



PROFILE OF CIBJO

Describing itself as the “United Nations of the jewellery business,” CIBJO, The World Jewellery Confederation, represents the interests of all individuals, organisations and companies earning their livelihoods from jewellery, gemstones and precious metals. With its membership made up largely by national jewellery trade organizations from more than 40 countries around the world. CIBJO covers the entire jewellery, gemstone and precious metals sectors vertically, from mine to marketplace, and horizontally within each of the component sectors in the various production, manufacturing and trading centres. Most of the international jewellery sector’s leading corporations and service providers are also affiliated to CIBJO through associate membership.

In 2006, CIBJO became the only organisation in the international diamond, gemstone and jewellery sectors ever to receive official consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. Based on Article 71 of the UN Charter, the new status enables CIBJO, on behalf of the international gemstone and jewellery industries, to advance the programmes and goals of the United Nations by serving as a technical expert, adviser and consultant to governments and the UN Secretariat.

Founded in Paris in 1926 as BIBOA, an organization whose mission was to represent and advance the interests of the jewellery trade in Europe, it was restructured as CIBJO (Confédération Internationale de la Bijouterie, Joaillerie, Orfèvrerie des Diamants, Perles et Pierres) in 1961, with a global rather than a continental focus. To the present day, its mission has been to encourage harmonization, promote international cooperation in the jewellery industry and to consider issues that concern the trade worldwide. Foremost among these is the protection of consumer confidence.

The organisation is today headquartered in Milan, Italy, and its president is Dr. Gaetano Cavalieri, an Italian national who has served in the position since being elected for the first time in March 2001.

Full membership in CIBJO is open to all professional organisations, regardless of the country in which they are located, although the organisation that receives voting power should be the one that most represents the specific jewellery industry sector in the country in question. In the event of that several associations exist, they may all be equally represented in CIBJO, after applying for membership and being approved by the organisation’s Executive Committee. Each country appoints representatives to participate in three distinct sectors, or areas of interest, which are: Sector 1 (Jewellery Manufacturing/Technology/ Precious Metals), Sector 2 (Jewellery Distribution), and Sector 3 (Gem Materials, trade and laboratories). Much of the day to day work carried out by the organisation takes place in the various commissions, which cover diamonds, coloured stones, pearls, precious metals, gem labs, ethics, and education & marketing.

CIBJO serves to protect its constituents from factors that threaten the confidence of consumers in the jewellery industry, as well as factors that threaten the confidence of consumers in the jewellery item itself. The first set includes what from 1999 came to be known to the world as conflict diamonds. In close cooperation with the governments of producing and consuming countries, the European Union and the United Nations, CIBJO, together with other representative bodies in the gemstone and jewellery sectors through the World Diamond Council, helped formulate the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. This clearly has led to an improvement in the economic fortunes of countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

CIBJO acts to uphold the confidence of consumers in the jewellery industry by supporting initiatives and programmes that address other threats, such as money laundering; questionable gemmological and assaying standards, and fraudulent hallmarks; health issues, particular as they may arise in the mine or factory; damage to the environment, most specifically in the developing world, where the mining and industrial regulatory systems are often lax; and employment practices, particularly where the hiring of children is involved.

The harmonisation of industry standards has been a critical element of CIBJO's mission, and has stood at the heart of its effort to protect the confidence of consumers in the jewellery product itself. To advance the goal of universal standards and terminology in the jewellery industry, CIBJO developed its Blue Book system, which involves definitive set of standards for the grading, methodology and nomenclature of diamonds, coloured gemstones, and pearls and other organic materials. Currently, work is underway to compile Blue Books for the precious metals sector and gemmological laboratories.

CIBJO has been actively involved in the development a recognized sets of terminology by the International Standards Organization (ISO). But this is a long and difficult process. In the absence of clear ISO-approved terminology, it is the CIBJO Blue Books that are most commonly referred to in official forums. Recently, the CIBJO Blue Book was relied upon by a panel of three judges in a district court in Munich, Germany, which issued a restraining order to the German distributor of gem-quality synthetic diamonds, to cease using the term "cultured diamonds" when marketing its products to the public. Explaining its decision, the court said the term was misleading. Legal commentators have suggested that since the ruling has taken place within the jurisdiction of a member country of the European Union, the verdict most probably has legal authority also in other EU countries.

For its annual CIBJO Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, in March 2007, CIBJO selected as a theme "Delivering a Sustainable and Responsible Jewellery Industry," specifically to address the issue of the jewellery industry's role in developing sustainable economies in the developing countries that traditionally have acted as a source of raw materials. In the presence of political leaders from across the African continent, the organisation released what was called the Cape Town Declaration, which committed the international jewellery industry to creating programmes that will help realise the eight Millennium Development goals, as introduced by former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan in the year 2000.

In July 2007, CIBJO President Dr. Gaetano Cavalieri and members of the CIBJO Presidential Council met with the current UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, to discuss CIBJO's development mission, and to further the liaison between the international body and the world jewellery industry. On October 29, 2007, the CIBJO Executive Committee held a one-day meeting at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva with senior UN officials, to discuss the programme ahead of the 2008 CIBJO Congress in Dubai, where for the first time the world confederation held its annual congress in the Arabian Gulf region.

At the Geneva meeting, CIBJO also agreed with ECOSOC to create together an international educational programme, designed specifically to promote corporate responsibility in the greater jewellery industry. The project is called the World Jewellery Confederation Education Foundation, and it will come to be known as WJCEF.

The goal of WJCEF is to establish a programme that will educate members of the diamond, gemstone and jewellery industries, all over the world and in all sectors, from mine to market, about the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility, and how they may implement these principles in their businesses. The programme is being designed together with the United Nations, which has assigned a team of experts to work together with us.

The establishment of the WJCEF programme was announced during the 2008 annual CIBJO Congress, which took place in April in Dubai. As the actual programme takes shape and gathers pace, we will provide the industry with more information, at its next General Assembly Meeting, at the 2009 Congress that will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, May 3- 6, 2009.

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