



PRESS RELEASE

Lesotho's King Letsie III visits Antwerp diamond sector

Antwerp, April 25 2013. On Thursday, the Antwerp diamond sector and the City of Antwerp welcomed King Letsie III of Lesotho to Antwerp. The visit underscores the excellent trade relationships Antwerp and the southern African diamond producer have enjoyed over the past decades. Although Lesotho is a relatively small diamond producer, its importance for the global diamond industry cannot be underestimated. In 2011, in terms of value, Antwerp imported the vast majority of Lesotho's total rough diamond production, for a total of 114,525.60 carats or 352 million USD.

Ari Epstein, CEO of the AWDC: *"We are very honored to have His Majesty King Letsie III as our guest as it underscores the strong ties between Lesotho and Antwerp. In terms of value, 96.2% diamonds mined in Lesotho pass through Antwerp, which is quite impressive. In addition, since the opening of the Antwerp Diamond Tender Facility in October 2012, half of the goods offered, were diamonds from Lesotho. Needless to say, we are very pleased Antwerp is the preferred trading partner of Lesotho."*

The Letseng Mine, Lesotho's biggest diamond mine, produced four out of the twenty largest white diamonds ever, including the in 2006 discovered 'Lesotho Promise', the largest diamond mined in this century, as masterpiece. This unique, 603 carat rough diamond was sold and studied in Antwerp, resulting in a 224 carat necklace, consisting of 26 fabulous diamonds. The Lesotho Promise is not only unique in size, but also in quality, as it yielded a perfect set of Flawless D color diamonds. Moreover, this exceptional quality is typical for Lesotho diamonds. Especially in the Letseng Mine, famous for the production of large, top color, exceptional white diamonds, resulting in the highest average dollar per carat diamonds recorded worldwide. The fact that the majority of these exceptionally high quality diamonds is polished in Antwerp illustrates Lesotho's acknowledgement of the Antwerp craftsmanship and polishing expertise.

King Letsie III was instated in 1995, in succession of his father, King Moshoeshoe II, and has been heading the small landlocked nation in the south of the African continent ever since.

On the four-day visit, King Letsie will get an exclusive tour behind the scenes of the Antwerp diamond square mile, including a visit to the HRD diamond lab, Diamond Office, GemDiamonds and the Antwerp Diamond Tender Facility, where this week First Element tendered goods from the Lesotho Lihobong Mine. In addition, the Royal delegation will be visiting the Antwerp Fashion Museum and Bruges.

Diamonds love Antwerp