



Press release

Sierra Leone President Koroma visits the Antwerp diamond sector

Antwerp, 1 April 2014 – Today the Antwerp diamond sector welcomed Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma. The visit of the presidential delegation underscores the importance of the trade relations between Sierra Leone and Antwerp’s diamond industry. A significant part of Sierra Leone’s diamond production is in fact traded in Antwerp.

Ari Epstein, AWDC CEO stated, *“We are very honoured to welcome President Komora. Sierra Leone is an important partner for the Antwerp diamond industry. In 2012, Antwerp imported 42% of Sierra Leone’s total diamond production, which translates to 45% of the total value of the country’s production. The average price per carat of a diamond mined in Sierra Leone amounted to \$301,56 in 2012, which demonstrates the high quality of the country’s diamonds.”*

Although Sierra Leone is a rather small diamond producer, its importance should not be underestimated, as the quality of the country’s diamonds is high. The ‘Star of Sierra Leone’ is an outstanding example of this high quality. The 968,9 carat diamond is the third largest rough diamond found to date. Harry Winston purchased it in 1972, for US\$ 2,5 million.

During his visit to the Antwerp diamond community, President Koroma was given a tour of the Diamond Office, the HRD diamond lab and the Antwerp Diamond Tender Facility. The AWDC visit was part of the President’s 5-day official visit to the Benelux. President Koroma will also take part in the fourth EU-Africa summit on 2-3 April.

President Koroma was first elected President of Sierra Leone in 2007 and was re-elected in 2012.

AWDC, 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 is 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.

Press contact:

AWDC Communications Department

03/222.05.41 – press@awdc.eu

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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