

First 'Made in Botswana' diamonds reach America

MONKAGEDI GAOTLHOBOGWE

Staff Writer

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The Coordinator of Botswana Diamond Hub, Dr Akolang Tombale, says the organisation is watching feedback from diamonds consumers with keen interest after the first-ever 'Made in Botswana' diamonds began selling in the US over the weekend.

In a bid to take beneficiation to another level, the Diamond Hub has twinned with two diamond manufacturing companies, Motiganz and Star Diamonds, a relationship that sees Botswana become both the source and manufacturer of diamonds.

Tombale says Star Diamonds have teamed up with a partner to polish diamonds locally and embark on jewellery manufacturing for export, although Tombale prefers to describe the initiative as more of a trial because nothing like this has ever been done in Africa.

The 'Made in Botswana' diamonds were launched in style in America where the Motiganz Diamond Group announced it had begun selling diamonds sourced, cut and polished in Botswana to US retailers.

In an interview with Mmegi, Tombale said the Diamond Hub is working with Motiganz to cut and polish diamonds from Jwaneng, resulting in what is called cubes.

"The Jwaneng diamonds are high in quality," Tombale says.

"We want to see them become the Botswana brand, if the process can be pushed to the next level. I was with people who were here in partnership with Motiganz, and they were satisfied with the quality of the Botswana brand.

"We are also watching with a keen eye to see if more, like manufacturing jewellery from here, can be done. That will depend on discussions we are having with Motiganz."

Designed to bring new jobs and momentum to Botswana's economy, the 'Made in Botswana' programme is funded and operated by Motiganz and is fully compliant with the Kimberley Process, a certification system designed to stem the flow of conflict diamonds worldwide.

Says Motiganz CEO, Moti Ganz: "Our effort to give back to the people of Botswana is a personal mission for us...Botswana is a great country and we're honoured to be getting even more involved in the country."

Day's Jewelers, a jewellery chain with locations in Maine and New Hampshire, is one of the first retailers to distribute the diamonds. Day's organised a gala event to fete the historic 'Made in Botswana' programme for its new, 10,000-square-foot store in Portland, Maine, over the weekend.

To ensure consumers that the diamonds are actually from Botswana, Motiganz is also using the Gem Certification and Assurance Lab Gemprint technology, a process for finding a diamond's unique optical fingerprint.

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