

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



STATEMENT BY HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,

MP, MINISTER

AT THE ONGWEDIVA CULTURAL EVENT

31st August 2010

ONGWEDIVA

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, AT THE ONGWEDIVA CULTURAL EVENT, 31ST AUGUST 2010.

Director of Ceremonies,

Honorable Clemens Kashuupulwa, Governor of Oshana Region and other respective Honorable Governors present here today,

Honorable Councilors,

Madam Akuenje, Chairperson of the Board and fellow Board members,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished guests, participants Ladies and Gentlemen

Trade Fairs, including Ongwediva Trade Fair always give a great opportunity for entrepreneurs to reflect and see how best they can make their business to move forward. Against this background, we in the Tourism Sector have decided to use the Ongwediva 2010 Trade Fair to bring to light of our Tourism products not yet fully realised, the “Cultural Tourism”. Cultural Tourism is highly appreciated by visitors from across the globe, but yet remain highly untapped and calls for dedicated action to develop this niche tourism product. This explains why the MET and NTB has developed and launched a campaign on Cultural Tourism and what we are seeing today is part of that campaign.

The World Tourism Organization, the global body that monitor international tourism movement, estimates that some 10% of global

tourism arrivals are travelling for purposes of cultural tourism and 10% of the Global Tourism is not a small number. Apart from the sheer weight of numbers of cultural tourists, they tend to have a higher level of income and have a potential to contribute to the skill development of the visited country than most travellers. In other words, cultural tourism not only attracts and educates visitors; it also delivers solid benefits to a host destination.

Through cultural tourism, nations do not only preserve and enrich their culture and heritage, but also contribute to poverty eradication. Culture and cultural heritage can be shown in different ways, both tangible and intangible. The preservation and application of traditional knowledge, especially at the interface between economic activities and culture, and the sustainable conduct of cultural tourism are integral parts of these processes. For example, when a site is inscribed on the World Heritage list such as the Twyfefontein rock arts and paintings, or protected areas are designated as “Biospheres Reserves”, like the Walvisbay wetland declared as the “ramsar site”, more awareness grows concerning the importance of protecting and preserving heritage. It stimulates interest and therefore increases the number of tourist who visits the location. Thus cultural heritage serve as tools for developing links between sustainable tourism and conservation effects. Similarly, traditional dances, songs, festivals, other events and food are part of culture and have a potential to attract visitors to any given country. To mention for example, in the Carribean Cultural Tourism, in form of Carnivals is very popular with tourists.

Culture has a niche space in tourism, but remains for too long on the periphery. All stakeholders must join hands to develop this product. When we engaged overseas operators we are being told that tourists are not having opportunity to experience various cultures, traditions and customs in Namibia except to see Namibians as employees only and to hear stories from them, or watch the performances which merely staged and, not real and authentic.

Therefore, it is important that programmes of heritage tours must highlight intense contacts with old and new and urban and rural, that can be found even in the heart of the modern city like Windhoek or even towns like Swakopmund, but to name a few. Visitors must be introduced to village lifestyle and ancestral rituals. In addition to cultural Kaleidoscope activities, visitors must be enticed to year-round calendar of colorful festivals and celebrations, cultural festivals and others. The presence of our traditional leaders here today is very important, because, they are the custodians of our culture. I believe their involvement will help the industry to see how best cultural can be used, to add value to our Tourism products. The Ministry welcome the initiative by CERET company that plan to set up a cultural village near Etosha National Park. That product will make a good match between Cultural and Eco-Tourism on one hand and conservation on the other.

In conclusion, let me express my gratitude to Namibia Tourism Board (NTB), all organizers, in particular Regional Councils, Local Authorities and traditional leaders, who proactively heeded to this noble cause, as well as the participants. Tourism is a social event of the modern world in which all countries and almost all society are involved. Governments including the Namibian Government, recognizes the growth of cultural tourism prestige, its economic and social value in life of modern society

I am confident that this important event will raise awareness that tourism is not only a factor of development but also a concrete engagement in intercultural dialogue and, therefore, a vehicle for living together in peace and mutual understanding, for the good of our country and its people.

THANK YOU