



Responsible Jewellery Council

NEWS RELEASE

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RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF ITS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

LONDON – The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) today announced that its Certification System is now fully operational to certify its members for responsible ethical, social and environmental practices throughout the diamond and gold jewellery supply chain.

“The release of the RJC’s Certification System represents over three years of solid engagement with all levels of the diamond and gold industries. Additionally, the RJC has sought the viewpoints of civil society and other like-minded organizations in the development of these standards,” says Matthew Runci, RJC Chairman, President and CEO of Jewelers of America.

Open to all organizations in the diamond and gold supply chain and their trade associations, RJC membership has continued to grow through the RJC’s research and development phase to over 140 Members. “This growth in RJC’s membership is evidence of a strong, early commitment to consumer confidence. As Members become certified against the RJC’s requirements, they will be able to evidence responsible business practices through independent, third-party auditing of their companies,” says John Hall, RJC Vice-Chairman and General Manager, External Relations, Rio Tinto.

The bedrock of the RJC System is the use of independent, third-party auditing to verify conformance with the RJC’s Code of Practices, making it objective, fair and transparent. The auditor accreditation process is underway and training is currently being delivered to RJC members through sector-specific webinars.

The RJC Certification System recently completed its Mining Supplement standards. RJC Certification is now open to every type of business that contributes to the diamond and gold jewellery supply chain, from mine to retail.

Current RJC Members as of 31st December 2009 are required to undergo independent verification by December 2011, or December 2012 if they have Mining Facilities. Companies that join the RJC from 2010 will need to undergo independent verification within two years of becoming Members.

“Having established the Code of Practices, the RJC is now turning its attention to issues surrounding the chain-of-custody, or traceability, of product. We believe that traceability can strengthen the integrity of the jewellery supply chain and we note that some RJC members have already implemented product

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tracking systems. The RJC will assist its members seeking to utilise chain of custody as a complementary element to the RJC certification process,” says Michael Rae, Chief Executive Officer, RJC.

A wide range of different industries (product types) effectively use a number of credible proprietary systems to trace goods from the point of origin, through supply chains and production processes and finally to retail. These tracking systems are prevalent in the food industry, e.g. organics, coffee and fish, but are also utilised in non-perishable goods sectors, such as clothing, timber and pharmaceuticals.

“In 2010, the RJC will investigate the applicability of such tracking systems to jewellery products. It is not the intention of the RJC to develop its own system of product tracking but to investigate the possibility of certifying the effectiveness, validity and claims made by proprietary tracking systems. We look forward to working with stakeholders on this important initiative,” says Mr Rae.

“The RJC System is truly a remarkable piece of work that is unmatched in any other industry for the quality and breadth of its scope and standards and the integrity and transparency of its developmental process. The jewellery community should be very proud that it is the first industry to undertake a sector-wide initiative that works together to reinforce consumer confidence,” says Michael Rae, Chief Executive Officer, RJC.

“The development of the RJC’s standards was underpinned by a wide-ranging consultation with the industry and its stakeholders. Building on the success of the dedicated and knowledgeable Consultative Panel established in 2009 for the Mining Supplement, the RJC aims to continue and enhance its multi-stakeholder dialogue for 2010 and onwards. We wish to extend our thanks to all Members, industry players and stakeholders who have contributed to this achievement,” concluded Mr Rae.

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About RJC -

The Responsible Jewellery Council is an international not-for-profit organisation bringing together over 140 member companies committed to promoting responsible ethical, human rights, social and environmental practices in a transparent and accountable manner throughout the industry from mine to retail. Their commitment aims to reinforce consumer and stakeholder confidence in diamond and gold jewellery products. The Council has developed the RJC System, a certification system – which will apply to all Members’ businesses that contribute to the diamond and gold jewellery supply chain. All Commercial Members of the RJC are required to be audited by accredited, third party auditors to verify their conformance with the RJC’s Code of Practices and become certified under the RJC System.

The Responsible Jewellery Council and a full list of its Members can be found on the web at www.responsiblejewellery.com

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