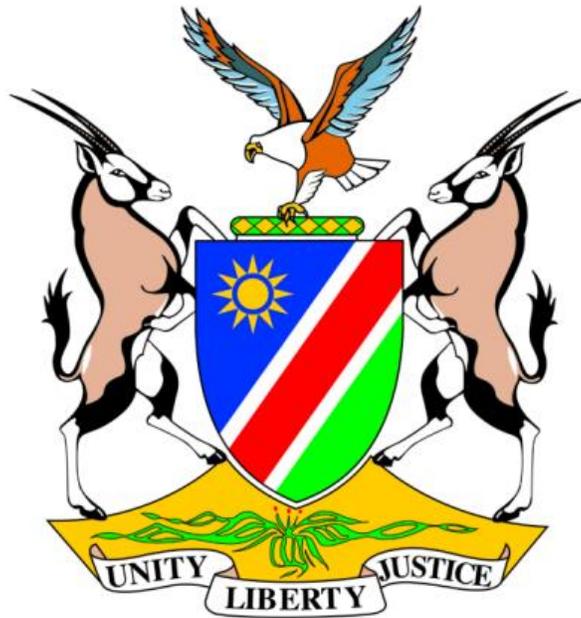


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT

BY

HONOURABLE FRANS KAPOFI, MP

MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION,

AT THE

LAUNCH OF THE TOURIST/VISITOR VISAS ON ARRIVAL PROJECT

25 SEPTEMBER 2019

**HOSEA KUTAKO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT,
WINDHOEK**

- **Director of ceremonies;**
- **Honourable Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism;**
- **Dr. Leake Hangala, Chairperson of the Namibia Airports Company;**
- **Ms. Penny Akwenye, Advisor to the President on Policy Implementation and Monitoring;**
- **Mr. Johannes !Gawaxab, Chairperson of the High-Level Panel on the Economy;**
- **Major-General Oscar Embubulu, NAMPOL Deputy-Inspector General for Operations;**
- **Esteemed Executive Directors;**
- **Ms. Charity Mwiya: CEO of Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry;**
- **Our valued Partners in the Tourism Industry;**
- **Distinguished invited guests from various Offices, Ministries, and Agencies of Government;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all.**

Today marks an important day on the calendar of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. At the onset, allow me to express my profound appreciation to you all present here; for taking time out of your respective schedules to join us at the launch of the Visas on Arrival Project at Hosea Kutako International Airport; in particular, our various Partners and Stakeholders from the Tourism Industry for honouring us with your presence.

As you may recall, Ladies and Gentlemen; the Ministry was tasked during the recent 2019 Economic Growth Summit convened by His Excellency President Dr. Hage G. Geingob, to make concerted efforts to introduce the **'e-visa or visa on arrival at entry point at a**

low nominal fee' in order to make it easy for the visitors to our country and to further boost local economic growth. However, prior to the Summit, the Ministry received approval from Cabinet to commence with the Visa on Arrival pilot project; and for the issuance of Five-Year Employment Permits to reputable Investors and those with critical Skills and Expertise.

Director of ceremonies;

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Travel and Tourism Competiveness Index 2019 Report by the World Economic Forum, ranks Namibia 81 out of 140 countries. One of the Pillars of the Index used for the rating is the country's International Openness. This Pillar sets out **"developing a competitive Travel and Tourism sector internationally requires a certain degree of openness and travel facilitation"**. It further affirms that **"restrictive policies such as cumbersome visa requirements diminish tourists' willingness to visit a country"**.

Equally of interest is the 2018 Africa Visa Openness Index, which is a joint work of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Africa. This index **"measures how open African countries are when it comes to visas by looking at what they ask of citizens from other countries in Africa when they travel. It aims to show at a glance which countries are facilitating travel for citizens of other countries and how; whether they allow people to travel to their country without a visa, if travellers can get a visa on arrival in the country, or if visitors need to get a visa before travel"**.

According to the 2018 Report, Namibia ranks No. 38 out of 55 African countries. It also states that **“Namibia moved ahead to liberalise its visa policy framework in October 2017, with a decision for all Africans to be issued visas on arrival, as part of a wider goal to remove visa requirements altogether. Since 2016, African diplomat and official passport holders can enter the country without a visa, following President Hage Geingob’s announcement citing the value of African unity”**.

One of the fundamental purposes which gave rise to this project is Government’s commitment to improve amongst others; Namibia’s Global Competitive Ratings. We should therefore be cognizant that this can only be achieved by eliminating ‘bottlenecks’ in our operations and processes. Furthermore, our Ministry will continue to deploy smarter approaches to support tourism and economic growth while maintaining the integrity and security of our country.

Secondly, Namibia does not have a far reaching diplomatic representation and network across the world. Thus, our Visitors from specific countries no longer need to apply in advance before departing their countries of origin for tourism, visiting, or transiting through Namibia. Along with this principal decision by the Government, Namibia exempted over 60 countries from visa requirements when their citizens are to visit Namibia for tourism purposes. This time, 47 countries have been selected for visas on arrival. All three categories of passports, being ordinary, diplomatic and official/service passports are accommodated for purposes of the visa issuance on arrival. I wish to make it clear that this arrangement excludes people coming to Namibia for employment purposes which obligate such people to apply and acquire employment permit in advance. Visas on arrival will benefit the following categories of visitors:

- Bona fide tourists (excluding tour guides who are required to obtain employment permit/work visa in advance);
- Potential investors coming to explore business opportunities;
- Visitors coming to attend meetings, seminars, workshops (**excluding those coming to perform pay related jobs which still requires one to obtain an employment permit/work visas**);
- Friendships and family related visits;
- Medical related visits.

Director of ceremonies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The current 27 African countries selected are as follows:

1. Benin
2. Burkina Faso
3. Burundi
4. Cabo Verde
5. Cameroon
6. Central Africa Republic (CAR)
7. Chad
8. Comoros
9. Cote d' Ivore
10. Djibouti
11. Equatorial Guinea
12. Eritrea
13. Gabon
14. The Gambia
15. Guinea
16. Guinea Bissau

17. Liberia
18. Madagascar
19. Mauritania
20. Niger
21. Rwanda
22. Sao Tome and Principe
23. Sierra Leone
24. Togo
25. Tunisia
26. Western Sahara Republic
27. Uganda

Other countries are as follows:

1. Belarus
2. Bulgaria
3. Cambodia
4. Chile
5. Czech Republic
6. Hungary
7. Mexico
8. Moldova
9. Nicaragua
10. Poland
11. Romania
12. Slovakia
13. South Korea
14. Venezuela
15. Vietnam
16. Thailand
17. Turkey

18. United Arab Emirates
19. Singapore
20. Ukraine

These are not the only countries we are aiming to include on the list for visas on arrival, but this is an ongoing process which will see more countries brought on board in future. In this spirit, we ask other countries to reciprocate or offer Namibia similar visa relaxed benefits for the good of all of us.

How will visas on arrival work?

The procedure will require a visitor to complete a visa application form as he/she arrives at Hosea Kutako International airport, submit the completed application form together with his/her passport to an immigration officer who will process the application. Upon approval of the application, the immigration officer will request the applicant to make a payment of One Thousand and Eighty Namibia Dollar (N\$1080.00). To facilitate the payment process, passengers are encouraged to carry credit or debit cards as speed points are available. When credit or debit cards are not functioning, provision will be made for exchange of foreign currency at Bureau de changes at the airport.

At this point; I wish to emphasize that for a visitor to be admitted in Namibia, the immigration officials are still obliged to make the usual background checks, including whether the individual is not a prohibited immigrant in Namibia or do not appear on other watch lists. Furthermore, the applicant should satisfy the immigration officer that the visit is legitimate and the individual has sufficient means of sustenance or proof that he/she is sponsored for that purpose while in Namibia. It is also required that his/her passport is at least valid for a period of not less than 6 months from the date of arrival and there should be sufficient pages for endorsement of visas, at least not less than 3 blank pages.

The period for tourism/visit in Namibia per year is 90 days which may be granted at once or as per the discretion of the immigration officer at the entry point depending on information provided. The tourist/visitor may apply for extension while in Namibia, which may be granted subject to the payment of a fee of N\$580 (including N\$80 handling/administrative fee) and reasons advanced.

Director of ceremonies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

HKIA is being used for visas on arrival as a first pilot Phase of this project. The next phase will include the following ports of entry:

- Walvis Bay Airport will be issuing visas on arrival by end October 2019;
- Katima Mulilo Border Post will start by end November 2019; and,
- Noordoewer, Ariamsvlei, Oshikango, Transkalahari and Oranjemund will start in the first quarter of 2020.

The decision for Namibia to implement visa on arrival for tourists/visitors is a contribution to, and is in line with general principles and agenda of the African Union (AU) for African integration and visa free Africa as well as Namibia's strategies to improve the performance of the economy.

The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration in consultation with relevant Government stakeholders and other non-governmental actors will therefore continue to spearhead this process for the relaxation of our visa regime so that it enables our tourism sector to gain maximum benefits for our economic and social development.

However, for all the above objectives stated to happen successfully, and without compromising security of the country; border agencies including Immigration Officials, Police, Customs and others need to exhibit high level of professionalism, integrity and friendliness to our tourists, investors and other visitors.

- We implore the support and understanding of our traveling public;
- We will continue to count on the goodwill of our Private Sector for their valuable support;
- Lastly, our border officials i.e. immigration officials, police, customs and all others; have a legal duty to perform. They therefore deserve to be respected and treated with dignity and honour.

I thank you!