

Annex 4 A (ENG)

CONCEPT NOTE ON THE HIGH LEVEL WORKSHOP ON DIAMOND FRAUD AND SMUGGLING IN CENTRAL AFRICA 20- 22 DECEMBER 2021, YAOUNDE- CAMEROON

1. Context

The High-Level Workshop on Diamond Fraud and Smuggling in Central Africa follows the one held on April 10-11, 2019 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo during which the Regional Cooperation in Central Africa among six Kimberley Process member countries was launched, namely Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon and Cameroon.

The establishment of regional cooperation in Central Africa was adopted at the 2017 Kimberley Process Plenary held in Brisbane, Australia. Indeed, after repeated calls for increased vigilance in countries neighboring the Central African Republic for the purpose of combating the circulation of conflict diamonds, it was important to think about a regional approach, following the example of the one initiated in the Mano River Union countries to stop the illicit diamond flow from Côte d'Ivoire which was placed under a KP embargo.

The effectiveness of such an approach lies in the synergy of efforts to share experiences on how to address the challenges of implementing the Kimberley Process minimum requirements and combating diamond fraud and smuggling in a given region. Across pertaining actions, there is a need to promote learning from the experiences of peers, with the understanding that diamond producing countries in Africa face the same challenges as well as the same opportunities.

This workshop highlights the issue of diamond fraud, an age-old issue, but one that has become even more acute due to the situation in the Central African Republic since 2013. Indeed, according to the definition still in force within the Kimberley Process, "conflict diamonds" must be understood as diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies for the purpose of financing their activities to destabilize legitimately established governments. This definition applies in practice to the experience of the Central African Republic in recent years. This is what justified a series of measures taken by the Kimberley Process to control the production and marketing of Central African diamonds on the one hand, and to prevent the contamination of official supply channels in neighboring countries on the other.

In addition to fraud issues, the workshop will also address issues related to illegal diamond mining and trade, money laundering and terrorist financing. Several organizations that regularly work on these issues will participate in the workshop in order to share their experiences and especially to learn from the experiences of other countries with a view to defining a plan of action at the domestic level for each country concerned, but also a regional action plan to better carry out activities to combat diamond fraud and its link with money laundering. The program of the workshop includes the titles of the interventions of the various participants.

General objective

The overall objective of the workshop is to build the capacity of criminal investigation and prosecution authorities to understand the emerging risks of diamond fraud and smuggling, to understand the Kimberley Process in order to better combat money laundering and terrorist financing related to the extractive industry.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- Present an overview of diamond fraud in Central Africa and share the experience of West African MRU (Mano River Union) countries
- Present the diagnostic report on the smuggling of diamonds of Central African origin and the investigations on the illicit trafficking of precious stones;
- To show the powers of criminal investigation and prosecution authorities and investigative techniques in the fight against fraud and smuggling of precious minerals;
- Make presentations on cash couriers;
- Present Financial Intelligence Units and their roles;
- To show the importance of national cooperation and coordination in the fight against the illicit traffic of precious stones and metals;
- Make recommendations on the need for inter-agency information exchange to enhance the effectiveness of the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing based on diamond and gold smuggling.

Expected results

The expected outcomes of this workshop are as follows:

- Criminal investigation and prosecution authorities in Central African countries have specific knowledge of smuggling practices, money laundering typologies and terrorist financing through international trade, cross-border physical transport of cash and other negotiable bearer instruments;
- Criminal investigation and prosecution authorities in Central African countries are aware of the procedures to be followed in the fight against diamond smuggling;
- Exchanges between the different organizations in each country are strengthened and collaboration and synergies of actions are facilitated.
- A regional level working group is set up to facilitate real-time information exchange.

Procedure and organization

This workshop will take place from **20 to 22 December 2021 in Yaoundé at the Hôtel Mont Fébé**. It will open and close with ceremonies that will be attended by members of the Government, diplomatic corps and various stakeholders in the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme Principles and Requirements.

The work will take place in the form of presentations, workshops and exchanges. They will combine theoretical presentations and practical cases. During these proceedings, participants will benefit from some conveniences, in particular kits for participants, meals and beverages. A translation service in two languages (English, French) will also be provided.

The guests will benefit from transportation and accompaniment during the procedures of obtaining a visa and hotel reservations during their stay in Cameroon.

Participants

Investigation and prosecution authorities and Ministries/Directorates (Customs, Police, Mining Brigades, financial intelligence units, ...), representatives of Mining Ministries and their technical agencies, KP focal points, civil society organizations, representatives of industry.