

**Committee: DISEC**  
**Director: Carly Bolton**  
**Moderator: Richard Cameron**  
**Topic: Blood Diamond Conflict**  
**Date: 10/08/09**

## **I. Committee Background**

DISEC, or the Disarmament and International Security Committee, is the First Committee of the General Assembly. DISEC's concern is disarmament and the resulting international security issues. Some of the issues that DISEC deals with are: reduction of military budgets, preventing a arms race in outer space, disarmament, maintenance of international security, establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone, reducing nuclear danger, among many others. A current issue that alarmed the General Assembly is the issue of conflict diamonds.<sup>1</sup>

## **II. Introduction and Description**

In fairly recent years, blood diamonds, also known as conflict diamonds, have become a hot topic in the General Assembly. Conflict diamonds as defined by the United States are diamonds that come from countries in political turmoil. These diamonds are predominantly found in the African continent. Profits from these particular diamonds are usually used to fund military action against the accepted and established governments of these countries or against decisions made by the Security Council. Besides supporting radical groups, conflict diamonds also extend the

periods of brutal wars that consume the countries of Africa. These wars are also known to involve innocent groups such as women and children.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **III. History of the Topic**

The countries that play the largest roles in the conflict are Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The most severe wars and issues concerning blood diamonds can be found in these countries. Rebel groups that use these diamonds use the civilian population for mining purposes. These people are not working voluntarily but instead are forced against their will to work and to work without pay. The innocents that are forced to mine the diamonds work in very poor conditions that are often damaging to health. Children make a large percentage of the people that are forced to work. They are taken away from their families at very young ages and are often conditioned to follow the ideas of these rebel groups. Children are recruited and forced to become soldiers. Children are often forced to execute elders or their own village or their own family. Obeying the rebel groups is also enforced in young women through the use of rape. This further increases the opposition and actions against the legitimate governments of these countries.<sup>3,4</sup>

## **IV. Points of View**

There are two points of views related to this particular topic. Many countries are outraged at the willingness of certain countries to continue purchasing conflict diamonds despite knowing of the violent conditions that plague the countries from which they come from. Other countries that purchase such diamonds from African countries wish to eliminate the trade from their own countries but are aware that the problem cannot be solved so quickly and easily.

### **The United States:**

As of April 25, 2003 the United States, at the time under the presidency of Bush Jr., The Clean Diamond Trade Act became a law. The law enforced similar restrictions as those found under the Kimberley Process. The United States was initially hesitant to accept the Kimberly Process for fear of its hindrance to the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, the WTO finally accepted the Kimberly Process and okayed it through 2006.<sup>5</sup>

### **The European Union:**

As a center for the purchase of blood diamonds, the European Union has made great efforts in the combat against conflict diamonds. With the adoption of the Communication on Conflict Prevention the European Union has pledged its efforts in solving the blood diamond conflict despite the fact that some of its members are the largest buyers of conflict diamonds. It has made effort in areas such as getting all EU members involved, employing EU instruments to get to the bottom of the issue, as well as seeking the underlying source of the conflict.

## **V. Case Studies**

### **Angola:**

In 1912, diamonds were found to exist in Angola. Approximately 27 years ago a civil war erupted between conflicting groups known as UNITA and MPLA. During this conflict, rebel groups employed the sale of conflict diamonds as a source of income to fund their actions. An estimated 1.5 million lives were lost between the beginning of the war in 1975 and its end in 2002. The United Nations finally intervened in 1999 when it applied sanctions to the groups who were mining diamonds.<sup>3</sup>

### **Sierra Leone:**

About one half of Sierra Leone's income is provided by diamond mining. The existence of diamonds in the country was discovered in 1930. After the discovery of the diamonds, the country suffered an atrocious 10-year civil war between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the government. The radical group, like so many others, used conflict diamonds as a main source of income. The profits from the diamonds were then used to gain weapons and foreign money.<sup>3</sup>

### **Liberia:**

The blood diamond conflict became a serious problem for Liberia in 2000 when Charles Taylor, the former president of the country, was accused of supplying the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) with arms and other types of preparation. In return for the help to the RUF, Liberia was provided with diamonds. The UN set sanctions on Liberia in 2001 in response to the issue and

Charles Taylor resigned from his presidency in order to comply with a peace deal which intended to end the civil war.<sup>3</sup>

## **VI. Possible Solutions**

One possible solution to the conflict diamond crisis is an international agreement such as the Kimberly Process. The purpose of the Kimberly Process is a form of regulating the rough diamond trade while preserving the trade of genuine rough diamonds. Countries who are involved in the importing or exporting of diamonds must be involved in an agreement such as this. A second solution to the issue would be that the United Nations imposes heavy sanctions on those countries that do not cooperate with policies set forth by the international community. These sanctions should go as far as to set embargos on the diamond trade in countries who do not take proper precautions in avoiding the trade of blood diamonds. A third solution to the issue of conflict diamonds is to advocate education on the issue. Consumers of diamonds need to be aware of the problem so that they are able to take responsibility for making sure that they are not purchasing these types of diamonds. In order for these consumers to avoid purchasing conflict diamonds they must know the background from which these diamonds come and sufficient information about them. Retailers must also take responsibility for confirming that their diamonds are not conflict diamonds. Buying cultured diamonds is an alternative which insures that consumers and retailers are not participating in the trade of blood diamonds.<sup>6</sup>

## **VII. Current Status**

The countries that are currently the most involved in the conflict are Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo. The countries mentioned are the largest producers of blood diamonds. The conflict diamonds crisis is presently a hot topic throughout the international society. Agreements such as the Kimberly Process have been signed by many countries in hopes of imposing stricter regulations on the trade of diamonds in order to prevent consumers from purchasing blood diamonds. The purchase of conflict diamonds is still an issue which many countries are dedicated to fighting against.

## **VIII. Conclusions**

The production and sale of blood diamonds is still a major concern that continues to go unsolved for many countries. Fortunately, the United Nations is devoted to finding a solution to this issue. Some of the current solutions proposed for solving the crisis are education, international agreements on regulations for the trade of diamonds, and sanctions imposed by the United Nations on those countries that do not abide by these set regulations. This crisis is a danger to the rights of people in countries where blood diamonds are produced and needs to be taken care of immediately.

## IX. Important Questions

- Are blood diamonds produced in your country?
- Is your country a consumer of conflict diamonds?
- Is your country a part of the Kimberly Process?
- What is your country's view as far as regulations on rough diamond trade?
- What has your country proposed as a possible solution to the problem?

## X. Bibliography

1)<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/526/34/PDF/N0652634.pdf?OpenElement>

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3)"Background- Conflict Diamonds." *Diamondfacts.org*. World Diamond Council, Web. 28 Nov 2009. <<http://www.diamondfacts.org/conflict/background.html>>.

4)"Africa Diamonds: Stop Blood Diamonds." *Africa Diamonds and Children*. 28 Nov 2009. ScanSoft Trading Company, Web. 28 Nov 2009. <<http://www.stopblooddiamonds.org/children-of-africa.asp>>.

5)Jon, Masin-Peters. "PAWSS- Conflict Topics." *Conflict Diamonds*. 2003. University of Massachussets, Web. 28 Nov 2009.<<http://pawss.hampshire.edu/topics/conflictdiamonds/index>>.

6)"Stop Blood Diamonds." *Stop Blood Diamonds*. 29 November 2009. ScanSoft Trading Company, Web. 29 November 2009. <<http://www.stopblooddiamonds.org/faq.asp>>.