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SNAPSHOT

IVORIAN DIAMONDS OFFICIALLY CONFLICT-FREE

Côte d’Ivoire achieves Kimberley Process compliance for the first time since 2003.

For a decade, Cote d’Ivoire was torn apart by a civil war that was largely funded by its agricultural and mining resources, including through trade in rough diamonds. This illicit use of diamonds prompted the Kimberley Process (KP), the international mechanism to fight conflict diamonds, to ban Ivorian diamonds from the world market in 2003. Almost 10 years later, in November 2013 the KP recognized that Cote d’Ivoire had met the minimum requirements to come back into compliance with the KP Certification Scheme, and the U.N. embargo on diamond exports from Cote d’Ivoire was lifted shortly thereafter.

The USAID Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development (PRADD) project played a key role in this achievement. In late 2012, the Ivorian government requested technical assistance to the U.S.

“Since March 2013, the Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development (PRADD) project has assisted Côte d’Ivoire design and implement its diamond governance system.”

government, then KP Chair, to strengthen their diamond systems, and USAID responded by deploying a technical adviser in March 2013. The PRADD project worked with the government to design and launch its mine-to-export system of internal controls. In a period of six months, procedures for production and sales tracking were developed, dozens of new customs and mining regulations enacted, and thousands of miners registered. An official review team was sent on a mission in September 2012 to assess this system, and their favorable findings caused the KP to declare Côte d’Ivoire compliant with KP standards for the first time since 2003.

Mining Minister Jean-Claude Brou expressed thanks to those countries, including the United States, who assisted Côte d’Ivoire in this effort. He noted that compliance was not an end in and of itself, but a key step towards ensuring that mineral resources benefit the country and its miners. The KP Permanent Secretary, Fatimata Thes, echoed these sentiments, calling the technical assistance invaluable.

The project’s follow on activity, PRADD II, which is co-funded by the European Union, commenced in October 2013. It combines property rights strengthening with other activities aimed at boosting the legal value chain and improving livelihoods in mining communities, while continuing to support the government in policy design and implementation.

PHOTO CREDIT: TERAH U. DEJONG

Photo Caption: An Ivorian village-based mining cooperative records its diamond sales and production figures. PRADD's experience promoting formalization since 2007 played a role in the design of the mine-to-export traceability system.