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## Natural Diamond Council talks social impact during Paris Couture Week

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*Placing a spotlight on creating an open dialogue of necessary change, the symposium's Q&A section emphasized carbon neutrality, female empowerment and biodiversity protection. Image courtesy of the Natural Diamond Council*

By ZACH JAMES

The Natural Diamond Council (NDC) is sparking wide-ranging conversations within the industry.

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Held at the Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week, the organization's panel on the environmental and social impacts of diamond mining featured speakers and luxury labels from around the globe. Placing a spotlight on creating an open dialogue of necessary change, the symposium's Q&A section emphasized carbon neutrality, female empowerment and biodiversity protection.

### Special speakers

Attendees of the "Diamond Transformation" panel on July 3rd included executives from major luxury houses, such as LVMH and Kering, with the latter taking the stage as a representative.

Speakers included Livia Firth, creative director and founder of Eco-Age, British actress and global NDC ambassador Lily James ([see story](#)), Iris Van der Veken, executive director at Watch and Jewelry Initiative 2030, Marie-Claire Daveu, chief sustainability & institutional affairs officer at Kering, Andr Messika, founder of Andr Messika Diamonds LTD and Kesego Kereemang, safety, health and corporate responsibility manager at Lucara Botswana.

*The six experts talked about issues facing the entire luxury landscape, such as social justice, biodiversity and women empowerment*

Focusing particularly on operations in Botswana as an example of how to handle mining with modern sensibilities of environmental protection, human rights and safety in mind.

"I wanted to be really fully present in it and I took this ambassadorial role seriously," said Ms. James, at the event.

"To have the opportunity to go to Botswana, really meet the people there and see first-hand the positive impact of the diamond industry."

The South African country has long held a partnership with De Beers ([see story](#)) and with the help of the NDC has

seen significant impacts on social programs, such as having free healthcare and education, which Ms. Kereemang attested. The region, which faces severe issues of hunger, has seen drastic improvements in its malnutrition rates thanks to the efforts of the mining company

According to the NDC, more than 10 million people across the globe work in the diamond industry, which is often based in smaller, localized communities, such as in Siberia and Botswana, which are world leaders in the business. Because of this, the speakers harped on the importance of diamond corporations reinvesting in their respective communities, whether it be in social programs, infrastructure or general safety measures.

"We have an opportunity here this is an example for any other business sector to look at," said Ms. Firth, during the discussion.

"The industry has advanced and changed so much," she said. "You could even argue that the diamond industry has done more work than any other industry."

#### Glass windows

A major trend in luxury recently has been the emergence of greater transparency.

Especially when it comes to sustainability, companies are releasing their plans, internal numbers, forecasts and overall success in the field in greater numbers. Gucci's Equilibrium arm released a podcast delving into the topic ([see story](#)), Ruinart launched a platform to showcase the impacts of its supply chain and product life cycles ([see story](#)) and Ralph Lauren is the latest to release an annual sustainability report ([see story](#)) - another corporate action seeing greater adoption - with many other houses also participating.

"What I see now today is that the key topics that are super key for the industry are transparency and disclosure, traceability and human rights due diligence," said Ms. Van der Veken, during the panel.