



THE RHINO GOLD BAR

| ADVISORY COMMITTEE |

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar initiative provides critical crisis support to community-backed rhino conservation efforts in northwest Namibia

The global COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the world's economy, which has negatively impacted conservation. Save the Rhino Trust Namibia (SRT), Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) and the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), which provide critical field-based support to trackers and rhino rangers, have seen their budgets slashed by up to 30% as international donors have had to pass along cuts to their own budgets.

The knock-on effect in terms of job security, provisions for families and the protection of Namibia's critically endangered black rhinos is potentially devastating for communities in the region that have worked hard to develop a rhino-based economy.

Adding to the pressure, tourism, which is a primary economic force in rural Namibia and contributes significantly to the cost of conservation, has been severely impacted. There are also significant job losses in urban areas and large numbers of the unemployed are migrating back to their extended families in the rural areas. This has created a vicious cycle of increased need, dwindling income, and increased pressure on natural resources, ultimately resulting in an escalation in poaching.

A number of areas within the Northwest Namibia rhino range have been left exposed by the lack of tourists, requiring extra patrolling efforts by SRT, IRDNC and Conservancy Rhino Rangers, together with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), law enforcement officials and private sector partners. Filling this gap requires increased resources at a time when conservation funding is being slashed.

B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar crisis funding

With donation of 1,000 ounces of gold by B2Gold, the launch of the B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar in January 2020 and the subsequent sale of 600 bars to local buyers, the B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar Advisory Committee has responded to the crisis in critical ways by providing funding for:

- Salaries and support to keep rangers from all 13 rhino range communal conservancies in the northwest in the field for the next 12 months, including the



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following conservancies: Anabeb, Otjikondavirongo, Ehirovipuka, Omatendeka, Sesfontein, Puros, //Huab, Doro !nawas, Tsiseb, Sorris Sorris, Uibasen, and #Khoadi Hoas

- Salaries and support for field staff from SRT and IRDNC that is crucial to ensure adequate patrol levels are maintained in order to keep the poaching pressure at bay and sustain population growth
- Funding for at least one field trip with regional Traditional Authorities in 2020 to raise awareness of the importance of black rhino conservation, an activity that is crucial to reinforce community support for rhino conservation through engagement with respected traditional leadership
- Funding to upgrade the communications system that links field teams and base camp and is fundamentally important to ensure rapid reaction time to crisis situations

Within four months of the launch of the B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar, the project has already disbursed N\$3 million to community-backed rhino conservation efforts.

This donation is in keeping with MEFT efforts to support community-based conservation through the Conservation Relief, Recovery and Resilient Facility.

For everyone involved in the B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar, there is deep satisfaction at being in a position to respond quickly to this crisis and ensure that trackers and rangers are employed at this critical time during which communities are experiencing severe hardship and rhinos are under extreme threat from increased poaching.

When the B2Gold Rhino Gold Bar is launched in North America, additional funds will be raised to provide long-term sustainable funding to community-backed rhino conservation in the Kunene region, ensuring that the conservation-based economy, for which Namibia is world-famous continues to be viable.

Project background

With a ground-breaking donation of 1000 ounces of Namibian gold, B2Gold is producing 1000 limited-edition Rhino Gold Bars, and, with local and international investors, we are supporting communities in their work to secure a future for the last, free-roaming population of black rhino left on earth.

B2Gold is also redefining conservation financing: This represents the first time that gold, a natural resource from the ground, is being used to provide sustainable funding to community-backed initiatives for the protection of an iconic global treasure, the Critically Endangered black rhino.

Proceeds from the sale of the Rhino Gold Bar will be used in two vital ways: A portion will be invested to provide long-term financing to community driven efforts to protect Namibia's black rhinos, while the conservation premium will be applied to activities in the field, ensuring that your support goes directly to the trackers, rangers and communities who live with wildlife.

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