



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**10 November 2006**

**Blood Diamonds: Ghana Must Embrace a Higher Standard of Openness**

ARTICLE 19 supports the initiative taken by the Kimberley Process members this week at their annual meeting in Botswana, to put Ghana on probation for the certification for export of illicit diamonds originating from Cote d'Ivoire.

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A recent UN report by a Panel of Experts on Cote d'Ivoire accused Ghana of being a conduit for the wholesale of conflict diamonds from rebel-held areas in Cote d'Ivoire. The increase in the average price of diamonds in Ghana has been one of the indications of the wholesale laundering of conflict diamonds.

ARTICLE 19 calls on the government of Ghana to act on the following points:

- Implement all mechanisms required under the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, which includes providing detailed information regarding laws and regulation that are in place to ensure the end of illicit diamond trade.
- Enact a Freedom of Information Bill (still pending in Parliament), which would include a detailed procedure for requesting and releasing information of public interest.
- Establish and enforce a transparent and comprehensive system of inspection and audit of rough diamonds.

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The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) imposes clear regulations for the international trade of rough diamonds. Over 70 governments around the world have joined the scheme since its inception in 2003.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

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ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.