

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM



STATEMENT

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MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF
ANNUAL TOURIST STATISTICAL REPORT 2022**

9 August 2023

Windhoek, Namibia

Director of Ceremonies,
Hon. Heather Sibungo, Deputy Minister, MEFT
Executive Director and Senior Officials of the Ministry,
Stakeholders & Partner institutions representative
Tourism private sector representatives from,
Members of the media,
Invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all!

We are gathered here today to witness the launch of the Annual Tourist Statistical Report for 2022. As we are all aware, among its many functions it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism to produce relevant and reliable tourism statistics for use by the sector. The report highlights and summarizes tourist arrivals in the country and also includes variables such as age group, gender, point of entry, purpose of visit, country of origin and to some extent the sector's performance as an economic driver. These statistics are crucial in the planning and enhancement of the tourism sector as well as the evaluation of the effect and impact of our collective interventions and programs to grow the sector.

Director of ceremonies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Namibia was among one of the first countries in SADC to open borders after Covid-19 pandemic and I'm proud to report that both Government and private sector efforts are gradually bearing positive results towards regaining our international tourist figures' of 2018. The key indicators of this Annual Tourist Statistical Report proved 2022 to be a remarkable period post-covid for our tourism sector, with record-breaking numbers and notable growth in tourist arrivals to the country.

I am delighted to report a record of 98.1% increase in international / inbound tourist arrivals from 232,756 (2021) to 461,027 in 2022. This figure indicates a 28.9% recovery level from the annual tourist

arrival of 2019. Many factors contributed to the positive growth trend, these amongst others is the overall confidence of tourists in “**Destination Namibia**”, ease of access to the country, reformed VISA regime, availability of more airline seat to Namibia, aggressive marketing and promotional campaigns, presence and participation at international platforms, hosting of business meetings, events, the increase in the country’s brand awareness globally, quality of experience and offering, etc.

In summary, South Africa, Angola, Germany, Zambia, Botswana, France, UK, United States, Italy and Switzerland makes up the top ten tourist source markets for Namibia in 2022. The majority of visitors, representing 53.1% of the total tourist arrivals came to Namibia between September to December of 2022, 36.1% of the tourist travelled between May to August and 10.8% travelled between the months of January to April. This revelation shows a shift in the travel pattern of visitors to Namibia. The annual average of stay of a tourist in Namibia is 16 nights. It is essential to recognize that our success should not only be measured by visitor numbers only but equally by our collective commitment to sustainable tourism development practices to reduce negative environmental impacts, provision of high standards of service delivery, assurance of safety and security of visitors, enhanced visitors’ experience and value for money.

**Director of ceremonies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

As we celebrate the progress and achievements of the past year, we must also be vigilant about the challenges. The Ministry urges the tourism sector to foster sustainable and smart partnerships with local communities and other strategic partners and stakeholders to ensure that tourism brings about an inclusive, broad-based and long-lasting socio-economic benefits to the citizens of this country (social & economic upliftment, employment creation and business opportunities).

The Ministry equally urges destination managers, tour operators and all relevant stakeholders to develop new products/services, experiences/packages, new routes, and new attractions to enhance guest experience, but equally to make the “**Destination Namibia**” appeals more to repeating visitors.

Namibia’s tourism sector stands a chance to equally benefit from opportunities by the domestic and inter- regional markets. It is therefore imperative to increase the country’s marketing effort aimed to increase the demand for travelling by locals and regional markets in order to achieve a robust,

sustainable tourism sector recovery. The Ministry is implementing the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan that sets out a framework for policy intervention and strategic programs to support each stage of the recovery phase.

In addition, the Ministry in collaboration with NSA and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has made good progress in the compilation and finalization of the 6th edition of the Namibia's Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) using the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) modality. The TSA will reveal the tourism sector's contribution to our country's GDP post Covid-19 as well as the economic leakages in the sector. This report will be launched towards the end of this year.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to key stakeholders, NTB, Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration and Safety & Security, NIPDB and the tourism industry at large who contributed to the success of our tourism sector in 2022. Your passion for Namibia, dedication, hard work and determination have paved the way for the phenomenal growth we are witnessing today.

I trust that this Annual Tourist Statistical Report 2022 will be a source of inspiration for us to continue our journey towards excellence, product innovation, sustainability, and inclusive growth in the tourism sector.

Finally, it is now my honor to launch the Annual Tourist Statistical Report of 2022.

I thank you.