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DDI Concludes Successful Freetown Workshop on Standards & Guidelines –

The Diamond Development Initiative (DDI) Standards & Guidelines for Artisanal Diamond Mining in Sierra Leone

Consultation workshop

A multilateral consultation workshop, organized by DDI, the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) and Partnership Africa Canada, took place on January 8 and 9 in Freetown, Sierra Leone to discuss, develop and refine a draft document dealing with '*Standards & Guidelines for Sierra Leone's Artisanal Diamond Mining Sector*'. The workshop brought together senior government officials, mayors, chiefs and paramount chiefs, artisanal miners representatives, labour leaders, diamond dealers and other relevant members of the diamond industry, civil society, donors and representatives from the media, to examine the opportunities and challenges in integrating identified best practices into existing or potential interventions in the artisanal mining sector.

A major objective of the Diamond Development Initiative is to draw development organizations and more developmentally sound investment into artisanal diamond mining areas, to find ways to make development programming more effective, and to help bring the informal diamond mining sector into the formal economy.

The Deputy Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Mr. Abdul Ignosis Koroma said, 'this workshop and the development of the DDI Standards & Guidelines document is an important step in moving forward the debate on artisanal diamond mining and its impact on the development of the communities concerned. The document will provide a wealth of essential information and will also encourage further discussion with all the parties concerned. I am also delighted to see a full range of business, community and civil society groups represented here today'.

At the end of the 2 day workshop, the participants agreed to form a multi-stakeholder forum that is steered by *Network Movement for Justice and Development* to continue discussions and examine practical ways to take forward the policy and activity recommendations identified in the Standards & Guidelines that will improve the artisanal diamond mining sector.

Representatives from USAID and Irish Aid, based in Freetown, have also agreed to help support the work of the forum in the coming weeks and months.

The DDI is scheduled to publish its Standards & Guidelines document in April. The document will be available for download from www.ddiglobal.org.

Standards & Guidelines

The Diamond Development Initiative is in the process of producing practical, relevant information, standards and guidelines for a wider cross-section of government departments,

investors and development organizations with an interest in engagement in areas where artisanal alluvial diamond mining takes place.

The workshop comes at an opportune moment in Sierra Leone's history: the war has been over for five years; Sierra Leone is a member of the Kimberley Process; it has joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and the new government has made significant pledges about change and development.

The Standards & Guidelines document constitutes an advocacy and educational tool and provides a foundation for possible new policies and approaches to this critical sector.

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Diamond Development Initiative

DDI International is a dynamic new non profit organization bringing governments, civil society and companies together in an effort to improve the lives of Africa's one million-plus artisanal diamond diggers through development projects, policy dialogue, education and public engagement.

For more information and contact details please visit www.ddiglobal.org