

Gift Ideas

Diamond Dreams: Africa's Rarest Treasure

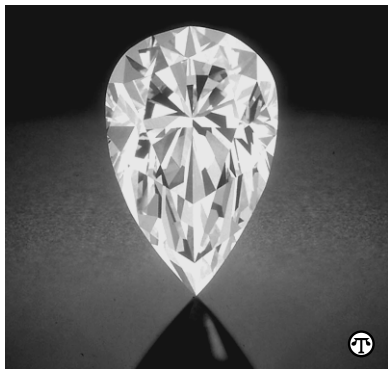
(NAPSA)—A beautiful diamond engagement ring or a journey diamond necklace can be an exhilarating gift to receive, but what many people don't realize is that every diamond purchased helps millions of people around the world.

In Africa, where 65 percent of the world's diamonds are produced, the trade contributes more than \$8.4 billion a year to various economies while simultaneously helping fund educational initiatives, health care programs and the building of roadways. In fact, diamonds are considered the backbone of the Namibian, Botswanan and South African economies.

As President Festus Mogae of Botswana said, "For our people, every diamond purchase represents food on the table; better living conditions, better health care, safe drinking water, more roads to connect our remote communities and much more."

Revenues from diamonds help fund the construction of hospitals, medical centers and hospices, ensuring that more than 5 million people have access to appropriate health care. Diamond revenue is also being used to help combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In Botswana, where the disease has ravaged the population, officials have witnessed a decline, which may be in part due to dia-



In some African countries, diamond sales are the backbone of the economy.

mond-funded programs. For example, Debswana, the diamond mining company in Botswana, was the first mining company in the world to offer free anti-retroviral treatment to HIV-positive employees and their spouses.

In addition to the great contribution to their economies and their health care systems, many African nations use the revenue from the sale of their diamonds to create roads. For example, before diamonds were discovered in Botswana, there were only three miles of paved roads, now there are more than 4,000 miles.

To learn more about how your diamond purchases can benefit people in southern Africa, visit www.diamondfacts.org.