



Press Release

## **AWDC organized exclusive networking event in Luanda**

**Antwerp, October 22st 2013 – Yesterday, in the framework of the Belgian Princely Economic Mission to Angola, Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) organized an exclusive Antwerp Diamond Networking event in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, representative of His Majesty King Philip of Belgium in Luanda, Angola, in the presence of high officials of the Belgian and Angolan government. The event was organized in cooperation with the Belgian Embassy and His Excellency Ambassador Delogne.**

The Economic Mission entails high-level meetings between Angolan and Belgian high officials, networking opportunities and workshops, connecting Belgian companies from a wide array of industries with their Angolan counterparts. On the backdrop of Angola's diamond centenary, it is the perfect opportunity to invigorate and confirm Antwerp's leadership role as the world's preferred rough diamond trading hub.

In the framework of this Mission, the Antwerp diamond industry organized a prominent networking event yesterday in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium. During the event, the participating Antwerp diamond companies were able to meet with the key players of the Angolan diamond industry, such as government officials, representatives from SODIAM and ENDIAMA and locally and internationally operating diamond mining and manufacturing companies.

The ties between Angola and Antwerp go back over a century, with Angola celebrating 100 years of diamonds in Angola earlier this year. AWDC CEO Ari Epstein; "Both Angola and Antwerp were at the cradle of the modern diamond industry and have enjoyed excellent relationships ever since. Angola started its lead role as the voice of the interests of the African producing countries while Antwerp laid the foundations as the world's prime diamond trading hub."

Stephane Fischler (President AWDC) confirmed the good relationship between Antwerp and Angola once again during his speech at the networking event yesterday. "I am convinced and have good reasons to believe, that our relations will not only continue but will be strengthened to our industry's benefit. A relationship in which both of us, strongholds of our industry, choose the path of working together, united and focused on ensuring profitable growth and a brilliant and fair future for all", he concluded.

**AWDC**, short for Antwerp World Diamond Centre, is an industry-established foundation, whose mission is to serve and support the diamond business in Antwerp, the world's most important diamond trade hub. AWDC is the coordinating body and the official representative of the Antwerp diamond sector, and as such are recognized internationally as the host, spokesperson and intermediary for the Belgian diamond community. In this capacity, AWDC liaises on behalf of the Belgian diamond sector with governments and actively promotes support for the diamond sector at home and abroad.

84% 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.

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# Diamonds love Antwerp

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