

September 8, 2014

Vietnamese delegation arrives in South Africa on mission to help protect rhinos

Johannesburg, South Africa, September 8, 2014 – Today, a famous singer, a well-known journalist, a customs official, and two conservationists arrived in South Africa having completed the long journey from Vietnam. Their mission is to witness first-hand the crisis facing South Africa's rhinos as a result of the widespread killing of the endangered animals for their horns, mainly to meet consumer demand from Vietnam and other Asian countries.



Photo: Vietnam delegation

(left to right) Do Doan Hoang (Lao Dong newspaper), singer Le Hong Nhung, Nguyen Minh Dung (Vietnam cable TV system), Vu Thi Quyen (ENV), Nguyen Hung Anh (Vietnam Customs)

The belief in the ability of rhino horn to act as a magical cure for cancer and other health problems, as well as its value as a status symbol, is driving the demand for rhino horn and the poaching of rhinos in South Africa. The death of rhinos continues to increase drastically each year; in 2007, only 13 rhinos were killed, but in 2013 this number soared to 1,004 (an increase of nearly 8,000%). During the first eight months of 2014, 695 rhinos have been slaughtered. If the killing of rhinos is not urgently stopped, rhino populations all over the world will be pushed to extinction within the next couple of years, following in the path of Vietnam's own rhinos, lost forever in 2010.

ENV and the Rhinose Foundation have organized this fact-finding mission to foster links between South Africa and Vietnam, and to bring the issue directly to the Vietnamese people by way of well-respected public figures. The delegation includes:

- Mr. Nguyen Hung Anh – Vice Chief of the Anti-Smuggling and Investigation Department, Vietnam Customs
- Ms. Le Hong Nhung – one of the four Divas of Vietnamese music
- Mr. Do Doan Hoang – Journalist, Lao Dong newspaper
- Mr. Nguyen Minh Dung – Deputy Manager of Digital Content Research and Development department, Vietnam Cable TV system
- Ms. Vu Thi Quyen – Executive Director, ENV

During the trip, the delegates will visit Kruger National Park, which has lost at least 418 rhinos so far this year, and will meet with rhino park authorities, rangers, and conservation groups to gain better insight on the difficulties they face in their efforts to protect rhinos on the ground. As guests of Kruger National Park, the delegation will also be taken by helicopter on a patrol deep into the African bush, where they might encounter poachers or come upon the grisly scene of a recently killed rhino. They will also hopefully see some live rhinos during a bush walk in an area of Kruger National Park that is frequented by rhinos, as well as lions and other spectacular wildlife of the park.

This is the second year the Rhinose Foundation and ENV has organized such a trip, and last year's mission was the subject of almost 200 features in Vietnamese newspapers, on TV shows and on national radio. This year the aim is to generate even more media interest, in order to transmit the cruel and shocking facts of the situation to the Vietnamese public and spur them to take action to protect the world's rhinos.

Here are ways that you can follow the delegation as they travel in South Africa and share their experience day by day:

- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/EducationforNatureVietnam
- Follow us on Twitter: @edu4naturevn

ENV wish to thank the Rhinose Foundation and the Humane Society International-Australia for sponsoring this important trip.

Should you need any further information, please contact us:

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