

On behalf of the Israel Diamond Exchange I welcome you.

Today we come full circle from 13 years ago, when we hosted the first meeting of the WDC.

The Israeli diamond industry joined the fight against conflict diamonds from the start in 2000, helping demonstrate the integrity of the world diamond industry. This is still our mission today and it will also be tomorrow.

The Israeli diamond industry was also one of the first to support the creation of the KP process. Israel passed all the KP committees with honors. It has a tough modern system, headed by Diamond Controller – Shmuel Mordechai and his deputy – Sigal Shidlovsky.

We had the pleasure and honor to lead the KP for a year. Boaz Hirsch did an excellent job, putting great effort into solving disagreements and offering new ideas for the KP.

Israel is clearly an important and attractive place for international events like this congress, headed by Eli Izhakoff, and the CIBJO conference headed by Gaetano Cavalieri.

I salute the Israel Diamond Institute, led by Moti Ganz and directed by Eli Avidar, who suggested we host these important congresses.

IDI was also the first to lend support when I suggested cooperation with the DDC, headed by Reuven Kaufman, to boost the business in all the diamond bourses.

In December 2012 we held a very successful Israeli Diamond Week in New York. Fifty Israeli diamantaires traveled to the DDC and returned so pleased that in March 2013 we already held a U.S. & International Diamond Week in Israel. Almost 250 diamond companies from the entire world met more than 1000 Israeli diamond companies and saw over 1 billion dollars of goods.

With such a dynamic growth trend, we know that hundreds of companies will come to Israel for the summer U.S. & International Diamond Week, to be held from August 26th until the 29th.

Together with Reuven Kaufman, I ask you all to save this date. We look forward to having you with us, to see for yourselves what powerful collaboration can do for business. We recommend such initiatives to every bourse in the world.

The summer and winter diamond weeks – which created a huge diamond fair at no cost and 100% security – proved that when you offer diamond traders the right business platform, they welcome it and put all their energy into using it.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all of you to visit the Diamond Exchange on Wednesday, when we award two dear people – Eli Izhakoff and Gaetano Cavalieri.

This is a great chance for all of us to thank Eli Izhakoff with all our heart for his 13 years of amazing service and incredible diplomacy, and to express our appreciation for Gaetano Cavalieri, whose personal leadership made CIBJO into an integral part of the world diamond industry.

The diamond industry united and put an end to the conflict diamond issue together with governments and NGOs. Today, less than 1% of world production is at potential risk of conflict. We, as the industry representatives and leaders, must work together to ensure the consumers don't lose their confidence in diamonds.

In this time of globalization, regulation and demand for transparency, we must be sure that the diamonds that provide a living for many millions of people in the world are indeed a symbol of purity and love.

Generations come and go, but the diamond business – like the diamond itself – can live forever.

In closing, on behalf of all the members of the Israel Diamond Exchange, I would like to thank the chair of the KP over the last year, Ambassador Milovanovic, and congratulate the incoming KP chair, Ambassador Nhlapo.

I wish the new WDC chair – Avi Paz, good luck, and all of us a productive and enjoyable congress.