



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

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OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

PRESS RELEASE

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

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Namibia burned area report

Namibia has been experiencing severe fire incidents since the start of the fire season. The fire season occurs annually from April to December when the vegetation is dry. Since April 2022 to 15 September 2022 a total of 920 944 hectares (ha) has been burned; including forests, shrub/bush and grass land in various regions. In addition, two people sustained severe injuries as a result of fire incidences. Unfortunately, one person succumbed due to his injuries. A truly regrettable incident, the Ministry extends condolences to the bereaved family and wishes the family strength with the loss of their loved one.

Veld fires were recorded in nine (9) regions with areas burned recorded as follows: i) Kavango East over 475 000 ha; ii) Otjozodjupa more than 228 000 ha; iii) Zambezi 148 892 ha; iv) Hardap 19 937 ha; v) Erongo 14 114 ha; vi) Kavango West 10 968 ha; vii) Kunene 7 756 ha; viii) Khomas 7 106 ha and Oshikoto 6 581 ha.

At present the Ministry is aware of the fire burning outside the south-western boundary of the Etosha National Park. Resources have been dispatched to assist in fighting this fire. Various methods including back burning are being implemented to suppress the fire but also to prevent it from spreading to the national park. We are closely monitoring this situation and updates will be provided as available.

The Ministry's fire preparedness activities included measures to manage veld fires through prevention and suppression; community outreach programs, education and awareness; and stakeholder engagement meetings. Furthermore, we have also been engaged in developing and maintaining fire breaks. To this effect, the government has cleared 328 km of fire breaks across the country to date.

Other interventions included farmer's training on fire management, charcoal production guidelines issued, early burning in national parks country wide to reduce the fuel load before the hot fire season, early burning in community forests and training of community members, servicing of available firefighting vehicles and equipment as well as procurement and distribution of firefighting equipment to the regions through the Directorate of Forestry.

Fire can be destructive if not used responsibly as it destroys and causes damage to our properties and infrastructure, loss of wildlife and livestock, severe environmental damage as well as loss of lives. Thus we call upon landowners and the public in general to assist in preventing unwanted veld fires as well as to participate in firefighting.

Considering the fact that fire still occurs at an unacceptable frequency and rate, The Ministry reiterates our call on the public to report any fires to the Ministry as soon as possible for swift response as well as to observe the following:

- Members of the public are required to use fire responsibly and are advised to clear areas around their property e.g. homesteads, campsites.
- Parents must not allow their children to use fires without supervision.
- People using fires for domestic purposes such as cooking, heating, camping, amongst other must ensure that fires are totally extinguished afterwards.
- Before starting a fire, check the surrounding to assess the risk (flammable materials, wind speed) of burning beyond the intended area.
- Put in place preventative measures to stop the fire from spreading to unintended places.
- Smokers should kill their cigarette stumps completely and not throw them away.
- When using fire to clear a specific area, ensure that relevant officials are informed, e.g. Nature Conservation, Forestry officials and NAMPOL.
- Charcoal producers are reminded to adhere to the charcoal production guidelines at all times.
- Let us continuously educate ourselves on the dangers caused by forest/bush/grass fires.
- Report veld fires to the nearest forestry office.
- Let us all assist in extinguishing fires occurring in our surroundings.

I thank you

Romeo Muyunda
Chief Public Relations Officer

