

NAMIBIA TOURISM AUTHORITIES TO ENCOURAGE DOMESTIC TRAVELERS



Namibia tourism delights in the popularity the country receives from its visitors. Namibia's Hotel Association plans to further facilitate domestic and cultural tourism.

Namibia tourism authorities plan to make the country Africa's most competitive travel destination. This was declared by Sem Shikongo, director of the environmental and touristic ministry's tourism agency, at the annual general assembly of Namibia's Hotel Association (HAN) in Windhoek.

According to him, **the awareness of the cross-industry impact of tourism needs to be promoted.** Therefore, there will to be an inter-ministerial committee, which will deal with questions and measures related to Namibia tourism.

Mr. Shikongo also mentioned the promotion of domestic tourism as a necessity. „A sustainable and successful tourism in the long term cannot only build itself on international guests, but currently only very few Namibians travel around their own country,” the director explained.

The association's CEO Gitta Paetzold talked about the importance of cultural tourism: „With its varied ethnic groups, Namibia has something to offer that other African countries do not possess. We need to build upon that foundation.”

Paetzold also welcomed Shikongo's comments of the currently problematic visa situation. Since the beginning of the year, the respective authorities have frequently demanded costly business visa from incentive travelers from neighboring countries, while previously they had only tourist visa. **The new measure significantly decreased Namibia tourism in this area.** According to Shikongo, the ministry wants to get in touch with the respective authorities to tackle the issue.

Finally, Paetzold talked about the heavily debated topic of trophy hunting. „HAN will develop a common concept with all relevant parties to establish a position,” the CEO explained. According to her, the regulated hunting in Namibia cannot be compared to the cases like the death of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe.

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