

In address to ECOSOC High-Level forum at United Nations, CIBJO President emphasizes jewellery's positive societal role



António Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations, addressing the Political Forum of the High-Level Segment of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), at the UN General Assembly hall today in New York.

NEW YORK: JULY 17, 2023 – Speaking this morning to the High-Level Segment of the United Nation's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Gaetano Cavalieri, President of the World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO), emphasized the potential that the jewellery industry has as a force for positive societal development, particularly during the period following the COVID pandemic. Among the leaders in attendance during the gathering was UN Secretary General António Guterres.

The CIBJO President was once again part of a very select group of NGO heads invited to make a verbal statement before the ECOSOC High-Level Segment, which began its 36th session on July 10, 2023, and will run through July 19, 2023. The theme of the session is "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels."

CIBJO has held special consultative status in ECOSOC since 2006 as the jewellery industry's sole representative.



CIBJO President Gaetano Cavalieri delivering the World Jewellery Confederation's statement to the UN Economic and Social Council's High Political Forum at the United Nation's headquarters in New York today. Seated alongside him is CIBJO's UN consultant Dr. Hanifa Mezoui, who is a former head of the ECOSOC's NGO section.

"In the difficult economic environment that has developed in the wake of COVID-19, the membership of the World Jewellery Confederation plays both a critical and challenging strategic role," Dr. Cavalieri said. "For while the end-consumers for the luxury products that they produce predominantly reside in high-income countries, where the ravages of the pandemic have largely subsided, a major proportion of the raw materials that they require are sourced in lower-income countries, where the social and economic aftershocks of the coronavirus period are still being felt, placing sustainable development programmes in peril."

"The presence of CIBJO members in these low-income countries, most of which are ranked in the lowest tier of the UN's Human Development Index (HDI < 0.55), provides them both with an in-depth understanding of conditions on the ground, and ample alternatives to support grass-roots economic programmes that encourage sustainable opportunity," Dr. Cavalieri continued. "This is a not only a moral imperative, but a business requirement as well, because the now dominant Millennial and Gen Z consumers

of high-end jewellery products are more than inclined to demand that the products, they buy demonstrably provide social and economic benefit along the entire supply chain."

The CIBJO President noted that among the most vulnerable sectors in the jewellery pipeline are those involved in artisanal mining, or sometimes what is referred to as the informal mining sector. "The percentage of artisanal mining input varies according to product type, accounting for about 20 percent of both the global gold and diamond supply, but 80 percent of the supply of coloured gemstones," he stated.

"CIBJO contends that, to be able to meet the challenge of the ECOSOC HLPF theme and the SDGs, artisanal miners need to be provided monitored but achievable access to established industry supply chains, and that will be achieved by the development of formal due diligence systems to ensure compliance with accepted responsible sourcing standards," Dr. Cavalieri said.

The CIBJO President added that to enable such due diligence to be conducted, in September 2022 CIBJO and Intertek Italia SpA launched the first-ever training and internationally recognized certification programme for sustainability officers working in the jewellery industry. The

programme is being offered on a dedicated e-training platform, presented by sustainability experts with special expertise in the gem and jewellery industries.

“CIBJO has the responsibility to implement the SDGs through smart, efficient, and innovative partnerships. We are committed to their realization,” he said to the UN ECOSOC gathering.