



IDMA
INTERNATIONAL DIAMOND
MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE

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2011 IDMA Presidents' Meeting kicks off with diamond manufacturing debate with Botswana stakeholders on sustainability in local diamond industry

Gaborone, Botswana, – April 4th 2011: For first time in the diamond industry's history, a Presidents' Meeting of the International Diamond Manufacturers (IDMA), the organization which represents diamond manufacturers worldwide, is held in Botswana, the largest diamond producing country in the world. Today's official opening of the meeting was preceded by the "Diamond Beneficiation Pitso," where high ranking government officials, diamond miners and manufacturers, as well as industry analysts and academics all discussed and presented their ideas how to build sustainable beneficiation of diamonds in Botswana.

In his opening address, IDMA president Moti Ganz said the reason for IDMA to opt for Gaborone for the meeting's location was that Botswana is expected to become an important destination of choice for industry players, from mine to market, as the country is taking steps to develop a profitable value chain and with it a long term sustainable diamond economy that will take the country and all the industry's participants forward.

"We're gathering in Botswana because we believe a competitive diamond industry and trade can be developed here in the future. The Pitso offered our organization's members a first opportunity for an exchange of views and I believe this event has been a true eye opener for many of our peers," Ganz noted.

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About IDMA

IDMA was founded and convened for the first time in 1946, in Antwerp. It is committed to fostering and promoting the highest ideals of honesty and best practice principles throughout the global diamond industry, as well as full compliance with all relevant national and international laws. The organization has developed and adopted a Code of Conduct, which is binding on all 15 member associations. IDMA also works to encourage fair and honorable practices and decent working conditions for industry employees; and to preserve, protect and promote consumer trust and confidence in diamonds. It encourages and supports social responsibility by the industry in respect to all citizens of the world. The Association has played an active role in establishing the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and is a co-founder of the World Diamond Council.

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Continued from page 1

The IDMA meeting is hosted jointly by the Botswana Diamond Manufacturers Association (BDMA) and the Botswana government. BDMA President Mervin Lifshitz said that the idea to hold the Pitso meeting had been suggested by Dr. P.H.K. Kedikilwe, Minister of Minerals Energy and Water Resources, who is now also Acting Vice President of Botswana.

In a meeting held several months ago, Vice President Kedikilwe told BDMA President Mervin Lifshitz and Jacob Tamanaage that he would like the BDMA to organize another Town hall Meeting, following a succesful event in 2009. From this the concept of a Pitso was developed.. A Pitso is the Botswana word for an informal village, or townhall, meeting, which usually ends up with decisions or policy recommendations..

The Pitso was co-moderated by Letsema Mbayi, a doctoral student from Botswana who is writing her Phd thesis on beneficiation in London, and Chaim Even Zohar, an internationally renowned industry analyst, commentator and conference facilitator.

Among the speakers featured were The Hon. Dr. P.H.K. Kedikilwe; Chaim Even Zohar; Keith Jefferis , a Botswana-based industry consultant; Varda Shine, Managing Director of the Diamond Trading Company; Letsema Mbayi; BDMA president Mervin Lifschitz; Victor van der Kwast, head of the International Diamond and Jewellery Group of ABN Amro; Roman Grynberg, Senior Research Fellow at the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA); Arik Sela, head of the international diamond brokering firm I. Hennig, which co-sponsored the Pitso, and Jacob A.R. Thamage, coordinator of the Diamond Hub of the Botswana Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources.

Most speakers recognized that the 16 diamond factories in the country, which employ some 3,000 direct production workers, have developed solely on the basis of rough diamond availability rather than for its international competitiveness. The IDMA meeting in Botswana is expected to deepen the Batswana people's and government's understanding of the complexities and challenges of diamond manufacturing and the need for factories to operate within internationally, vertically organized value chains.

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Note to editors:

The majority of the presentations given at the Pitso can be downloaded here. At the close of the meeting, a full press kit will be posted online that will include a choice of photographs, speeches and presentations, background materials on Botswana, the diamond manufacturing community, etc.