

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**13 NOVEMBER 2015**

GABORONE, BOTSWANA

## **CONNECTING RESOURCES AND SOCIETY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN BOTSWANA**

*Conference will explore how public-private partnerships can best serve society*

Leading experts will meet in Botswana on 23 - 24 November 2015 for the *Connecting Resources and Society* conference that is set to explore the role of Botswana's diamond industry in the socio-economic development of the country since independence, almost 50 years ago. It will also discuss how responsible resource management can safeguard the benefits of resource extraction for future generations.

The conference, organised by Chatham House, a world leading independent policy institute, will be hosted jointly by The De Beers Group of Companies and the Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources.

Across the two days, the hosts will be joined by civil society, members of the media and Botswana's private and public sectors. The speakers and panellists will examine the role of public-private partnerships, such as the one between the Government of the Republic of Botswana and De Beers.

The conference coincides with the publication of a report from De Beers exploring the socio-economic contribution to Botswana of its longstanding partnership with the Government. The report, which looks back over the history of the partnership and the economic contribution it made in 2014, shows that:

- Between 1966 and 2014, Botswana's GDP per capita grew at an average of 5.9 per cent per year – the third highest rate anywhere in the world over this period - delivering real and lasting benefits for the country. Before independence:
  - there were only three secondary schools in Botswana. Now there are more than 300 and every child receives free schooling up to the age of 13;
  - there were just five kilometres of tarmacked road across the country. Now there are nearly 6,000 kilometres;
  - there was one doctor for every 48,000 people. Now there is one for every 3,000 people.

- In 2014, the Partnership, through direct, indirect and induced impacts, has:
  - generated more than US\$4 billion of value to the Botswana economy, which is equivalent to more than 25 per cent of GDP – double that of the entire wholesale and retail sectors;
  - contributed thousands of jobs in Botswana and spent around US\$6 million on more than half a million hours of training for its employees;
  - in addition, De Beers' relocation of its multi-billion dollar international sales operation from London to Botswana contributed more than \$400 million to GDP, along with an increase in jobs and supply chain spend.

Hon. Minister of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources, Kitso Onkokame Mokaila, said: “We are delighted to co-host this conference. Our stewardship of Botswana’s precious diamond resource has created huge opportunities for the country. As diamonds have brought about significant national economic growth, we look forward to sharing our experiences and continuing the conversation on future development opportunities.”

Philippe Mellier, CEO, De Beers Group, said: “Societies across the world are increasingly – and rightly – demanding more value from their natural resources. Our partnership with Botswana is one of the world’s most enduring and successful private-public partnerships, delivering significant benefits to the country. However, it is not a panacea and we look forward to exploring the lessons learnt and how these can be applied for the long-term prosperity not only of Botswana, but also for the benefit of other resource-rich nations around the globe.”

Dr Alex Vines OBE, Head of Africa Programme, Chatham House, said: “I have seen how diamond revenues have not been drivers of equitable growth or tools for economic diversification in a number of countries. Botswana can make its diamonds a catalyst for change and this conference will help showcase ideas on how this can be done.”

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#### NOTES TO EDITORS

Attendance at the conference is by invitation only. However, the sessions can be viewed online at [www.connectingresources2015.com](http://www.connectingresources2015.com). Also online you will find the conference agenda, speaker biographies and, from 23 November, a live ‘conversation wall’ will be available.

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## **ABOUT THE CHATHAM HOUSE AFRICA PROGRAMME**

The Africa Programme at Chatham House develops independent policy-focused research on issues affecting individual states of Africa, their relations in the international system and African regional and continental politics. Since its establishment in 2002, the Africa Programme has grown to become a world-leading independent centre for policy research and debate on Africa's politics and international relations. The Programme has worked to improve the quality of information available to domestic and international policy- and decision-makers. Working with a diverse network of experts and decision-makers globally, the Africa Programme designs, undertakes and delivers independent research, ensuring quality and accountability, and promotes outcome orientated debate.

See more at: [www.chathamhouse.org/about/structure/africa-programme/about#sthash.zkDchCQq.dpuf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/about/structure/africa-programme/about#sthash.zkDchCQq.dpuf)

## **ABOUT THE DE BEERS GROUP OF COMPANIES**

De Beers is a member of the Anglo American plc group. Established in 1888, De Beers is the world's leading diamond company with expertise in the exploration, mining and marketing of diamonds. Together with its joint venture partners, De Beers employs more than 20,000 people across the diamond pipeline, and is the world's largest diamond producer by value, with mining operations in Botswana, Canada, Namibia and South Africa. As part of the company's operating philosophy, the people of De Beers are committed to Living up to Diamonds by making a lasting contribution to the communities in which they live and work, and transforming natural resources into shared national wealth. For further information about De Beers visit [www.debeersgroup.com](http://www.debeersgroup.com).

## **ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF MINERALS, ENERGY AND WATER RESOURCES**

The Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources (MMEWR) is responsible for the provision of reliable, adequate and good quality water; reliable and accessible energy services, and efficient administrative services for mineral exploitation in partnership with stakeholders.