

NAMIBIA: A NEW DESTINATION?



The Republic of Namibia is located in Southern Africa on the Atlantic coast and has a population of about 2 million. Local climate ranges from desert to subtropical, and is generally hot and dry. The capital of the country is Windhoek (German: Windhuk). Other important towns are Oshakati, Grootfontein, Tsumeb or Keetmanshoop and also the ports of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund. The country's economy is highly dependent on mining, which makes up some 20% of the GDP, and on the export of minerals. It is also the world's fifth largest producer of uranium. Other important exports are diamonds, lead, zinc, tin, silver, and tungsten. About 50% of Namibians depend on agriculture, but in spite of this, the country must import some of its food.

These days, however, tourism has become more and more important to the Namibian economy. There is even a prediction that says Namibia has the potential to become one of Africa's leading travel and tourism economies over the next decade. Tourism is of great importance to Namibians as it creates job opportunities and also stimulates economic growth. According to Director of Tourism in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Albert Mize, the tourism industry's need for transport, accommodation, catering, recreation and services for visitors encourages the government to develop the country's infrastructure. Mr.Mize says that "... certain decisions need to be taken, both to extend the basic infrastructure, such as airports, roads, communications, water and electricity supply, and also to ensure that infrastructure will be sufficient in the future to encourage potential investment and support the growth of travel and tourism."

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