



NAMIBIA
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Namibia Travel & Tourism Forum Statement on the Tourism Sector Drive for Covid-19 Vaccination In Namibia

Windhoek— 18 Jan 2022 — Today, The Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism held a press conference on the discussions around the Namibian tourism sector driving the Covid-19 vaccination efforts. The event was attended by the Minister of MEFT, Executive Directors of Ministry of Health & Social Services, Ministry of Information & Communication Technology and Ministry Of Immigration, Home Affairs And Security. The Director Of Tourism Of MEFT, CEO of Namibia Tourism Board, MD of Namibia Wildlife Resorts, and a few tourism entities like Namibia Travel & Tourism Forum, Federation Of Namibian Tourism Associations & its affiliates.

The discussions were centered around the impact of vaccination, or the lack thereof, in the tourism industry. The industry was on an upwards curve in 2021 until the Omicron variant was announced, which collapsed the industry again and forced a rethink of the strategy going forward. As European countries have been focused on vaccination, the travel industry in Africa has had to adapt to their needs of companies and tour guides having to be vaccinated.

The big point of contention currently among the industry, and in Namibia in general, is the vaccination itself. While FENATA did not issue a statement at the conference, TASA (Tour And Safari Association) spoke about how important it is to open up the tourism industry to start accepting vaccinated tourists without a PCR test, which the industry at large feels that might put the country at risk again if there are no testing protocols in place. TASA also discussed mandatory vaccination for people gathering at public

places. HAN (Hospitality Association Of Namibia) also took a similar stance on the issue and emphasized the need for vaccinated tourism.

Emerging Tourism Enterprises Association, ETEA, spoke about the need of having a more balanced approach. NTTF also takes the stance that we need a wider discussion and a more open approach around vaccinations in tourism, because Namibia, along with the majority of African countries, has been subject to extreme bias when it comes to supply of vaccinations and the hesitancy around administering them. If Namibia was to enforce mandatory vaccination for tourism, it would be at the expense to the sub-continental tourists and business travelers. ETEA also raised a point where there have been reports of tour guides and tourism employees being discriminated against because of their vaccination status, employees have been let go because of their vaccination status.

NTTF feels that currently we do not have enough information at hand within the industry and that more local surveys need to be conducted to get a bigger pool of information to be able to make a well informed decision. HAN said that within the industry between 30-60% of the personnel are vaccinated, however this figure is purely assumption and there was no survey conducted, especially because HANs membership consists of less than 10% of the accommodations, which does not represent the entire sector.

NTTF is against any efforts of mandatory vaccination or initiatives, which only benefit a few big companies, while leaving the rest of the industry and thousands of Namibians without an income or a business. We highly recommend that industry wide discussions are held with private companies, even the ones who are not affiliated with associations, to then find strategies that benefit everyone.

For more information, press only:

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