



## **Press Release: 16 June 2014**

The World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) formally opened its 36<sup>th</sup> World Diamond Congress in Antwerp, Belgium during an impressive gathering at the Bourla Theatre. Industry leaders and representatives from around the world attended the event. Local politicians addressed attendees and stressed the value and significance of the diamond industry to Belgium and, more importantly, to Antwerp. The diamond sector contributes 5% of Belgium's overall value per annum in exports and employs 35 000 people. The industry has been part of the city for the past 600 years and plays an imperative role in its economy.

After the official opening, the first working session took place at the Hilton Hotel Conference Centre where elections were held and key agreements were endorsed.

Ernie Blom, current WFDB President, was elected for another two-year period unopposed. The following people were also elected:

Vice President: Julien Drybooms

Secretary-General: Rony Unterman

Michel Schonfeld (Deputy)

Treasurer-General: Dieter Hahn

Harry Levy (Deputy)

Executive Members Committee:

Rami Baron, Reuven Kaufman, Harry Levy, Nikhil Jhaveri, Anoop Metha, Peter Meeus, Sergery Oulin, Alex Popov, Lin Qiang and Shmuel Schnitzer.

During the first working session a number of key decisions were finalised including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the WFDB and the Borsa Istanbul to work together to develop the diamond market and also to launch the World Diamond Mark in this country later this year. Dr. Ibrahim Turhan from the Borsa Istanbul, and Alex Popov, Chairman of the World Diamond Mark, signed the agreement.

The WFDB also formally accepted and welcomed the Diamond Bourse of Canada, represented by Mr. David Gavin, President of the Bourse in Canada. The Korea Diamond Bourse, represented by its President Mr. Chang Soo Nam, was also welcomed as the 30<sup>th</sup> member bourse of the Federation. “This is a milestone in the history of the WFDB as we now represent 30 Bourses from around the world and more than 95% of the world’s diamonds are now traded through a member bourse,” commented Blom.

The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) represented by Mr. Suresh Shah was also confirmed as an Associate member during the meetings. Blom further announced that the WFDB has put into place a drive to secure both producing countries and mining houses as part of the WFDB as this would ensure that the supply chain representation is expanded and in doing so create a more efficient and co-coordinated industry.



From L to R: Mr. Suresh Shah from the GJEPC being congratulated by Mr. Ernie Blom President of the WFDB on its Associate membership of the WFDB.



From L to R: Mr. Chang Soo Nam from the South Korea Diamond Exchange and Mr Blom President of the WFDB congratulating South Korea on joining the WFDB .



The President of the WFDB Mr. Ernie Blom congratulating the President of the Diamond Bourse of Canada Mr. David Gavin on joining the WFDB.



From left to Right: Mr. Shmuel Schnitzer, Mr. Eli Izhakoff, Mr. Ernie Blom, Mr Dieter Hahn, Mr. Julien Drybooms and Mr. Rony Unterman.



Mr. Alex Popov, Chairman of the World Diamond Mark signing a MOU with Dr. Ibrahim Turhan from Borsa Istanbul..

**The 36th World Diamond Congress powered by the AWDC**

