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PDE and IBGM, Brazil's leading jewelry industry association, sign MOU, IBGM to open representative office in Panama Gem & Jewelry Center

PANAMA: August 11, 2014 – Brazil's leading jewelry industry association, Instituto Brasileiro de Gemas e Metais Preciosos (IBGM), will be taking up residence in the Phase 1 building of the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center when it opens later this year. The announcement follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Panama Diamond Exchange and IBGM in Sao Paulo during the Feninjer Jewellery Show, according to which South America's largest national jewelry market will come to play a key role in the Latin American diamond, colored stone and jewelry center under development in Panama City.

Representing Brazil's 23 state jewelry associations and the country's leading jewelry and gemstone companies, IBGM encompasses the full chain of distribution, including both industry and trade. Producing about one third of the colored gemstones mined each year, Brazil is also the world's 12th largest gold producer and is a diamond producer, as well as being home to a flourishing jewelry design and manufacturing sector and one of the world's most exciting and promising jewelry markets.

The MOU was signed by Hécliton Santini Henriques, President of IBGM, and Dirk Blommaert, PDE's Director of Business Development. According to the agreement PDE will provide a range of benefits to the association and its members in Panama, and IBGM will take an active role in promoting PDE and the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center in Brazil, to both members of the local industry and the Brazilian government.

"It is impossible to understate the importance of this agreement," said Eli Izhakoff, Founding Chairman of the Panama Diamond Exchange. "Brazil is home to a jewelry industry and market that not only is critical to the Latin American trade, but to the world industry in general. IBGM's entry into the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center is nothing short of a milestone."

"We are delighted to be part of the project, which we are confident will raise the profile of Brazil and the jewelry trade in all of Latin America," said Mr. Henriques. "This region is poised for interesting growth, with fast developing economies, and our industries and consumers are catching the attention of the world. The development of a gemstone and jewelry business infrastructure in Panama that will serve the growth of the entire region is something that we support enthusiastically."



The Phase I building of the Panama Gem & Jewelry Center, which rising in the in the prestigious Santa Maria Business District in Panama City, will serve as the headquarters of PDE, including its administrative offices and 300 square-meter trading floor. The building, which will also provide office space for leasing for up to 59 local, regional and international companies and organizations, is scheduled for completion before end of the third quarter of this year.

The second phase of the project will feature a multi-story tower, in which offices can be purchased. Construction will begin in 2015, with a finish date scheduled for 2017. Tenants in the Phase I building will get the first pick of offices in the Phase II tower.

The \$200 million Panama Gem & Jewelry Center is the largest and most ambitious development project ever undertaken on behalf of the jewelry and gemstone trades in Latin America. Serving as a trading hub for both regional and international companies, the center will serve a market that today is worth \$8 billion, and comprises 11,500 retail jewelry outlets located in 20 countries and 23 islands. The entire complex will be located in the Vaguil Free Zone, which was established by an act of the Panamanian parliament for the benefit of the international gem and jewelry trade, and exempts transactions conducted within its area from payments of customs duties and taxes, and corporations registered in the Free Zone from paying company tax.

For more information, visit the Panama Diamond Exchange website at www.pde.com.pa.