

Namibia Faces Serious Obstacles in Tourism



Tourism is without any doubt Namibia's biggest industry. In the run up to the 2010 World Cup, to be held in South Africa, developing and improving what Namibia can offer is particularly important. It is a vital period. This is why extra effort is being made to make Namibia more attractive to foreigners and locals. There are obstacles to be faced, mainly the extortionate prices and the fact that the old apartheid system is still visible in Namibia's tourism industry.

Established just over 9 years ago, the premier tourism show is designed to promote what Namibia has to offer potential tourists and to generally increase local awareness. This year will see 276 exhibitors take part and will host special events such as a chef's competition and a motor show. This event is seen as a key annual event in the development of Namibian tourism. Furthermore, the Namibians need to address their high prices. Out of surveyed tourists after their visit to Namibia, 60% stated that the prices were too high, whereas 71% claimed that the extortionate prices would prevent them from coming back.

What is very surprising about Namibia is that, unlike most other countries, most of its tourists come from abroad and only 31% of income from the tourism industry is generated by Namibians. The core of this problem is, of course, the high cost of taking a trip. A further factor is the fact that the old apartheid system still applies to the Namibian tourism industry. Many black Namibians feel that whites are treated more favourably by trip organisers. Nobody can deny that foreigners are treated better than locals. Namibia is faced with the threat of domestic tourism disappearing altogether. So far, only the wildlife resorts have responded to this threat by offering a 25% discount to locals.

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