



Press Release

## **Antwerp Welcomes DRC Minister of Mines - MoU's to Strengthen Collaboration**

**Antwerp, 21 October 2021 - Antwerp, led by umbrella organization AWDC, yesterday welcomed the new minister of mines of the Democratic Republic Congo, Mrs Antoinette N'Samba Kalambayi and the General Directors of the Ministry's two main diamond institutes, the CEEC and SAEMAPE, on a working visit to Antwerp.**

The delegation was welcomed first by the AWDC leadership, before embarking on an extensive tour of the district. The minister and her entourage witnessed the import and export procedures at the pinnacle of the world's largest trade hub, the Diamond Office, visited the HRD Antwerp grading lab and received an extensive tour behind the scenes of HB Antwerp.

During a meet and greet with several stakeholders active in the DRC, AWDC renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the CEEC, the Centre for Expertise and Evaluation of Precious Minerals of the DRC. "After the visit of DRC President, Felix Tshisekedi, in 2019, direct imports of DRC rough in Antwerp jumped from 27% of DRC's total exported volume in 2019, to 51,5% in 2020. Renewing this MoU will allow us to continue this collaboration, including capacity building in the DRC, and facilitating sales of the country's rough diamonds via Antwerp.", AWDC President Chaim Pluczenik commented, during a closing dinner attended by Antwerp Governor, Mrs Cathy Berx and Alderman for diamonds, Peter Wouters.

A second MoU, concluded between the AWDC, the CEEC and SAEMAPE, the governmental institute charged with streamlining the DRC's Artisanal and Small-scale Mining operations (ASM), outlines the fundamentals of a "mine-to-market" pilot program, to set up a blueprint for a digitally enabled, fully transparent value chain for small-scale and artisanal, responsibly mined diamonds, to be developed over the course of the next years in the DRC. Mrs N'Samba Kalambayi, the first female mining minister of the country, welcomed the initiative, remarking that the DRC is the world's largest producer of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mined diamonds. "Formalization, transparency and value addition for DRC's mining communities, is a primary objective of the DRC government and the ministry of mines in particular", she said.

The **Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC)**, coordinates and officially represents the Antwerp diamond industry, the global leader in the diamond trade. In this role, AWDC promotes the entire diamond industry at home and abroad. AWDC is also recognized internationally as the point of contact, spokesperson and intermediary for the entire Belgian diamond community.

86% of all rough diamonds and 50% of all polished diamonds pass through Antwerp. Diamonds represent 5% of the total Belgian exports and 15% of all Belgian exports outside the EU, making diamonds the most important export product outside the EU.

Press contact:

Karen Rentmeesters  
Senior Manager PR & Communications – Industry Relations  
kare@awdc.be  
0497 83 80 35

# Diamonds love Antwerp

**Private Stichting – Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC)** • Hoveniersstraat 22, BE-2018 Antwerpen, Belgium  
T +32 3 222 05 11 • F+32 3 222 05 99 • info@awdc.be • www.awdc.be • BTW – BE 0885 969 987