

## OUR VERY FIRST EDITION!

### *IN THIS ISSUE*

We're on the move.....	1
The NACOBTA Tourism Business Programme.....	2
NAMIBIA, a Gem worth investing in!.....	3
World Travel Market.....	4
Renovated Khowarib Campsite.....	5
New Website.....	5
Meet the faces behind the wheel.....	6

The Namibia Community Based Tourism Assistance Trust (NACOBTA) 'is a non-profit membership organization which supports communities in their efforts to develop and operate tourism enterprises profitably as well as sustainably'. It is established under a Deed of Trust and has an independent Board of Trustees. So now this new NACOBTA Newsletter aims to keep all our members, our supporters, followers and every interested party worldwide abreast of important developments and strategies emanating from both the Trust's membership and this office.

It's planned to publish the Newsletter quarterly, electronically on our website; but the Namibia Economist, God bless their souls, have agreed to publish it in their newspaper, as a form of support – no cost to us! It's going to be compiled on this regular basis by Neil Digby-Clarke.

Don't forget, the news, views and information contained in this regular epistle is intended to both update and hopefully benefit not only our member establishments and services but also our generous sponsors, donor agencies and benefactors as well as visitors and tourists both local and overseas. **Just watch this space!**

## **We're on the move**

Movin' on, movin' up goes the Billy Joel song and that's just what we're doing. Our home of many years standing, namely No.3 Weber Street in Windhoek West, will become old hat with our move during w/c March 25<sup>th</sup> into new premises at 2878 Johan Albrecht Street in Windhoek North. Our existing telephone numbers +264 61 250558 and 221918 will be supplemented by an additional line +264 61 228783. The fax number +264 61 222647 remains the same as does our PO Box 86099 Windhoek.

You'll have already seen our completely revamped, updated and far more informative website at [www.nacobta.com.na](http://www.nacobta.com.na) whilst the default e-mail addresses remain [office@nacobta.com.na](mailto:office@nacobta.com.na)

The new offices will be officially inaugurated by the Hon Willem Konjore, the Minister of Environment and Tourism during a ceremony on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

But the Minister will be there to do more than just cut the ribbon, read on...

## **NACOBTA REPRESENTED AT THE WORLD TRAVEL MARKET (WTM) IN LONDON.**

Next, our busy Executive Director was off to London to visit, for the first time, one of the world's biggest and most renowned travel shows, the World Travel Market. WTM was held at the ExCel centre in the capital's prestigious Docklands area from November 12 -15 last year and became the best attended show ever. Olga was there to promote and create awareness of the full range of NACOBTA's products and membership, which has steadily burgeoned since the NGO's creation in 1995.

25 campsites, one community lodge, three guiding concerns, 3 information centres, 11 Namibian tour operator entities, cultural groups, traditional homesteads, 2 museums and several craft outlets can be numbered amongst the current and indeed diverse membership. Interest shown by both travel professionals and members of the public was high and the visit deemed a resounding success.

## **THE NACOBTA TOURISM BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

At the same function when our new offices are formally declared open, Minister Konjore will also deliver a keynote address launching the new Tourism Business Support Programme. NACOBTA believes the time is right, the direction meaningful and the infrastructure ready for such a stimulating development; below are the words of NACOBTA'S Executive Director, Olga Katjuongua:



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*Ms Olga Katjuongua,  
Executive Director*

'It is no longer a secret that tourism worldwide is booming. With the strengthening of the Euro, the Pound and the US Dollar against the Namibia Dollar / South African Rand, Namibia has obviously become one of the most affordable tourist destinations for these markets. One could anticipate an increase in visitor numbers during this and next year. Tourism operates on a knife's edge and it is therefore crucial to reap as much as one can, when it is the right time to do so, as in this industry it is difficult to predict what tomorrow will bring. *The outbreak of a contagious disease in Namibia like Marburg could crush the tourism industry in the blink of an eye.* This too, is the right time for tourism small and medium enterprises to address various issues that inhibit them from benefiting optimally from the already lucrative tourism industry, if they are to remain trusted and valuable players in the industry.

It is against the above background that NACOBTA has carefully studied all the challenges affecting the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and decided to design a structured approach of addressing such challenges in a manner that ensures both sustainability and profitability. Under this approach high potential enterprises will be adopted and their specific challenges identified, and a well experienced coach from within the industry (ideally a person who has managed a tourist facility before) will be attached to them and will spend at least 4 days a month with the enterprises to help address the issues as raised and transfer the necessary skills to the local people. This intervention will address general management aspects, service delivery, customer relations, access to markets, financial management, etc. and will have a clear entry and exit strategy. It will instil in enterprises the need to operate along sound business principles and to cover business related costs as a norm and by so doing, reduce dependence on donor funds.

The new approach has been named the "NACOBTA Tourism Business Support Programme (TBSP)" and is funded by the Embassy of Finland and the Namibian Ministry of Trade and Industry. The first intake will be limited to five enterprises and will be rolled out as soon as results of the first round become visible.'

The above certainly reflects the commendable spirit and enterprise with which NACOBTA and its donor / funding partners are prepared to develop this initiative. The TBSP launch and future development should ensure that Tourism SMEs enter the mainstream and compete with other enterprises on an equal footing. Once the five initial enterprises have been assisted and developed, it is hoped that further SMEs will be welcomed to take part in and benefit from the scheme, subject to available funding. It all looks very promising!

## **NAMIBIA, A GEM WORTH INVESTING IN!**

The Walvis Bay Spatial Development Initiative / Namibia International Investment Conference, jointly chaired by H.E. Hifikepunye Pohamba, the President of the Republic of Namibia and his counterpart H.E. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa took place at the Safari Conference Centre & the Windhoek Country Club and Resort over October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. The Walvis Bay Spatial Development Initiative (WBSDI) was initiated in 2000/2001 by the Governments of Namibia and South Africa as a bilateral initiative to be funded by the two countries.

The WBSDI has since been expanded to include the Trans-Caprivi Highway which proceeded from Walvis Bay to Katima Mulilo and the Trans Kunene which proceeds from Walvis Bay to Ruacana, with Walvis Bay as the nodal point. A significant policy decision was that taken by the Government of Namibia in early 2007 to hold an International Investment Conference for all of Namibia, not just limited to the geographic scope of the SDI, this meant intensive engagement with all 13 regions in the country to generate projects. The WBSDI/NIIC presents an ideal platform for both domestic and international investors, with the conference offering a chance to explore investment opportunities in key economic sectors with a focus, amongst others, on showcase investment projects in Tourism. In addition opportunities exist for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP's) in this and other sectors. Pre-conference publicity earmarked Tourism 'as a rapidly growing sector of the Namibian economy and a significant generator of employment. It is already the third-largest source of foreign exchange after mining and fisheries. Although the majority of Namibia's international visitors originate in the region, other international travellers are increasingly attracted by the country's unique mix of political stability, cultural diversity, and geographic beauty. Tourism in Namibia has had a positive impact on resource conservation and rural development.'

All in all, a perfect opportunity for our Executive Director, Olga Katjuongua, to make a presentation entitled: FINDING A FINE BALANCE BETWEEN PROFITABILITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE: "THE CHALLENGE OF FINANCING COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM PROJECTS (CBTEs)". The presentation encompassed details on all the burgeoning and exciting developments in the Namibian Tourism industry, many benefitting through NACOBTA's efforts. CBTE's here in Namibia earned just about a round zero from their efforts in 1994. By 1996 the figure was N\$ 568,850 whilst in 2006 that income had grown to a phenomenal N\$ 26,834,772. Full and part-time employment measured 5,772 jobs – nearly a third of all regulated tourism employment. Simply amazing, considering 8 years ago there were only 498 employed by CBTEs. NACOBTA has been largely responsible for uplifting the profile of CBTE and ensuring the private sector understands the marketplace. Government is at last supporting the sector as long as our valued donors and benefactors. There are huge challenges facing this marketplace, including the business understanding of those running CBTEs, the high turnover of staff and much isolation from the mainstream. But the portents are good and still hugely encouraging. Please do refer to our website to read this whole presentation in full. [www.nacobta.com.na](http://www.nacobta.com.na)

## **THE KHOWARIB CAMPSITE IS TOTALLY RENOVATED AND RE-LAUNCHED.**



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*The newly renovated  
and revamped  
Khowarib Campsite*

“Perched on cliffs above a perennial stream and surrounded by spectacular desert mountains, the campsite offers unparalleled views of the gorge below”. Clinging close to the ephemeral Hoanib River in deepest Damaraland, these home-grown words describe Khowarib to a ‘T’.

But things in early 2007 were not so good. The Camp was in disrepair, management was poor and visitors were in short supply. A knight in shining armour, alias NACOBTA, saves the day.

Funding was put in place to allow a full refurbishment and indeed improvement of the original Campsite; local sourced materials, and a prerequisite to blend in environmentally, have produced a magnificent result. Word is spreading fast, management is spot-on and the area and community have been uplifted. Job done!

Booking to [office@nacobta.com.na](mailto:office@nacobta.com.na)

## **LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WHAT AN IMPRESSIVE NEW WEBSITE!**

We’ve been wanting to do it for years, but now here it is, our brand new website. Courtesy of donor funding and the skills of ProDG, web designers extraordinary, visit [www.nacobta.com.na](http://www.nacobta.com.na) to overview everything that is important to us: Enquiries and Bookings, our Enterprises – nay Membership! – details of Joint Ventures, possible Investments, our Sponsors & Donors plus our Partners and Links.

Visit us regularly and look out for our next Newsletter. We’ll be telling you all about Hospitality Training in India, Tertiary Education Scholarships, Responsible Tourism Awards and plenty more. See you soon!

# NACOBTA

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.nacobta.com.na](http://www.nacobta.com.na)

## MEET THE FACES BEHIND THE WHEEL



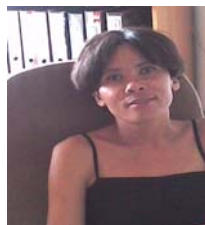
Olga Katjuongua, **Executive Director**



Usiel Ndjavera , **Business Advisor**



Jeanne Bezuidenhout, **Business Support Officer**



Charoline Bock, **Reservations & Admin Officer.**



Dancos Kulumbela, **Logistics Officer & HIV/AIDS Focal Person**

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**Watch out for our next edition**

