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## News release

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### **Diavik celebrates underground mine opening**

**Yellowknife, March 25, 2010** – Diavik Diamond Mines Inc (DDMI), operator of the Diavik Diamond Mine in Canada's remote Northwest Territories, is pleased to announce commencement of production from its new underground mine.

To commemorate this milestone, Diavik today hosted an underground mine opening ceremony at the site. The Diavik Diamond Mine, a joint venture between Rio Tinto (60%) and Harry Winston Diamond Corporation (40%) has been operating as an open pit mine since 2003. The transition to underground mining has always been part of its 16-22 year mine plan.

Commenting on this important milestone in Rio Tinto's 20 year involvement in the diamond industry, Mr Kim Truter, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Diavik mine, said,

"We are delighted to celebrate Rio Tinto's first underground diamond mine. I am enormously proud of the team who has helped make this happen safely and responsibly in some of the harshest operating conditions in the world."

"This achievement ensures that Diavik will continue to provide local training, employment, and business benefits for many years to come. I would like to thank all our investors, our community, business, and government partners, and our workforce for their support," Mr Truter added.

The underground inauguration ceremony was attended by a senior Rio Tinto delegation, Traditional Owners, Northwest Territories dignitaries, and employees. Harry Kenyon-Slaney, Rio Tinto's Chief Executive of Diamonds and Minerals spoke of the richness of the Diavik ore body and Rio Tinto's commitment to the diamond industry,

"The Diavik Diamond Mine is a world class resource that has required significant financial commitment from Rio Tinto and its partners. From the mid 1990's when the initial discovery of Diavik was made and the joint venture arrangements put in place, we have fully supported the development plans for Diavik. Today a new chapter begins and I am proud to

acknowledge the many men and women who have contributed to the onward course of the Diavik Diamond Mine.”

The Diavik mine currently comprises three diamond bearing kimberlite pipes that will be mined using open pit and underground mining methods. Underground operations will steadily increase as the open pits are depleted and by 2012, Diavik is expected to be a 100% underground mine. A fourth pipe, the A21 pipe, is being reviewed to determine the viability of mining. The underground operation will extend the life of the Diavik mine past 2020.

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**Notes to editors**

**About the Diavik Diamond Mine**

The Diavik Diamond Mine is located 300 km. northeast of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories and is an unincorporated joint venture between Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. (60%) and Harry Winston Diamond Limited Partnership (40%). Both companies are headquartered in Yellowknife, Canada. DDMI is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto plc of London, England, and Harry Winston Diamond Limited Partnership is controlled by Harry Winston Diamond Corporation of Toronto, Canada. DDMI is the operator of the mine.

Website: [www.diavik.ca](http://www.diavik.ca)

**About Rio Tinto's diamonds business**

Rio Tinto operates a fully integrated diamonds business. Rio Tinto is one of the world's major diamond producers through its 100 per cent control of the Argyle mine in Australia, 60 per cent share of the Diavik mine in Canada, 78 per cent interest in the Murowa mine in Zimbabwe and 100% ownership of the Bunder Project in India.

The sorting, valuation, sales and marketing of all diamonds from Rio Tinto's mines is located in Antwerp, Belgium, with representative offices in Mumbai, New York and Hong Kong and a niche polished pink diamond business in Perth, Western Australia.

Rio Tinto is a leading supporter of the Kimberley Process as well as a founding member of the Responsible Jewellery Council.

Website: [www.riotintodiamonds.com](http://www.riotintodiamonds.com)