

## **Conflict diamonds**

### **Fuelling wars**

Rough diamond caches have often been used by rebel forces to finance arms purchases and other illegal activities. Neighboring and other countries can be used as trading and transit grounds for illicit diamonds. Once diamonds are brought to market, their origin is difficult to trace and once polished, they can no longer be identified.

### **Who needs to take action?**

Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, diamond traders, financial institutions, arms manufacturers, social and educational institutions and other civil society players need to combine their efforts, demand the strict enforcement of sanctions and encourage real peace. The horrific atrocities in Sierra Leone and the long suffering of the people of Angola have heightened the international community's awareness of the need to cut off sources of funding for the rebels in order to promote lasting peace in those countries; such an opportunity cannot be wasted.

The international diamond industry is already taking steps to respond, such as the adoption by the World Diamond Congress, Antwerp, 19 July 2000, of a resolution which, if fully implemented, stands to increase the diamond industry's ability to block conflict diamonds from reaching market. Other efforts include the launching, at the initiative of African diamond-producing countries, of an inclusive, worldwide consultation process of Governments, industry and civil society, referred to as the Kimberly Process, to devise an effective response to the problem of conflict diamonds.

### **What is the United Nations doing?**

The tragic conflicts in Angola and Sierra Leone, fuelled by illicit diamond smuggling, have already led to action by the Security Council. Under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, targeted sanctions have been applied against UNITA in Angola and the Sierra Leone rebels, including a ban on their main source of funding -- illicit diamonds. Diamond sanctions have also been applied against Liberia but are not yet in effect.