KP) participants to address unresolved issues within the certification system, hailed the group’s achievements at its annual plenary meeting in Botswana, Nov. 6-9, 2006.

JA had joined others in calling for changes such as: more control over the movement of diamonds within borders, better management of KP trading statistics, and greater funding for effective ongoing management of the system, which now includes 71 countries.

“Kimberley participants addressed all of these concerns – and more,” says JA President and CEO Mathew A. Runci. “Of particular importance was a United Nations report that conflict diamonds from a rebel zone in Côte d’Ivoire were entering international markets through Ghana. The plenary approved a plan to help Ghana strengthen its internal diamond controls or face a possible loss of its Kimberley status – with a review mission scheduled in three months to check on its progress. It is that kind of tight control over the system that Kimberley needed to assert – and it has.”

Runci also commended a Kimberley Process pledge to forge closer partnerships with

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alluvial mining countries and stay updated on initiatives that address development issues in those places. “Artisanal miners, many of whom work in countries most affected by conflict diamonds, must begin to derive more benefit from their diamond resources, through education, organization and better infrastructure. It is through achieving these goals that the scourge of conflict diamonds can be prevented in the future,” says Runci.

JA also supports the diamond industry’s call for effective and credible government oversight of industry compliance with Kimberley standards, which KP participants promised would be forthcoming.

“Our 11,000 member stores can now confidently address consumer questions about the effectiveness of the Kimberley Process,” says Runci. “The system is working, and participants have pledged to invest even more time, money and resources in the ongoing prevention of diamonds entering the legitimate supply.”

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For more information about Jewelers of America, visit www.jewelers.org.

*Jewelers of America is the national trade association for retail jewelers.
With 11,000 member stores, JA also works locally through its 40 state and regional affiliates.
JA advocates high social, ethical, and environmental standards, promotes professional business and leadership skills, and enhances its members’ profitability by offering education, certification, marketing and cost-saving programs.*