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**Principled negotiation as a tool
to negotiate with local
communities: the case of the
Kimberley Process initiative in
Ivory Coast**

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Research Paper

CEPMLP Annual Review 2022



Abstract

Numerous armed conflicts and civil wars erupted in Africa in the early 2000s that was fuelled by natural resources, especially diamonds. The West African nation of Ivory Coast has not been exempted from these conflicts, particularly with the politico-military crisis from 2002 to 2004, which resulted in the country being split in two, with a north held by the rebels and a south held by the government and an international embargo on the country's diamond exports. The restoration of normalcy and establishment in-country of the diamond sector oversight and transparency Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) resulted in a series of negotiations between the Government of Ivory Coast (GoIC) and the local diamond-producing communities. However, the sensitivity of natural resource deals often results in their genesis from negotiations in which parties may take firm core positions but yet may need to make sacrifices to achieve an agreed settlement. This article examines how the GoIC's use of principled negotiation as a means of negotiation assisted in achieving agreement with local communities. By analysing the entire negotiation process between the GoIC and local communities, this paper concludes that applying four identified, fundamental, principles of principled negotiation is the most effective method for resolving Ivory Coast's complex diamond sector problems. Notwithstanding the method's effectiveness in negotiating an agreement with local communities, this paper provides lessons for future negotiations, in Ivory Coast and beyond, informed by the challenges encountered during the process.

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Introduction

The illicit diamond trade has been associated with crisis and civil wars in numerous African countries, not least in the early 2000s focus period for this research paper, resulting in millions of deaths¹. As a result of this conflict, a series of international negotiations involving global diamond supply chain stakeholders resulted in the creation of the KPCS oversight and transparency initiative, initiated by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution. By voting on the resolution entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to the prevention and settlement of conflicts²", the UNGA, emphasising the importance of broad involvement in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, urged all Member States to actively engage in the Certification Scheme by complying with its obligations.

In Ivory Coast, the 2002 protracted and bloody political-military crisis, including secessionist armed revolt across many of the country's 14 districts, was exacerbated by the ability of combatants to extend the war through revenue generated by Ivorian diamond international sales. This situation led to a UN embargo on Ivorian diamond exports in 2005³. With the political situation subsequently normalising and the crisis finally ending in 2011, the GoIC committed to take the requisite measures to comply with the KPCS, and hence the country's re-admission into the (formal) global diamond trade. Pursuant to that end, the nation-wide domestic compact negotiated by the GoIC was inclusive of all parties of the national supply chain, including local diamond-producing communities, which committed to joining the KPCS's legal certification chain.

Negotiations between two or more parties has received increasing attention by numerous researchers, such as Rubin and Salacuse⁴ who articulate asymmetric relationships such as those pertaining between a vulnerable party and an adversary with significantly superior

¹ Ian Smillie, *Blood on the stone: greed, corruption and war in the global diamond trade* (Anthem Press 2010)

² United Nations, *The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict :#breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts :resolution* (UN 2001)

³ United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1643 - Côte d'Ivoire, Diamonds (Kimberley Process)' (*United Nations Security Council*, 2021) <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1643>> accessed 15/05/2021

⁴ Jeffrey Z Rubin and Jeswald W Salacuse, 'The problem of power in international negotiations' (1990) 4 *International Affairs* 24

power. Their findings are supported by more recent research that describes negotiation as a global transaction fraught with difficulties arising from language, and ideology, amongst other factors⁵. Nonetheless, there is a shortage of relevant literature on negotiation in Africa's extractives industry, especially between governments and local communities. A reasonable presumption could be that such agreements may tend to be uneven and one-sided, i.e. in favour of government positions and interests. Even given the evident power asymmetry, the GoIC seems to have been successful in the way they conducted their negotiations around the diamond sector not just in reaching an agreement with Ivorian diamond-producing communities, but in achieving an inclusive and stable one. Thus, this study examines the method of principled negotiation and its applicability in the negotiation process between a government and a local community by reviewing the KPCS initiative on Ivory Coast. This paper aims to demonstrate a negotiating method that governments might use while dealing with local communities and lessons learned from the challenges faced during the Ivorian negotiation.

The paper is divided into three main sections structurally. The first part presents Ivory Coast diamonds sector and the KPCS while providing a general description of diamond mining and trade as it pertains to Ivory Coast. The second section discusses principled negotiation as the appropriate negotiating method among various approaches, especially with local communities. The paper ends with analysing the negotiation process's challenges and lessons learnt from them that may serve as an example for future negotiations.

⁵ Jeswald W Salacuse, *The global negotiator: Making, managing and mending deals around the world in the twenty-first century* (St. Martin's Press 2015)

1. Overview

1.1 Why is diamond so valuable?

Diamond is a pure carbon mineral that forms between 75 and 120 miles below the earth's crust⁶. The process of natural diamond formation takes between 1 and 2.6 billion years⁷, albeit that it is now possible to form artificial (synthetic) diamonds now in laboratories. As a result, only about 5,000 rocks capable of forming diamond have been sampled over the years, of which approximately 50 have thus far been found to be sufficiently rich in diamonds to be commercially exploitable, which in turn support (as of 1995) the 15 major diamond mines operating globally⁸. These statistics illustrate diamond's scarcity, which has resulted in it being one of the most valuable minerals in the world. For instance, in 2011, approximately 124 million carats of rough diamonds were extracted for a value of \$15bn (unpolished),⁹ \$24bn when polished, and \$71bn when retailed.¹⁰

Since the late 19th century, De Beers has controlled both the industrial and gemstone diamond markets. By the beginning of the 20th century, diamond production from mines owned and controlled by De Beers accounts for 43%¹¹ of the total value of raw diamonds in the world. De Beers Group had to organise the worldwide diamond cartel with other large diamond companies and is now part of Anglo-American PLC¹². These producers' control around 75% of the global market for rough diamonds¹³. To perpetuate the myth around "a diamond is Forever"¹⁴, it becomes apparent that those companies have as marketing strategy to tightly control the world's supply of diamonds to create a scarcity of diamond and therefore maintain high prices.

⁶ GP Bulanova, 'The formation of diamond' (1995) 53 Journal of Geochemical Exploration 1

⁷ JJ Gurney, *Diamonds* (1986)

⁸ AJA Bram Janse and Patricia A Sheahan, 'Catalogue of world wide diamond and kimberlite occurrences: a selective and annotative approach' (1995) 53 Journal of Geochemical Exploration 73

⁹ All \$ are US Dollars

¹⁰ Y Spektorov, Olya Linde and Pierre-Laurent Wetli, 'The Global Diamond Industry: Portrait of Growth' (2012) Bain & Company

¹¹ Donna J Bergenstock and James M Maskulka, 'The de beers story: are diamonds forever?' (2001) 44 Business Horizons 37

¹² AngloAmerican, 'Diamonds' <<https://www.angloamerican.com/products/diamonds?product=diamonds>> accessed 27/05/2022

¹³ Bergenstock and Maskulka, 'The de beers story: are diamonds forever?'

¹⁴ De Beers Group <<https://www.debeersgroup.com/about-us/a-diamond-is-forever>> accessed may 27,2022

The wealth generated by the diamonds trade makes it the hard mineral that has fed the largest number and extent of Africa's armed conflicts, hence the well-known term: "conflict diamond."¹⁵

1.2 Conflict diamond and Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

In the early 2000s, a UN study exposed rebel groups' presence in fourteen African countries' civil wars¹⁶. A peculiarity or common feature of many of these civil wars, including those in Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ivory Coast, was that rebel groups financed their warfare through the rough (unpolished) diamonds trade.¹⁷ In May 2000, It began as a consultation process including governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations and eventually evolved into a negotiation process. The deal was negotiated for thirty months. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) formally endorsed the Kimberley Process in 2001, and the Kimberley Process core text was adopted during a ministerial conference in Interlaken, Switzerland in November 2002. The parties to this agreement committed to implement its requirements by January 1, 2003¹⁸. Consequently, the KPCS was developed and then, in 2003, adopted to prevent conflict diamonds from entering export supply chains legally.¹⁹

1.3 The Ivorian diamond context

The diamond industry in Ivory Coast began before the country's independence in 1960; the first diamond deposit sampled was in 1928 and the first at-scale extraction achieved in 1940²⁰. The principal producing area in the country is Seguela, in north-western Ivory Coast, where artisanal production activity took place via twelve village-based cooperatives. This formalised artisanal mining structure was legalised by the country's first mining regulation, in 1964.²¹

¹⁵ UN General Assembly, 'The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts' (2000) 55 GA Res 1

¹⁶ Nations Unies, 'Progress in tackling Africa's conflicts' (2004) 18 Africa Renewal 15

¹⁷ Ola Olsson, 'Conflict diamonds' (2007) 82 Journal of Development Economics 267

¹⁸ Franziska Bieri, *From blood diamonds to the Kimberley process: How NGOs cleaned up the global diamond industry* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd. 2013)

¹⁹ Ana Elizabeth Bastida, *The Law and Governance of Mining and Minerals: A Global Perspective* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2020)

²⁰ TU DeJong, 'Diamond mining in Cote d'Ivoire: Programming options for the artisanal sector' (2013) Report to the Diamond Development Initiative

²¹ Ibid

However, a rebellion against the regime started in 2002, resulting in a civil war and then the country's *de facto* separation into two parts: the areas under, and those outwith, the control of the GoIC. The rebels dominated the north of the country, including the diamond city of Seguela²². A UN report revealed that rebel groups were mining and smuggling diamonds into neighbouring countries to purchase weapons and munitions during the crisis,²³ which finding resulted in a UN ban on diamond exports from Ivory Coast in 2005.²⁴

With the normalisation of the situation after the 2010 Ivorian presidential election and the country's political reunification in 2011,²⁵ there existed an opportunity to fully integrate Ivory Coast into the KPCS and hence facilitate the legal export of Ivorian diamonds to international markets. Pursuant to that end, the GoIC needed to ensure that all Ivorian diamonds produced joined the national legal chain. To achieve this, the GoIC negotiated with local diamond-producing communities in formerly rebel-held regions, both with respect to commitments for currently-stockpiled diamonds in those regions and regarding future production.

However, given the complexity of the situation involving, on the one hand, diamonds provided by local communities and, on the other hand, rebel groups' former dominance over those diamond mining regions, a pressing question arises about the most appropriate method of negotiation to be used by the GoIC to address the issue. This question is critically examined below.

²² Fabienne Hara and Gilles Yabi, 'Côte D'ivoire, 2002–2011', *Responding to Conflict in Africa* (Springer 2013)

²³ Steven Van Bockstael, 'From boom to bust, and back again: the Tortiya diamond fields of Côte d'Ivoire, 1947–2018' (2020) 41 *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement* 450

²⁴ United Nations, 'UN Security Council renews sanctions on Côte d'Ivoire, bars diamond exports' (*United Nations News*, 2005) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2005/12/163762-un-security-council-renews-sanctions-cote-divoire-bars-diamond-exports>> accessed 27/12/2020

²⁵ Hara and Yabi, 'Côte D'ivoire, 2002–2011'

2. Principled negotiation as a tool

2.1 The selection of the negotiation method

Regarding the context of the diamond sector in Ivory Coast, the first negotiation approach that is critically examined below is that of soft negotiation.²⁶ This negotiation approach entails being ready to make compromises and sacrifices where necessary (and without destroying the core expected value of any final settlement), being cooperative, trusting the other party, shifting (selective) positions to appease, avoiding conflict where possible, and (selectively) yielding to pressure, whilst still pursuing core outcomes through the negotiation.²⁷ However, this approach can be considered not wholly appropriate for the GoIC to adopt when dealing with former rebel regions rife with smuggling and anti-State armed uprisings, a state of affairs not conducive to mutual trust.

The second negotiating strategy considered is referred to as hard negotiation;²⁸ it entails making threats, being tough on the situation and the people, digging in on positions, distrustful attitudes between the parties, and applying pressure in pursuit of the negotiated end-goals.²⁹ Nonetheless, this strategy is also considered a poor choice and inadequate for the GoIC, considering that the diamond miners are local Ivorian citizens with fellow-citizen dependents (all of whom the GoIC exists to serve) and that every government, according to International Labour Organization convention,³⁰ is required to initiate consultations with communities in good faith and respectfully.

Given that the GoIC in these circumstances is unlikely to rationally select either a soft or a hard negotiating strategy in this case, it is prudent to implement a middle-ground strategy known as principled negotiation. This third, or middle, option is critically considered below.

²⁶ Roger Fisher, William L Ury and Bruce Patton, *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in* (Penguin 2011)

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Lee Swepston, 'A new step in the international law on indigenous and tribal peoples: ILO convention no. 169 of 1989' (1990) 15 Okla City UL Rev 677

2.2 The use of principled negotiation

2.2.1 What is principled negotiation?

The principled negotiating strategy was developed at Harvard University³¹ and is commonly used to win-win negotiation in dispute management and resolution³². It is an interest-based approach to dealing that significantly increases the likelihood of parties reaching a mutually beneficial result. As such, this method is based on four main points:

- *people: separate the people from the problems*³³, which requires the parties to put the people's issues aside. Then parties are obliged to distinguish all personal matters from the actual problem underlying the negotiations before any discussions;
- *interest: focus on interest, not positions*³⁴. Negotiation should be motivated by the discovery and expression of shared interests. Parties are expected to avoid putting personal interests ahead of the negotiating process since this could jeopardise the process;
- *option: invent multiple options looking for mutual gains before deciding what to do*³⁵ Parties must create a series of mutually beneficial options that take the parties' interests into account; and
- *criteria: Insist that the result be based on some objective standard*³⁶. This argument applies to the notion that all sides should choose a principle that would eventually result in a just outcome.

2.2.2 The use of principled negotiation in the Ivorian negotiation

In line with the complexity of the issues in Ivory Coast regarding the diamond trade, formerly rebel regions of the country and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), the GoIC negotiation team can be seen to utilise each of the four above elements of the principled negotiations approach. This rational choice led to a highly positive outcome, not at first but finally and through persistence and patience, for the negotiations, namely sustainable agreement on all key points.

³¹ Vicki Lens, 'Principled negotiation: A new tool for case advocacy' (2004) 49 Social Work 506

³² Barbara McDevitt, 'Negotiating the syllabus: a win-win situation?' (2004) 58 ELT journal 3

³³ Fisher, Ury and Patton, *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

By applying the first point, which is to separate people from the problem, the GoIC was able to identify high-salience stakeholders. Following the failure of the first round of talks, which included representatives from all twelve producing villages who raised various issues, the GoIC negotiating team agreed to hold separate meetings with each diamond-producing village. This approach has enabled communities to be separated from any misunderstandings that may result in an emotional response such as fear or frustration and concentrate the negotiation on the communities' diamond miners.

The establishment of this framework permitted the government team to move on to the second level, prioritising interests over positions. This step allowed identifying the local communities' diamond miners' interests and the discovery, upon closer examination, of many shared rather than opposed interests. As the negotiations continued, it became clear that the majority of the diamond mining communities' attention was directed towards basic human needs, local economic development, stability, and external recognition/ respect; all of the above were in strong alignment with the GoIC's own negotiating position and aspirations for these Ivorian citizens. Hence the basis for agreement was already there, awaiting discovery and the writing enabling environment for its articulation.

As can be seen from the above conclusion, the parties' knowledge has set the ground for the principled negotiation third approach, which is about broadening the options on the negotiation table to ease the choice of solutions for the mutual benefit of all sides.

To implement this process, the negotiating teams developed several options for ensuring that diamonds are no longer traded illegally. Among the alternatives considered was that the entire traceability process would be overseen by local community cooperatives rather than the State. A percentage of the official certification fees would be retained for the socio-economic development of the villages ('benefits sharing'). This choice satisfies the GoIC's objective of incorporating the diamond into the legal chain and the community's need to maintain control over their ancestral activities.

Nonetheless, much of this discussion had to be conducted following objective criteria, the fourth aspect of principled negotiation. As such, the GoIC negotiating team focused all its efforts on fulfilling the KPCS requirements to be permitted to exchange diamonds globally after the embargo lifting. The framework of the criteria has prevented unnecessary deadlock

on other issues, such as the previous crisis and the country's internal, *de facto*, split into regions loyal to the GolC, and those *de facto* outwith its legal writ.

Following the successful execution of the four elements of principled negotiation in the process, an agreement was reached between local communities and the government, resulting in the publication of a KPCS guide document translated into local languages for communities. Among the accomplishments of this partnership was the official review visit of a KPCS working group in 2013³⁷ to verify compliance, which resulted in lifting the diamond export embargo in 2014³⁸.

However, though this negotiation was fruitful, the parties encountered a few barriers and learnt valuable lessons from them.

³⁷ DeJong, 'Diamond mining in Cote d'Ivoire: Programming options for the artisanal sector'

³⁸ United Nations, 'Security Council lifts Côte d'Ivoire's rough diamond ban, tweaks arms embargo' (*United Nations News*, 2014) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/04/467212-security-council-lifts-cote-divoires-rough-diamond-ban-tweaks-arms-embargo>> accessed 27/12/2020

2. Barriers and lessons learnt

3.1 Barriers in the negotiation process

One of the most significant obstacles has been communication breakdowns. It cannot be overstated how important it is for parties to maintain a two-way contact during a discussion with local communities. As stated by Salacuse: " *some groups place emphasis on direct and simple methods of communication, others rely heavily on indirect and complex methods*"³⁹. In the Ivorian negotiation, with the challenge of communicating with the populations without an interpreter, the GoIC team encountered several communication difficulties since the communities misinterpreted the negotiators' figurative language, facial gestures, and other body languages; this often resulted in minor deadlocks.

Another constraint to negotiation is that local communities may lack sufficient evidence to make rational decisions. Frequently, communities may have been misinformed about crucial parts of the discussions, or presumptions underpinning their good faith negotiation, as was the case in Ivory Coast, where some communities believed the KPCS was a GoIC effort to rob their diamond. Additionally, communities may have capacity-development challenges to effectively negotiate with the GoIC, months of back-and-forth negotiation may result. Hence the need noted above for the GoIC to be patient and persistent in its negotiating approach, which efficaciously it was, plus to engage creative lateral thinking, resulting in more imaginative tactics (see below) to circumvent residual points of non-agreement.

Apart from those difficulties, some negotiations with local communities may encounter challenges concerning the timing and location of the negotiations, as in the example of a negotiation where local communities were unable to attend a Friday session due to the Muslim prayer in these largely-Islamic regions of Ivory Coast. Again, patience, e.g. avoiding Muslim prayer-days for negotiations, just as the Christian Sabbath is also not commonly a day of such negotiations either.

Various lessons must be gained and replicated in the future process of negotiating with local communities due to these different issues encountered.

³⁹ Jeswald W Salacuse, 'Ten ways that culture affects negotiating style: Some survey results' (1998) 14 Negotiation journal 221

3.2 Lessons learnt

The first lesson learned from the difficulties encountered during the negotiating process is the critical importance of proper preparation⁴⁰ before a negotiation. This planning entails developing a negotiating strategy, familiarising oneself with the other party's culture, thinking, and organisation, defining positions and selecting a negotiation style.

Additionally, the parties must take a transparent and inclusive approach from the beginning; as Fisher and Ury said, "*If they are not interested in the process, they are unable to accept the product.*"⁴¹. Additionally, based on Ivorian experience negotiating with local communities, a negotiation team should include (at least one) individual capable of understanding and speaking the local community language, in order to avoid an impasse caused by the translator's absence or wrong translation.

In a back-and-forth negotiation or a deadlock situation, the team must consider using back-channel negotiation⁴², as was the case in the Ivorian negotiation, where the GoIC communicated with the village chief's spouse through a back-channel contact. This technique was effective because the spouse convinced his/her spouse to make concessions for mutual benefit.

Throughout the process, the team learned never to underestimate the other side; as Salacuse stated, "*the weaker party is generally stronger than, the stronger party assumes*"⁴³, since negotiation has the potential to reduce the original inequalities between the two sides and improve the relationship's symmetry.

⁴⁰ EA Berghoff, 'The international negotiations handbook: Success through preparation, strategy, and planning' (2007) PILPG and Baker & McKenzie

⁴¹ Fisher, Ury and Patton, *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*

⁴² Anthony Wanis-St. John, 'Back-channel negotiation: International bargaining in the shadows' (2006) 22 Negotiation Journal 119

⁴³ Jeswald W Salacuse, 'How should the lamb negotiate with the lion? Power in international negotiations' (1999) Negotiation eclectics 87

Conclusion

This paper has emphasised the value of principled negotiation as a tool for negotiating between local populations and government, focusing on Ivory Coast's KPCS debate. With diamonds fuelling Africa's civil war, the UN agreed to introduce the KPCS, to which all countries are expected to comply.

After the 2002 crisis's embargo, the GoIC needed to negotiate with local populations to meet these conditions. This paper has illustrated the government's use of principled negotiation as an effective tool for resolving the diamond issue's complexity. This approach, which consists of four identified fundamental components centred on people, interest, options, and criteria, is a middle ground between the hard and soft negotiating styles and have permitted the signature of an agreement between the GoIC and Ivorian diamond-producing communities.

Although emphasising the positive outcome of the principled negotiation, which resulted in the lifting of the embargo, this study has also discussed the obstacles faced by the teams, including communication, asymmetric knowledge, time, and the negotiation location. The paper provides lessons learned by the negotiating team from these challenges, including proper preparation and the use of back-channel negotiation. Therefore, these lessons could serve as a foundation for future fruitful negotiations between local communities and government for the shared benefit of all parties and the country's long-term development.

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