

Federation of Namibian Tourism Associations

welcome@fenata.org

18 January 2022

Honorable Minister Pohamba Shifeta,

Government Representatives,

Tourism industry employees and employers,

Invited guests and media,

Fellow Namibians,

All protocols observed,

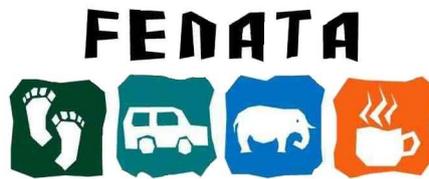
Greetings, Compliments of the New Year!

As defined by the UNWTO,

'Tourism is a **social, cultural and economic phenomenon** which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business and/or professional purposes.' A tourist is defined as any person that spends revenue earned and travels outside their country of residence. In addition, as we are all aware, tourism sector has the longest value-addition chains in any sector and plays an integral role in employment creation and retention. From the petrol attendant at your gas station, to the waitress at your favourite get-away in the Namib Desert, to the Guide that unpacked the mystical Namib night sky to you in lay-mans terms, - these are some of the livelihoods that encompass the tourism economy.

In 2021, amid dynamic global travel restrictions that impeded the traditional flow of travellers into Namibia, - it was encouraging to lobby and witness an increased effort to woo domestic tourists by our local Tour Operators, Activity Operators and accommodation service providers, just to name a few. The innovative solutions have been inspiring! A lot of effort was expended by service providers into ensuring Namibian and African citizens (including domiciled non-African citizens) could afford to visit this beautiful land. The top ten arrival tourist markets (in order of highest recorded arrivals) in 2021 where South Africa, Zimbabwe, Germany, Zambia, Botswana, France, UK, Switzerland, Russia; compared to Angola, South Africa, Germany, Zimbabwe, Botswana. France, UK, USA, China in 2019 (according to MEFT TRI Statistical Report 2021 & MEFT Tourist Statistical Report 2019).

Most importantly, this flexibility in pricing structure allowed for a constant revenue flow, albeit not at those comfortable profit margins pre-Covid, but nevertheless OK



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enough to keep some livelihoods afloat. Unfortunately, some were forced into liquidation. Point is, thanks to the patronage of local/regional travellers (incl. international tourists that were not impeded by the dynamic travel mandates and restrictions), some jobs were retained and some businesses just barely made it. In addition, the timing of the launch of the National Strategy on Sustainable Heritage Tourism Development & Employment Creation by MEFT last November couldn't have come at a better time, particularly where we have reached incomprehensible poverty milestones of 1,6 million citizens, in a country with a population of barely 3 million.

Namibia is buzzing globally. We have positive narratives to tap into for our potential destination marketing efforts – our sports superstars Ms Mboma & Ms Masilingi keep doing the nation proud! Namibian films clinching nominations and awards at prestigious international award ceremonies, renewable energy, talented visionary artists such as Hage Nasheetwala creating live art in spaces hosted by the WHO SG, just to name but a few. Cross sectoral collaboration is key.

MEFT has indicated three main factors as responsible for the successful recovery of the tourism economy (a higher jabbed population %, robust public health measures and sectoral health protocols). I will not discourage you from taking the vaccine - I encourage each and every one of us to be tolerant of each others' diversity and choices, and to remain cognisant of the tenets of the UN Charter for Human Rights and the Namibian Constitution, as we go about the business of building resilience and recovery for the tourism economy.

I Thank You.

Ms Netumbo V. Nashandi
Chairperson
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