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B2Gold Announces the Launch of its Namibian Rhino Gold Bar Campaign in North America to Support the Conservation and Protection of the Critically Endangered Black Rhino

Laurence M. Stevens • Jul 28, 2020 0 168 5 minutes read



B 2Gold Corp. is pleased to announce the launch of its Namibian Rhino Gold Bar campaign in North America to help support the conservation and protection of the critically endangered black rhinos, and the community-based rhino rangers and trackers who protect the rhinos, in **Namibia**, Southern Africa. This announcement coincides with the

International Ranger Federation's ("IRF") World Ranger Day, which takes place annually on July 31.

World Ranger Day was established on the 15th anniversary of the founding of the IRF and has been observed globally since 2007. The day, which is promoted through the IRF's Thin Green Line Foundation and sanctioned and supported by global members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, recognizes and celebrates rangers who are at the forefront of conservation efforts around the world by protecting natural and cultural resources. It also commemorates rangers that are injured or killed in the line of duty.

Due to poaching, driven by the illegal rhino horn trade, over 1,000 wild rhinos are killed for their horns in Africa each year. The northwest of Namibia is home to the last and largest population of free-roaming black rhinos in the world, but with fewer than 5,630 black rhinos left in the wild, the need for rhino conservation and protection has never been so critical. At the current rate, it is predicted that black rhinos will be extinct within a decade.

One of the key challenges for successful conservation and protection of the black rhinos is that they live in a rural area that covers 25,000 square kilometres with no national park status, few roads and little control as to who can access the area. The monitoring and safety of this population of black rhinos is attributed to the commitment of organizations – such as Save the Rhino Trust Namibia ("SRT"), Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation ("IRDNC") and Rhino Rangers – and local communities that continue to dedicate their lives to protecting the rhinos. In addition to the vast size and remoteness of the rhino range area, rhino rangers and trackers are faced with several other challenges in the field, including tackling dangerous terrain, dealing with a harsh climate and being continually threatened by poachers.

More recently, the biggest challenge to the success of black rhino conservation and protection is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Organizations such as **SRT** and **IRDNC**, which provide critical field-based support to rhino rangers and trackers, have had their budgets slashed as international donors have had to pass along cuts to their own budgets due to the pandemic. The pandemic has also generated significant job losses in urban areas

and created an influx of people migrating back to their extended families in rural areas, putting increased pressure on natural resources and ultimately resulting in an increase in poaching. Furthermore, a number of areas within the rhino range have been left exposed by the lack of tourists because of the pandemic, which now require extra patrolling efforts by SRT, IRDNC and Rhino Rangers. In turn, this leads to a need for increased resources at a time when conservation funding is being cut. Rhino tracking has been central to tourism development in the region and has provided local jobs and a source of income for local communities. However, the knock-on effect of the pandemic in terms of job security and the protection of the black rhinos is potentially devastating for a region that has worked so hard to develop a rhino-based economy.

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Through its groundbreaking donation of 1,000 ounces of gold (valued at approximately US\$1.9 million (as at July 28, 2020)) from its Otjikoto Mine in northcentral Namibia, B2Gold has produced 1,000 limited edition Namibian Rhino Gold Bars in various sizes. To celebrate the launch of the campaign in North America, 400 one-ounce gold bars will go on sale on Kitco Metals' ("Kitco") retail website on July 31. Kitco, one of the world's premier retailers of precious metals, has generously agreed to process these transactions (on behalf of B2Gold) at cost to further benefit black rhino conservation and protection efforts in Namibia and local communities whose livelihoods depend on the survival of the species. Each one-ounce bar is available for purchase at the spot price of gold plus a 15% conservation premium.

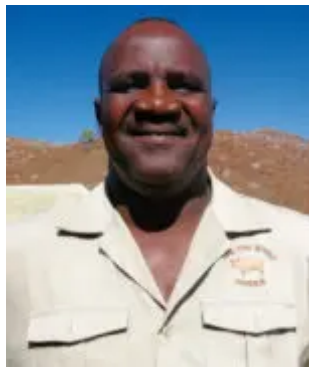


*Clive Johnson, President
and CEO of B2Gold Corp.*

The 15% premium is a way to extend the positive impact of each gold bar sold in support of rangers, trackers, and black rhino conservation and protection. It will be used to fund the future production of more gold bars, or gold medallions, the second limited edition of which will be distinctly different from the first mintage, ensuring that this initiative remains self-sustaining. "Poaching and the illegal trafficking of animals and their parts is a scourge that takes place around the world and must be stopped," said B2Gold's President & CEO, Clive Johnson. "In Namibia, where we work closely with our employees, local suppliers, business partners, the government and non-governmental organizations in so many ways, our collaborative vision for the Rhino Gold Bar was to put a new and innovative funding mechanism for conservation in place that we could all be proud of," Johnson said. "Every gold bar purchased helps to combat poaching – by supporting rhino rangers and trackers, which in turn, supports their families and empowers communities to help save a species on the verge of extinction. This is an example of using one precious resource, gold mined in Namibia, to protect another – the world's critically endangered black rhino population – now and for generations to come."

The gold bars feature symbols of hope for the future of the black rhinos. With a striking image of a rhino mother and calf on the back, and an iconic image of Namibia, the Namib Desert, on the front, the gold bars are presented in a box made of sustainably harvested material. Purchasers of the gold bars will receive ongoing information and updates from the Rhino Gold Bar Advisory Committee ("the Committee") as to how their investment is helping to redefine conservation financing and how funds are being used to save the black rhinos from extinction.

Proceeds from the sale of the first 600 gold bars to Namibian and African purchasers have been managed and distributed by the Committee, which includes representatives from B2Gold, SRT, IRDNC, the Namibia Chamber of Environment, and the Namibia Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism. Funds have been allocated to help counteract the impact of the pandemic by providing salaries to keep rhino rangers and trackers in the field for the next 12 months; maintaining adequate patrol levels to diminish the threat of poaching and sustain population growth; raising awareness about the importance of black rhino conservation to reinforce community support; and upgrading communication systems to ensure the rapid response of rhino rangers and trackers during a crisis situation.



*Simson Uri-Khob, CEO of
Save the Rhino Trust
Namibia*

Proceeds from the sale of the 400 gold bars in North America will continue to be managed and distributed by the Committee. Significant funding will continue to provide long-term sustainable financing for black rhino conservation and protection, ensuring that community-driven efforts by the rural communities, for whom the protection of rhinos is their birthright, continues, as well as securing the future for a rhino-based economy.

Recognizing the importance of this groundbreaking creative conservation and philanthropic initiative, Simson Uri-Khob, SRT's CEO, said: "The timing of the Rhino Gold Bar campaign in North America could not be better as Covid-19 has impacted conservation funding and plunged the world's remaining wild rhinos into serious risk. As we mark World Ranger Day, we aspire for the healing of our people and our planet. B2Gold's support for

sustainable, community-backed rhino conservation and protection allows us to not only dream of a better world, but to plan for it.”

B2Gold’s Vision and Values

B2Gold is a responsible mining company that demonstrates leadership by going beyond industry standards and continuing to raise the bar on its own performance. The Company’s principles of fairness, respect, transparency and accountability are part of its corporate culture and are applied globally across its corporate social responsibility projects. Not only is B2Gold committed to minimizing its impact on the land in countries in which the Company operates, it also invests in projects that have nothing to do with mining and everything to do with the protection of the planet and the quality of life for future generations.

About B2Gold Corp.

B2Gold is a low-cost international senior gold producer headquartered in Vancouver, Canada. Founded in 2007, today, B2Gold has operating gold mines in Mali, Namibia and the Philippines, and numerous exploration and development projects in various countries. In 2020, B2Gold forecasts consolidated gold production of between 1,000,000 and 1,055,000 ounces.

ON BEHALF OF B2GOLD CORP.

“Clive T. Johnson”

President & Chief Executive Officer

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