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World diamond manufacturing head and IGI chief executive confirm attendance at Panama Gem & Jewelry Center launch event

PANAMA: FEBRUARY 20, 2014 – Registration for the launch of the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center on March 17 and 18 is gathering steam, as more industry leaders confirm that they will be attending the event. Among the most recent additions are Maxim Shkadov, President of the International Diamond Manufacturers Association, and Roland Lorie, co-CEO of the International Gemological Institute.

Anchored by the Panama Diamond Exchange (PDE), which is the first and only diamond bourse in all of Latin America, the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center will be the first dedicated facility for the diamond, jewelry and colored stone trades in the region that includes South and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

President of the International Diamond Manufacturers Association, which is a body that represents diamond cutting and polishing associations from 15 countries, Maxim Shkadov is also Director General of Kristall Smolensk, Russia's largest polishing factory, and President of the Russian Diamond Manufacturers' Association.

Roland Lorie stands atop the International Gemological Institute, which is the world's largest independent laboratory for testing and grading diamonds, colored stones and fine jewelry. Established in 1975 in Antwerp, IGI has offices in 19 gemstone and jewelry centers, and also operates schools of gemology in several locations. He will present a seminar at the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center launch event.

The two-day launch event in Panama will bring together members of the diamond, gemstone and jewelry industries from Latin America and around the world, where they will be introduced to the \$200 million project that is likely to change the face and boost the prospects of the diamond, jewelry and colored stones trades in the region that includes South and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. The guest of honor at the launch will be President Ricardo Martinelli, Panama's head of state.

A dedicated website has been established for the launch, which, in addition to providing information about the event and the project itself, enables participants to register online and book flights and hotels at especially discounted rates. The website is located at www.pdecenterlaunch.com, and can be viewed in Spanish and English.