Rwanda’s annual Kwita Izina Gorilla Naming Ceremony returns this Friday, 2 September 2022 with global leaders, philanthropists, conservation champions as well as sports, music and fashion stars among the distinguished guests given the honour of naming a baby mountain gorilla. His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales will name a baby mountain gorilla virtually.

This year marks the 18th edition of the international conservation event, and is the first time the ceremony has taken place in person since 2019 following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Held in Kinigi at the foothills of Volcanoes National Park, the Namers will join communities living around Volcanoes National Park, the home of the endangered mountain gorillas, as well as rangers, trackers, researchers and friends from around the world in the ultimate celebration of nature and conservation.

The event will feature a naming ceremony of 20 baby mountain gorillas born in the park over the last 12 months and one newly formed family group. Since the naming ceremony began in 2005, 354 baby gorillas have been given names. Today, Rwanda is home to one third of the world’s remaining mountain gorillas and the population is steadily increasing.

The 20 baby gorillas to be named are members of the Noheli, Musilikali, Ntambara, Mutobo, Igisha, Susa, Kureba, Pablo, Sabyinyo, Muhoza, Amahoro, and Hirwa families.

The 2022 Kwita Izina Baby Gorilla Namers are:

- HRH The Prince of Wales (virtually)
- Uzo Aduba – Actor
- Dr Evan Antin – Veterinarian and Television Presenter
- Neri Bukspan – Managing Director, Standard & Poor’s Credit Market Service
- Dr Cindy Descalzi Pereira – Philanthropist and Entrepreneur
- Didier Drogba – Football Legend
- Itzhak Fisher – Chairman, Rwanda Development Board
- Laurene Powell Jobs- Founder and President, Emerson Collective
- Dr Frank I. Luntz – Founder and President, Luntz Global
- Stewart Maginnis – Deputy Director General, International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- Thomas Milz – Board Director, Sales and Marketing, Volkswagen Group South

Africa & Sub-Saharan Africa
- Salima Mukansanga – International Football Referee
- Louise Mushikiwabo – Secretary-General of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
- Youssou N'Dour – Musician
- Naomi Schiff – Professional Racing Driver and Presenter
- Kaddu Sebunya – CEO, African Wildlife Foundation
- Gilberto Silva – Arsenal Football Club Legend
- Sauti Sol – Musical Band
- Juan Pablo Sorin – Paris Saint-Germain Legend
- Moses Turahirwa – Creative Director, Moshions
- Sir Ian Clark Wood, KT, GBE – Chairman, The Wood Foundation

Clare Akamanzi, Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Development Board, says this year's Kwita Izina will be a celebration of conservation and the return of tourism.

"We're delighted to be back in Kinigi in Rwanda's Northern Province, near the habitat of these majestic creatures for Kwita Izina, two years since our last in-person ceremony. Initiatives such as the Kwita Izina gorilla naming ceremony play a major role in conserving gorillas. Thanks to Rwanda's conservation efforts, we have improved the gorilla trekking experience for our visitors and increased the support to local communities through our Tourism Revenue Sharing programme."

"We are also happy to celebrate the safe return of tourism to Rwanda, after managing the Covid-19 pandemic well. We look forward to continuing to protect our natural heritage, providing world class experiences that highlight the diverse natural beauty of Rwanda, while also ensuring that Rwandans benefit from tourism and conservation."