

# NTB Newsletter

July / August 2020

1st Edition



**Namibia Tourism Board**

# A message from our CEO



We are facing an unprecedented global health crisis that will shape in future how travel and tourism will be conducted and the economic dynamics that will be derived as an output. On the scale of things, it is a human, economic and social crisis. The COVID-19, is attacking societies at their core and has shaken us out of our comfort zones.

Travel and Tourism is one of the most directly affected industries in this current crisis and this calls for immediate and long term response. This is particularly true for Namibia. At the advent of Namibia's decision to close the borders, NTB, with collective industry input via the umbrella body, being Fenata, has been engaged to ponder modalities during the meetings chaired by Hon Shifeta himself already in March. This dialogue and interaction continued since then. Through this pursuit, it was blissful when the President, His Excellency Dr Geingob, announced gradual re opening of the borders to revive the tourism industry as of 15th July 2020. Further consultations were since then held collectively with the Government assigned Technical Team to frame the principles that will govern the gradual revival of the tourism industry. We continued to portray united front and inclusivity by roping in Namibia Airports Company, Namibia Civil Aviation Authority, Air Namibia, ETEA, HAN, NAPHA and CARAN etc., as tourism revival requires inputs and ideas and preparedness of all stakeholders in this value chain. Surely, the grounded silver line is to balance the health of the citizens and economic revival, whilst mitigating the continued surge of COVID-19 infections--- this has proven to be a challenge, which has delayed the formal announcement on the re-opening of borders. But the thankful outcome is that all parties in these negotiations are now poised with the appreciation as to how this industry and health issues are intertwined, which we certainly hope that very soon government will pronounce itself to set out the overarching framework. It is also further envisaged that a technical task team shall be appointed, who shall then be mandated to work out the finer details to bring the principle framework, as shall be announced by the government, to life. At this juncture, it is premature to provide any details around the discussion as the Cabinet must still deliberate and take a decision. This is simply to avert confusion and uncalled for expectations in the marketplace. The proposal on the table, however, does not restrict arrival of tourists from a specific source market/country. It shall be broader in line with the infection rate in that given country, which will be reviewed by the Government constantly. Therefore, the decision to allow entry of residents of such identified countries into Namibian shall then depend on how the COVID-19 impact evolves in that given countries. At this point, we do not have the full list and it shall form part of the formal announcement by the Government.

But we should remain cognizant of the fact that with international aviation, at a virtual standstill since March 2020, the closure of the tourism sites and attractions, the cancellation or postponement of major festivals and events, and restrictions on public gatherings (indoor and outdoor) in many countries, the Namibian tourism recovery shall not happen overnight as much as the borders will be opened. Especially, airlines must make a commercial decision as to the viability to undertake flights to Namibia as we have seen in the case of Tanzania and Kenya, who opened they borders, but this has not still yielded significant result, except providing confidence is planning.

As I sign off, let us be reminded that we have to change the way we are thinking in reviving this industry very fast, decisively, and together. The right, urgent, measures, could make the difference between survival and collapse. The choices we make today will directly affect the way this crisis shapes tourism tomorrow.

COVID-19 is a greatest test for travel and tourism industry, if one fail than we all fail. The reality is that global travel and tourism will be hard hit throughout 2020 and beyond, even if the spread of the virus is brought under control in the coming months. Therefore, my fellow colleagues within travel and tourism industry this is the time we stand together and become better than the crisis.



# Welcome New NTB Board Members



*Pictured from left: Ms. Janette Fourie, Ms. Madeleine /Goagoses, Hon Minister Pohamba Shifeta, Ms. Isolde Kollmitz, Mr. Terence Makari*

The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Hon. Pohamba Shifeta announced the appointment of the new NTB Board members on the 06th July 2020 for three years term from 1st July till end June 2023. We are pleased to welcome the dynamic team on board.

We bid farewell to the past Board and thank you for the exemplary work you have done.

The Board Induction and Handover session took place at Midgard Country Lodge on Friday, 17 July 2020. The purpose of the induction session was to ensure that the new Board members have a broad understanding of the role, culture and operations of the NTB and its relations to various stakeholders, as well as to gain expectations regarding compliance requirements by the Procurement Act, Public Enterprises Act and principles of sound corporate governance.

An effective induction for new Board members is crucial to ensure that the new board remains informed and are able to participate efficiently and effectively in the strategic journey of NTB. During this session, Executive Director of NIPAM, Ms. Maria Nangolo and Mr. Francois Brand, Director of Procurement Policy Unit, were invited to share their knowledge around the corporate governance perspectives and the Procurement Act.



*Pictured: Mr. Silas Kishi Shakumu*

## **New Board Members**

- Ms Madeleine /Goagoses: Board Chairperson
- Ms Janette Fourie: Board Member and Chairperson of the Marketing Advisory Committee
- Ms Isolde Kollmitz: Board Member and Chairperson of the Standards and Industry Human Resources Development Advisory Committee
- Mr Terence Makari: Vice Board Chairperson and Chairperson of the Audit Committee
- Mr Silas Kishi Shakumu: Board Member and Chairperson of the HR and Remuneration Committee

# COVID-19 GUIDELINES TOURISM SECTOR

Namibia Tourism Board recently spear headed the development of Guidelines and Protocols, commonly known as SOPs, for the tourism industry that will provide confidence in our source markets and Namibians to travel to, or within, Namibia and to allay any reasonable fears of both the guests as well as staff and management, who are operating in this industry as there is an effort to make concerted awareness and action towards a safe, secure and hygienic working space for the tourism industry. This was developed closely with the organised private sector, through FENATA, and follow to large extent the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, albeit with some customisation to the local environment. This is a living document which will keep being updated as the impacts and/or risks of COVID-19 become evident.

This document was also shared with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC) and United Nation's World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) for review and guidance. We have now received some inputs and we are in the process to update the SOPs Toolkit. The feedback we received is very resoundingly positive. UNWTO states: *"It is a good initiative that the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) has undertaken to harmonize the SOPs to be implemented. They have been prepared based on the WHO guidelines. However the UNWTO Global Guidelines to re-start tourism could be consulted and adapted to the needs of the tourism and travel sectors in Namibia. Priorities areas of tourism recovery, safe and seamless travel and the global guidelines are step-by-step actions that can guide the tourism and travel industries in the country."*

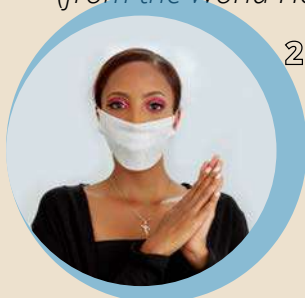
On the other hand, WTTTC responded and the their words: *'this is one of the best we've seen'*. They have made a few suggestions, nothing too material.

Equally, NTB Head office has put in place safety and health measures to contain the spread of the disease, while protecting workers, customers and society, at large. NTB has the responsibility of ensuring that all practicable preventive and protective measures are taken to minimize occupational risk. These include the provision of face masks and sanitizing facilities.

## Help Stop the Spread of COVID-19

### 4 Easy Steps You Can Do Daily

(from the World Health Organization)



#### 2 WEAR A MASK

A mask can act as a barrier to prevent the spread of the virus. Use the mask to cover your mouth, nose and chin. Avoid touching the mask while wearing it. Hand wash your mask daily using soad and clean (hot) water.

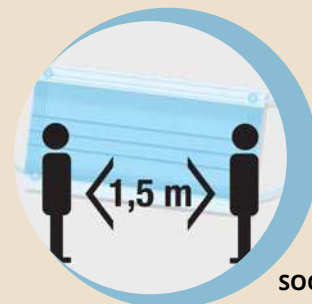
#### 1 WASH YOUR HANDS

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.



#### 3 FEELING SICK? STAY HOME

Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others.



#### 4 SOCIAL DISTANCE

Avoid going to crowded places and Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.

# CLOSURE OF NTB'S CAPE TOWN OFFICE

NTB primary objectives are, *inter alia*, to regulate the tourism industry and to market Namibia as a tourist destination. After its establishment in 2001, the NTB took over from then Ministry of Environment and Tourism foreign offices which were based in London, Frankfurt, Johannesburg and Cape Town in 2001. These offices were opened due to the historical links between Namibia and the host countries. The London and Johannesburg offices were, however, closed due to the high operational costs in 2004.

NTB survives predominantly on the subsidy it receives from the Government of the Republic of Namibia, via the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and tourism levies. Currently, the business model and dynamics of NTB do not support the continued existence of an office in Cape Town, because of numerous of reasons apart from dwindling government grants. This decline in government funding is not only limited to NTB. It is pervasive throughout the Namibian economy.

It was not an easy decision, but unfortunately there was no other appropriate measures to avoid the closing of the office in Cape Town, SA. The heartfelt gratitude goes out to the two employees, who were employed at the office for 8 and 20 years respectively and we value the immense contribution they have made to the face of NTB, its business and existence. We wish them much success in their future endeavours.



*Pictured from left: Ms Nash-Leigh Williams & Ms Vivian Goqoza*

## THROWBACK ON NTB BUILDING INAUGURATION

NTB Opens NEW Building in Style. The Namibia Tourism Board officially inaugurated their new building three years ago on the 7th July 2017. It was a festive affair, attended by VIPs including the Head of State, who officiated. During his speech, the Head of State, His Excellency Dr Hage Geingob, stressed the importance of good service delivery in the tourism sector. Speaking at the same event, the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Honorable Pohamba Shifeta, reflected on the sector's growth, and the Board Chairman, Mr. Paul Brinkmann highlighted the foresight of NTB to go green to save energy and contribute meaningfully to sustainably utilize natural resources so that our future generations can derive benefit as well. This was indeed a very historical and thrilled moment for the entire NTB staff and Management.



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