

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**STATEMENT BY DR. KALUMBI SHANGULA, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES, ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION TRUSTED TRAVEL SYSTEM**

**8 NOVEMBER 2021**

**WINDHOEK**

*\*Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies, Mr Ben Nangombe, Executive Director, MoHSS  
Your Worship, the Mayor of the City of Windhoek, Dr. Job Amupanda  
Ambassador Penda Naanda, Executive Director, MIRCO  
Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC  
Esteemed Representatives of United Nations Agencies  
Distinguished Members of Diplomatic Corps  
Senior Government Officials  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I take great pleasure in welcoming you to the launch of the African Union and Africa Centers for Disease Control Trusted Travel System for the verification of COVID-19 test results and vaccination certificates. I thank you for your valuable presence.
2. The world is facing a protracted COVID-19 pandemic. As at yesterday the 7 November 2021, Namibia has recorded a total number of 129 014 COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic of which 177 are currently active. There has been a total of 3 563 deaths.
3. Namibia, like most countries, has put in place measures to combat the spread and impact of the COVID-19. One of the measures include efforts to minimize the importation of infections from other jurisdictions, by regulating the movement of people. In this context, international travellers are required to produce evidence of a negative COVID-19 test at Points of Entry. However, as the risk grows, so does the critical need to strengthen the system and to harmonize cross-border COVID-19 travel requirements. This is not enough. Strengthening systems must be supported by technologies to assure the integrity of COVID-19 test results presented at Ports of Entry.
4. Countries around the world, including Namibia, have experienced incidences of falsified and counterfeit PCR test results being presented at the various Points of Entry. It is these incidences of counterfeit results that necessitated the innovations to bring on board technologies to make this system a reality without delay. One such technologies is the Trusted Traveler System, introduced under the auspices of the African Union and PanaBios consortium. This is the system which we are gathered here, physically and virtually, to launch in Namibia today. Similar such systems have been developed around the world.
5. Here in Namibia, the Ministry of Health and Social Services began its first consultations on the Trusted Traveler System on 2 June 2021, with technical experts from the African Union and PanaBIOS consortium. This engagement was started following a communication from the African Union requesting Member States to adopt and

operationalize the system. The Trusted Traveler System offers an online digital platform for the verification and authentication of COVID-19 test results from a network of participating COVID-19 testing laboratories, Port Health Authorities and transport industries.

6. It is recognized that paper-based systems for the verification of COVID-19 results have proven to be cumbersome and slow. This results in long queues and delays for travellers at Points of Entry and Exit causing disruptions to travel plans, supply chains and logistic arrangements. The delays associated with paper-based manual systems have various knock-on effects that compromise and undermine economic performance and trade, which is so dearly needed, taking into account the negative impact of the pandemic on different facets of life, especially here on our continent. In addition, paper-based verification processes have proven to be ineffective in ascertaining and determining the legitimacy and authenticity of test result certificates, hence the need for a system that ensures robustness, speedy execution and improved analytics across the verification continuum. In this manner, at the Points of Entry and Exit, during the journey, and aboard the vessels, it is possible to protect public health security of countries and the world at large.
7. The Trusted Traveler System we are launching here today, allows for the detection of counterfeit test results and also enhances cross-border collaboration and confidence in COVID-19 results originating from participating jurisdictions. The platform further provides updated information on entry requirements and travel restrictions for participating states. With greater interoperability amongst systems, travelers are able to plan, embark upon and undertake their journeys in a hassle-free manner. This is exactly what we desire.
8. The launch of the Trusted Traveler System in Namibia marks an important milestone in our COVID-19 preparedness and response. The Ministry of Health and Social Services, with the support and technical assistance from our partners such as the African Union, Africa CDC and the PanaBIOS consortium have successfully put all systems in place for the system to go live in Namibia. The public, Diplomatic Missions, line Ministries, the tourism industry and other key stakeholders have been informed by way of a public notice. All diplomatic missions have supported Namibia's plan to roll-out the system.
9. All accredited laboratories in the country have been added to the system. They are now on board, and are in the process of generating codes for travellers which will be required for persons leaving Namibia. Our Points of Entry on the other hand, are also equipped with both trained staff, internet devices and tablets to implement the system. By 15 November 2021, all participating gazetted Points of Entry in the country will have the

system operational. In this regard, it is important to note that it will become mandatory to have all travellers PCR results entered on the system by 1 December 2021.

10. I express wholehearted gratitude to all COVID-19 response teams, individually and collectively, who have worked tirelessly and selflessly to fight this pandemic. Frontline workers are indeed our greatest asset. They have worked hard during the pandemic and especially during the three waves we have gone through to save lives at the expense of their own. We need to spare them further anguish, despondency and compassion fatigue by ensuring that we are all vaccinated against Covid-19.
11. Vaccines are one of the most effective medical tools ever created. Vaccines save more lives than any other medical or public health innovation. It is estimated that vaccines alone save between 2-3 million lives a year. They do this by using an active ingredient, to mimic a pathogen in order to trigger an immune response. All vaccines work by exposing the body to molecules from the target pathogen to trigger an immune response. Namibia can attest to the power of vaccines to eliminate disease outbreaks. More than a decade ago, polio mass vaccination delivered Namibia from poliomyelitis outbreak. We can achieve the same feat with mass vaccination against Covid-19 during our vaccination campaigns that we have embarked upon.
12. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the African Union, Africa CDC and the PanaBIOS consortium, for their continued support, which ensured that Namibia is ready to roll-out the Trusted Travel System. It is now my singular honor, to declare the Trusted Travel System for verification and authentication of COVID-19 test results officially launched in Namibia.

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