

ISRAEL



Israel

By Sarah Manning

IDE, ALROSA SIGN AGREEMENT

The most recent International Diamond Week (IDW) at the Israel Diamond Exchange (IDE) is being hailed as the most successful of the seven semiannual trading weeks the exchange has hosted over the past four years. Held in February in cooperation with the New York Diamond Dealers Club (DDC) and the Antwerp Diamond Bourse, the rough and polished trading floors were packed with people throughout the five-day event.

Moti Fluk, the head of the IDW organizing committee, reported that 400 buyers from 24 countries attended. Representatives of Turkey's jewelry manufacturing and export industry came to Israel for the first time, despite political tensions between the two countries, and IDE hosted a special reception to welcome the Turkish delegation.

Diamantaires from within Israel and from other countries expressed optimism that Israel's Diamond Week strengthened international ties among traders and will help to generate significant sales going forward. Ashwin Lodha from the Japan Auction House in Tokyo, who attended as a member of the DDC, reported selling a large amount of his goods in all sizes ranging from 10 points to 10 carats. "This was my first time in Israel, and the event has been an excellent platform for making connections with Israeli companies," he said. "We plan to start running live auctions in Israel, as we do in Hong Kong and Japan."

Amir Simkhai from Kanton Diamonds in New York City made a snap decision to attend just a few days before the event. "I really had no expectations but it has been an excellent show and I would certainly come again," said Simkhai.

ALROSA AGREEMENT

For Shmuel Schnitzer, president of the IDE, the highlight of the week was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), designed to expand the relationship and trade between IDE and ALROSA, the Russian diamond mining giant that produces one in four of all gem-quality diamonds sold around the world. An indication of the significance of their agreement can be seen in the fact that the official signing ceremony was held at the residence of Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.

"Our main goal is to boost Israel's manufacturing industry, so this new understanding with ALROSA will help to increase the supply of rough stones," Schnitzer said. Figures for the quantity of rough to be sold in Israel have not yet been determined. For ALROSA, the focus of the agreement is the exchange of information and expertise on new diamond identification and grading, as well as cutting and polishing technologies being developed in Israel. The MoU refers to developing new methods of sorting diamonds and detecting their origin in order to identify synthetic

and treated diamonds. “Israel is recognized for its high-tech advantage, which is one of the areas that we are highlighting in order to maintain our international competitiveness,” noted Schnitzer.

DIAMOND TECHNOLOGY

Diamond Week also included a DiamTech Exhibit where visitors could see and test the latest developments in diamond-related technology and software. Israeli company Shirtal DiaCam Ltd. demonstrated its tabletop scanner, which was developed in response to demand for high-quality 360-degree images and videos of diamonds that are offered for sale over the internet. Segoma Imaging Technologies, whose research and development center is located in Israel, demonstrated its latest 3-D photography system that links with its ecommerce platform to facilitate international diamond sales. Both products were developed to provide detailed visual impressions of diamonds to potential buyers as a substitute for firsthand physical inspection. Another Israeli company, EasyStock, was showcasing its ecommerce management platform for diamond and jewelry retailers.

DIAMOND ENHANCEMENT

Among the Israeli diamantaires exhibiting at Diamond Week was Doron Kenig from David Levy Diamonds, which specializes in clarity enhancement and color enhancement techniques. “Clarity enhancement technology is known in the U.S. as the Yehuda Treatment, but today we have the world’s leading treatment laboratory here in Israel,” said Kenig. “Color enhancement uses High Pressure-High Temperature (HPHT) finishing technology to finish what nature started. This enables us to produce fancy stones in the most popular colors — such as pink — for a fraction of the price of natural colored diamonds. Naturally mined HPHT-processed diamonds receive standard certification from the Gemological Institute of America (GIA).”

Both enhancement techniques are still controversial in the industry and some retailers are nervous about offering processed diamonds because they may be confused with synthetically grown stones. Stones that have been “cleaned” using clarity enhancement are more accepted in the U.S. jewelry market than HPHT-processed stones.

Article from the Rapaport Magazine - March 2015. To subscribe [click here](#).