

madison dialogue



Madison Dialogue Summit Addresses Ethical Jewelry and Small-Scale Mining Issues

Washington, D.C. – The Madison Dialogue Ethical Jewelry Summit, held Oct. 25-26 at the World Bank, convened to discuss ethical jewelry and small-scale mining issues, with representatives from artisanal and small-scale mines (ASM) and their communities around the world. Attending the summit were also representatives of governments, donors, certifying organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and large and small commercial organizations (from mine to retail).

After the two-day meeting, the attendees agreed that creating credible ethical jewelry products could help bring sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits to the artisanal and small-scale mining sector. The attendees crafted a declaration, which reads:

Madison Dialogue Summit Declaration

We believe there is an opportunity to make a difference in the lives and communities of artisanal/small-scale miners and other marginalized workers worldwide, by developing and implementing robust standards for the production of ethical and fair trade metals, diamonds, gems and jewelry. We also encourage governments, where needed, to develop policies and regulations that protect these miners, workers and their communities.

Madison Dialogue Summit attendees agreed to form working groups to address some of the key issues raised during the Summit, which include, so far:

- * The development of principles, standards and a third-party assurance system for jewelry products that may be labeled as “ethical” or “fair trade.”
- * Large- and small-scale mining interactions
- * Artisanal and small-scale metals mining
- * Artisanal and small-scale colored gemstone mining
- * Artisanal and small-scale diamond mining
- * Recycled metals

The Summit heard from a panel of speakers led by Michael Conroy, author of the new book, “Branded! How the ‘Certification Revolution’ Is Transforming Global

Corporations,” who explained why standards and third-party certification are necessary to ensure that “ethical” claims are credible. He was joined by representatives from a range of developed or developing assurance and certification programs for the jewelry industry, such as the Oro Verde (Green Gold) program, the Association for Responsible Mining’s Standard Zero for Fair Trade Gold and Associated Metals, the Fair Made Jewelry Initiative begun by the Rapaport Group, The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, and the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices.

Representatives of company-specific ethical initiatives also spoke as part of a panel that included suppliers such as Target Resources, Nature’s Geometry, Columbia Gem House, Urth Solution, and Fair Trade in Gems and Jewellery, along with ethical retailers Leber Jeweler, CRED Jewellery and Fifi Bijoux.

A number of small-scale miners attended the conference from various parts of the world, to convey to gathered attendees their interest in ethical mining, as well as their ongoing need for education, tools and other assistance, to fully realize their goals of becoming self-sufficient, productive members of their communities. These miners or their representatives hailed from Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Tanzania, South Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.

The meeting was organized by a Madison Dialogue steering committee, which included representatives from a variety of entities that have shown interest and leadership on these issues. They include: the Association for Responsible Mining (ARM), Communities and Small Scale Mining (CASM), the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices (CRJP), De Beers, Earthworks, Ethical Metalsmiths, Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), Jewelers of America (JA), Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) / Diamond Development Initiative (DDI), and the Rapaport Group.

Communities and Small Scale Mining (CASM) hosted the Madison Dialogue Ethical Jewelry Summit at the World Bank, and was a prime sponsor of the event. It was joined by other sponsors including: AngloGold Ashanti, BHP Billiton, Ben Bridge Jeweler, Cartier, De Beers Group, Hoover & Strong, Newmont, Rapaport Group, Rio Tinto, Tiffany & Co. and Toby Pomeroy.

The Madison Dialogue is a cross-sector initiative, located online at www.madisondialogue.org, which was established in 2006 to promote communication and collaboration among commercial entities, civil society groups and others seeking to encourage best practices, sustainable economic development, and verified sources of responsible gold, diamonds and gemstones. While the website and its listserve are the main sources of contact for entities interested in these issues, the Ethical Jewelry Summit was the first time all interested stakeholders in the ethical jewelry and small-scale mining fields gathered to talk face-to-face.

For more information on the Summit, visit www.madisondialogue.org. Papers, presentations and detailed summaries will be posted to the website in due course.