Poaching should be considered a Priority Crime
Welcome to the third edition of the official newsletter for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the first issue for 2015.

You might have noticed that this issue has been rebranded as “Earthbound”. To some who know, this is simply going back to the roots. Earthbound has been in existence before and the intention is to carry it forward since it captures, in totality, our core duties, objectives and indeed our national mandate in line with those of our key stakeholders, particularly non-governmental organisations and the private sector.

I take this opportunity to welcome all of our readers to 2015. I sincerely hope that everyone has had a restful festive season together with their families.

It is my hope that we return re-energised, focused and ready to build on what we achieved as far as 2014 is concerned.

I know, as a sector, we have celebrated a number of achievements particularly as a ministry.

However, in the midst of those achievements there are challenges and opportunities.

Therefore, I urge all of us to work tirelessly and smart in ensuring that we steer this ship to the Promised Land.

It is not in our best interest to fail in our mandate to protect the environment and to develop tourism in the country.

Reaching yet another year is a milestone that presents an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our conduct, achievements and failures and enables us to realign our conduct, attitudes to reach desired objectives.

For most of us, particularly I, we went to assist our families to cultivate crops to ensure food security.

My contacts at home informed me that harvesting sufficient food is almost impossible because of erratic rain patterns this season.

This means that with no food security from subsistence and commercial farmers, and with no grazing for livestock, it is likely that there will be job losses. This, in turn, will lead to limited or no income and commodity prices will escalate.

These are some of the effects of climate change. As human beings, we do not realise the role we play. In contributing to Global Warming, let us all be proactive to mitigate the effects of climate change and land degradation.

On that note, please do enjoy reading this issue.
The Minister of Environment and Tourism Hon. Uahekua Herunga would like to see the situation of illegal hunting of wildlife described as a priority crime so that more resources can be invested in the ministry’s efforts to stop poaching.

The Minister highlighted this during a consultative workshop on the 26th January at the Safari Hotel in Windhoek to review and update the ministry’s current strategies and measures to curb illegal hunting of wildlife particularly rhinos and elephants.

The workshop was attended by members of the Law Enforcement Agencies, representatives of NGOs and Private Sector, other senior government officials, officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism amongst others.

“The protection of wildlife essentially involves preventing crime. The focus should be on preventing animals being killed illegally and not just on following up after they have been killed. Perhaps the most effective component of crime prevention, whether in an urban or rural setting, is that of establishing and maintaining a law enforcement or security presence on the ground”, the minister said.

“We have seen the growth of capacity in the conservancies to manage this wildlife, and develop economic activities based on this wildlife.

We have also seen how well local communities have integrated wildlife management in their other activities and increasingly how such wildlife management is complementing forms of land use. Rhino and elephant poaching should be condemned and I therefore call upon those involved to refrain from such activities with immediate effect or risk their chances of being caught and face the full wrath of the law”, he added.

He further urges all stakeholders involved that they fight for the stop to illegal hunting in a coordinated manner through the responsible government agencies. Namibian should be vigilant in preserving its wildlife by reporting suspicious activities to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism or the Namibian Police Force.

The Minister noted that Namibia’s values and fundamental objectives regarding its natural resources, biodiversity and wildlife are clearly enunciated in its constitution and policies.

He further explained that the Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 is being revised and receiving urgent attention and priority by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

He further added that the Ministry remains committed to the sustainable use of wildlife resources, as it indeed provided for its national constitution. “We will continue to invest more resources in combating illegal hunting of our rhinos and elephants” he said.

Tourism has grown to be one of the most important industries in Namibia in terms of its strong contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, employment creation and the well-being of social upliftment of rural people.

Namibia has made tremendous effort and has significant success stories in biodiversity and the minister further added that the ministry is currently in the final stages of creating the Wildlife Protection Services which may be operational with the new financial year which starts in April this year.
Poaching and the illicit trade of wildlife can have significant consequences beyond those popularly known in terms of economic, social environmental and animal welfare.

The acting Director in the Directorate of Scientific Services at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mr. Kenneth /Uiseb said this during a workshop on Stock Taking of National Response to Poaching on 26 January 2015 in Windhoek.

Mr. /Uiseb said people poach for commercial gain, home consumption, trophies, pleasure and thrill in killing wildlife.

“The environmental impact of poaching are sometimes clearly visible and are sometimes much harder to identify, at least in the short term,” he said.

He added that the most obvious impact is the depletion in the number of wildlife in a given area and the effects on the ecosystem that develops a delicate balance between different types of fauna and local habitat.

“Because of this, in terms of cause/effect the depletion of one species is analytically bound to the effects this has on other species,” he emphasised.

The negative economic impact of wildlife crime is difficult to quantify but are very real. Poaching has immediate flow on the effects in terms of financial cutbacks, job losses, and overall economic sustainability.

The impact poaching may have on human health is not widely discussed, however it can be significant and the emergence of numerous zoonotic diseases has been linked directly to wildlife crime.

Ebola, one of the world’s horrific diseases, has had outbreaks in Africa directly linked to the poaching and consumption of primates, he noted. Bird flu (H5N1), monkey pox, and heartwater disease are diseases directly facilitated by the illegal wildlife trade.

The social impact of poaching are harder to objectively measure and their seriousness often depends on each person’s sense of ethics and morality Mr. /Uiseb lamented further.

For instance, it is impossible to put monetary value on the ability to see wild animals in their natural environment and not just in a zoo, a shoot to kill policy where poachers and staff resulting in the loss of life.

The effects of poaching and the illicit wildlife trade on animal welfare are also impossible to put monetary value on, though most people would be appalled by some of the details.

Poachers worry about the tell-tale sound of a gunshot in a national park or game reserves sometimes resort to darting animals with a drug called M99. The are some poachers who overdose rhinos to kill it instantly.

If the rhino survives, and they took its horn, the high dose of M99 leads to severe and lasting kidney, liver and other organ damage.

If elephant poaching continues, elephant trophy will inevitably cease because MET will be forced to cut quotas or countries that lose confidence in Namibia, will impose a trade ban on the import of trophies.

Elephant hunting helps to market other species, so the loss of el-
Elephant hunting will undermine the entire industry.

Poaching will undermine tourism and trophy hunting, which in turn, will eliminate the main drivers for wildlife as land use.

This will, in turn, destroy the wildlife industry and will contribute to bush encroachment as important browsers including black rhinos and elephants are not part of the ecosystem.

As has been argued, poaching and illicit trade wildlife can have significant consequences beyond those popularly known.
Electronic permitting for Etosha National Park

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has introduced a new and advanced permitting system in the Etosha National Park.

The electronic permitting system started operating in 2014 after a comprehensive pilot study was conducted on the use of the equipment.

According to Mr. Erckie Boas, the deputy director and administrator of the Etosha National Park, the system is a welcome move based on its flexibility and many advantages.

He noted that the system is able to capture the number of entries in a day or a given time, finance recording keeping and can be accessed from any geographical location even from faraway places.

The system started with the support from the Span before the MCA-Namibia assisted with the consultancy and initial implementation.

Currently, the project is being supported by the Pass Project for further implementation.

They system scans documents such as passports, identity documents and drivers’ licences and automatically captures the necessary information onto the system.

Mr. Boas says this system reduces queues and ensures fast and effective service delivery to visitors of the park.

Mr. Boas said even though the system has some challenges in regards to network connectivity, the ministry and its partners are one step ahead in addressing these challenges.

With the assistance of Pass Project, the ministry plans to roll out this initiative to other national parks in the country.

To this end, three areas were identified already which are Dorop, Namib Naukluft and Ai-Ais National Park.
The Kwando conservancy has signed a lucrative concession operator’s contract with a well-established business entity. The Mufiljo joint venture is the concession operator for the conservancy that pledged a budget of N$9 million to be utilised as part of the company’s social responsibility to the community.

The multi-million dollar contract will cover projects such as the establishment of a clinic; procurement of a Land Rover ambulance, water points for communities, creation of a vegetable garden and poultry farming; funding for a hunting guide and professional hunter training, funding for a student nurse and a veterinary supply shop for livestock farmers.

The Kwando North Concession consists of three development sights namely the old Susuwe station; the Bum hill Campsite and Nzuna Island.

The agreement will see the contractor developing infrastructure for business where the community as the concession holder will have shares.

The community is expected to benefit in terms of concession fees, social responsibility obligation from the operator. The community further has a 15% shareholding in the operation of the envisaged Kwando North Lodge.

Additionally employment will be created through the establishment of this lodge and other tourist infrastructures to be developed.

Capacity development through training in various conservation and tourism areas is on the cards for the benefits of the community.

The concession and operating agreement will run for the period of 25 years and is expected to generate a minimum of approximately over N$12 million in concession fees on which 75% goes to the community whiles as only 25% will go to the ministry.

Such concession clearly demonstrate the ministry’s commitment to ensuring that citizens of this country particularly those in rural areas benefit from its natural resources as provided for in the Namibian constitution Chapter 11, Article 95.

The concessions are an initiative of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism tailor-made to benefit communities residing in and around protected areas.

Through the initiative communities as a unit are given a concession to operate a business in protected areas that will earn them income, job opportunities and infrastructure development among other benefits.
Swakop centre for galleries, craft shops

The Cosdec in Swakop is not only a training facility but has many another peculiar functions.

The centre is a beautifully structured complex that multi-functions as a tourist leisure spot, a skills training centre and a retail and expo centre for the producers of crafts.

It comprises wheel-chair accessible, well equipped art studios and workshops in which students learn their various trades, craft retail shops, incubation units for products made on the premises, two restaurants offering local and foreign influenced cuisine, galleries, a kiosk, craft shops and an amphitheatre for different arts performances.

Built in a foyer structure type, all rooms, workshops, offices and shops surround and look into a beautifully designed centre where plants, a lawn and eccentric brick benches add to the beauty and artistry.

There are two art galleries at the used for showcasing arts work in mini exhibitions. A female duo of Michelle Inixas, the national arts and craft coordinator and Jessica who oversee the day to day running of the centre.

The idea was to give a platform for school dropouts, the unemployed, the unskilled as well as those seeking a formal ‘education’ on how to perfect their craft.

As the name suggests, it focuses primarily on products and services made entirely from artistic execution, such as wooden art pieces, fashion and clothing pieces, jewellery made from natural raw materials, knitwear, leatherwear, canvas painting, mixed media images and various other kinds of unique art that is purely Namibia.

There is a full blown Cosdec shop that meets you as you enter the premises targeting tourists and visitors with its souvenirs and art pieces

Some merchandise in the shop are sourced from different parts of the country and thus giving more citizens an opportunity to benefit from the national initiative of the National Development Plan 4 and Vision 2030 goals through the Cosdef venture.

Established brands and producers can be accommodated provided their products meet a certain standard of quality.

This shop also sells leather bags and sandals made in the centre’s department of leather which has a workshop 100% fully running.

The backbone of this department is Afas Mbura, who is auspiciously a product himself of Cosdec. Mbura enrolled for leather craft in 2009. He said its only when he joined Cosdec that he learnt of the logistics of formal business, in leather craft such as costing, pricing and business development in the nine month course.

Mbura has only encouraging words to the youths and fellow countrymen without any skills for self-sustenance describing how he has also been further opportune with a chance to impart his skills knowledge to other students at the College of Arts.

“After paying a reasonable fee which most people can afford, one can move a step further in their talents by learning the business aspects of leather making. One only has to persevere,” Mbura said.

Mbura has managed not only to better his interpersonal skills through the training he got prior to being a trainer at the College of Arts, but has learnt how to structure his business and reap more benefits from his crafts.

The Cosdec Arts and Craft centre seeks to equip students with more than just the know-how of producing arts and crafts, but are taught to think outside the box so that they can learn how to adapt to different business environments as well as markets and maintain relevance in their respective industries.

Students from the Textile Crafts course are one such example and
have managed to expand their creative scope through conceptualising a fashion show as well as clothing pieces they featured in it.

The idea was to take away the student’s mindsets of basic seam stressing to explore their hand in high end couture.

This ‘thinking outside the box’ drive was implemented so well so that a renowned Namibian fashion blogger commended the versatility and raw talent showcased at the student’s fashion event.

Afas Mbura, the ‘leatherman’ has also developed this ‘thinking outside the box’ mindset and has managed to come up with an innovative, tailor-made type of sandal which is personalised for the customer.

This drive in students can also be seen through Cosdec’s product Eres-tine Hoeses who has since 2008, learnt Leather Craft, Crochet, Beading, Embroidery and Knitting courses. She now runs a shop at the centre, which has different kinds of crafts like leather purses, beaded bracelets, knitted pullovers, berets, phone pouches and jerseys.

She praises the Cosdec courses, which she says have enabled her children’s upkeep as well as paying for her further education.

Her story is one which testifies again that the National Development Plan four and Vision 2030 goals of empowering the women and girl-child are being met.

The centre strives on continually growing and it plans to increase the number of courses offered to include jewellery design, goldsmithing and performing arts mainly specialising in African drums and guitar.

The vision for 2015 is to develop the curriculum which the trainer’s have been formulating themselves by having them accredited by the National Training Authority. This will see students being readily armed to enter the formal skilled workforce system and be graded in industry accordingly.

According to Inixas, this vision of developing the centre also includes the transformation of its system from wholly donor funded to being self-sufficient.

Numerous frameworks have been put in place to see that profits from the centre can be turned back to cover the operating costs and pay for salaries.

She said, “Since it has been functioning for two months, it is imperative to set long term goals of breaking even financially and thus these mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that.”

At the premises is also a tourism booking agent, Hata Angu Snowboarding and Township Tours which is run by a young trio, Detnie Haoses being at the front.

Tourists can see Namibia as it is from this service. They can also buy locally produced organic cosmetics and consumables Nara BODYfoodNAMIBIA which features raw materials that are sometimes indigenous to Namibia and exotic elsewhere.

Available at the premises are crafts from five projects from different parts of Namibia which are sold and showcased under Kubatsirana Women’s Project. Items like hand crafted rugs, t-shirts, necklaces, bracelets, hat, place mates, dresses and cushion covers are items that are available to possibly be bought as souvenirs.

There are diverse shops that sell diverse items appealing to visitors such as Ikhoba Embroidery Project and Karakulia Weavers.

There is also Yambke Restaurant that is as tastefully decorated as is their menu. It is a typical restaurant that offers western cuisine and beverages.

There is also another restaurant that offers traditional Namibian food like mopani worms, porridge, papa and matangara to suit different tastes and cuisine preferences.

Students and visitors alike can also buy biscuits, sweets and fast foods. This diversity is to cater for the different people that visit the centre.

The Cosdec centre for Arts and Crafts is therefore a success in its early stages. The vision to expand its influence through extensive skills training of various courses, increasing the student enrolment and keeping in line with the overall objectives of the National Development Plans and Vision 2030 goals, is on course to being met so to change the lives of ordinary folk as well as the economy of the country.

The centre is one which bears testament to the vision of Cosdef, giving opportunity to the marginalised and academically underprivileged with self-sustaining ventures.

Opened in November 2014 in Swakopmund, thus only in its wee stages of existence, it has however already managed to materialise a particular goal of the National Development Plans 4 and Vision 2030 goals—that of empowering people from the cross-section of society and inspiring home reared solutions for their livelihoods.

It serves as a selling and value-added outlet for local arts and crafts and provides an opportunity to develop skills necessary to be self-sustainable.

Courses offered include leather introduction, goldsmithing introduction, recycling, beading, fashion design, fine arts introduction, general drawing, ceramics and drumming and African dance.

The centre’s objectives include providing an outlet for the Cosdec’s arts and craft products, as well as for other Namibian artisans. It also offers Arts and Crafts training and mentorship programs to respond to a market demand for a Namibian offering of arts, craft and culture.
Namibia prepares for Green Climate Fund accreditation

Namibia is preparing to seek accreditation of institutions from the Green Climate Fund to secure funding for environmental projects benefiting the country.

At this point in time, only the Environmental Investment Fund has completed the process of application and awaits the outcome.

The Green Climate Fund was established by the UN Climate Change Framework Convention (2011) and its Secretariat Head Quarters opened in December 2013 in Songdo, South Korea.

Namibia initially bid to host the Fund’s secretariat, but lost to South Korea.

The global purpose of the fund is to make significant & ambitious contribution to combating climate change; promote paradigm shift towards low carbon climate resilient development pathways; provide support to developing countries taking into account the needs of vulnerable countries.

According to Louise Brown, the Readiness Programme Advisor for Green Climate Fund Secretariat, the fund provides Namibia an opportunity to building climate resilience and emissions reductions into Namibia’s development priorities such as Vision 2030, NDP priorities and priority economic - mining, agriculture, tourism, fisheries, manufacturing - and social - education, land reform, housing, health sectors and support industries - infrastructure, transport, water, energy, telecommunications and banking.

The fund will also strengthen integration of climate and development planning and budgeting, nationally, sub-nationally and across sectors. Namibia according to Louise Brown has a competitive advantage due to its Strong emphasis and track record on sustainable development; strong institutions and governance relative to many other countries in Africa; strong capacity in the private sector; robust, well regulated financial sector and it is an early mover.

Namibia’s National Designated Authority (NDA) or Focal Point is the Department of Environmental Affairs of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

Its role is to be the interface between the country and the Fund, provide broad strategic oversight of the Fund’s activities, convene all national stakeholders to identify priorities for funding support, endorsement / “no objection” national/ sub-national entities seeking accreditation to the Fund and ensure consistency of funding proposals with national plans and strategies.

Access to Fund resources is through accredited sub-national, national, regional and international implementing entities.

Applications require a letter of nomination from the NDA, entities will be assessed against the Fund’s fiduciary principles and standards and environmental and social safeguards (ESS)’ accreditation process takes into account the diverse activities different institutions are involved in terms of:

- fiduciary functions: grants, concessional loans, equity, guarantees
- size of project/activity in a programme: micro, small, medium, large
- environmental and social risk category: High, medium, low
Human resource is a critical aspect of any organisation where roles go beyond the general understanding and managing incoming and outgoing personnel.

We have decided to give a little in-depth of the major activities of the ministry’s human resources division.

The division is headed by a chief Human Resources Practitioner, who oversees the implementation of all activities, tasks and duties. This position is currently vacant. The division has three key performance areas.

**Human resource forum**

**Industrial and Labour Relations**
Head: Albertus Strauus
This unit is responsible for disciplinary actions, conflict resolutions, grievances, disciplinary hearing and labour relations.

**Condition of service and wellness programme**
Head: Ester Elago
Responsible for administering service benefits e.g. pension, medical aid, overtime, housing and transport allowances, payment of salary, cash bonus, recognition of qualification. Under wellness, the unit is responsible for referral services for illnesses, fitness health, HIV and Aids awareness programmes, awareness of gender-based violence and mainstreaming of disability.

**Recruitment**
Head: Stephenus Mentoor
The unit coordinates the entire recruitment process including placement of adverts for vacancies, shortlisting of candidates, conducting interviews, appointment, probations, vacancy statistics and structural adjustments.

Human resource is a critical aspect of any organisation where roles go beyond the general understanding and managing incoming and outgoing personnel.
Coming from a humble beginning and being the smallest directorate in the Ministry with only 24 staff compliment, the Department of Environmental Affairs is on course with its national mandate as stipulated in the Environmental Management Act.

This is according to the Environmental Commissioner Mr. Teofilus Nghitila in an exclusive interview with Earthbound.

The Department is responsible for the implementation of Environmental Management Act. It mobilises resources for the implementation of programmes to promote environmental protection; implements international conventions and multilateral agreements on biological diversity. It also deals with land degradation, waste management and climate change.

The Environmental Commissioner further says that his department has a number of projects that indirectly or directly contribute to the social and economic well-being of Namibia.

“We have a number of initiatives for instance programmes on climate change adaptation through crop production, water conservation (water harvesting) and value addition to natural resources,” he explains. “Through policy implementation, we enhance economic development and ultimately contribute to Vision 2030 as you might know economic development only happens when there is environmental and natural resource sustainability in the country,” he adds.

The department is currently busy with the process to develop a research and development centre to commercialise natural resource products.

The centre will not only cater for Namibia but the SADC region as a whole.

Currently, through KFW the feasibility study is being done and expected to be finalised in April 2015.

The commissioner noted that some of the major achievements in recent years include the setting up of the legal framework by putting up policies such as:

- the National Climate Policy;
He says the department has secured funds from the Global Environmental Facilities where the department has been able to absorb more than N$200 million for environmental initiatives.

Furthermore, he says the department has formulated project proposals for funding through GEF and attracted major international conferences to Namibia such as the COP11 held in 2013.

According to Nghitila, the department has implemented pilot partnership programmes for sustainable land management to support communities and setting up the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, which the commissioner is the ex officio member.

Despite these achievements, the department faces some challenges, which according to the Commissioner; the department has done so much with very little.

He gave the example of the challenge of limited the staff compliment, which creates a challenge in setting up the legal framework of operating; coordinating stakeholders; administering environmental assessments and ensuring that clearances are issued on time.

He acknowledges that waste management across the country, particularly in towns, has been neglected. He quickly points out that this aspect will receive major priority this year.

“We must ensure that all our towns are kept clean. The problem is that the municipalities do not have sufficient capacity. The investment is not coming forth and the awareness is simply not there. “It does not give a good picture for a country investing so much in tourism to have unmanaged waste in towns,” he remarked.

He further stressed that the department will work on awareness creation together with traditional, local and regional authorities.

Another challenge, he states, is the problem of sand mining that is causing a hazard to villages and communities.

The commissioner stresses that SMEs and developers alike mine sand and leave open mines, which become a hazard when it rains.

He calls on those mining sand to rehabilitate the areas or fence them off to prevent any loss of lives.

The department, he explains, will consult with regional governments to ensure that developers do the right thing.

Mr. Nghitila says the DEA will ensure the implementation of the Namibia Declaration emanating from COP11 to ensure that the Country hands over the presidency at the next COP with significant progress.

He would personally like to see his department continuing to grow to be responsive to the needs of the Namibian people and to implement the Environmental Management Act and other key strategies and policies.

### Wildlife Breeding Stock Loan Scheme

**I**n June 2004, Cabinet authorized the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to establish a wildlife loan scheme to provide breeding stock of wildlife species to emerging farmers on freehold or resettlement farms in support of livelihood diversification, as well as in support of biodiversity conservation and rare species management.

This scheme is aimed at complementing other initiatives of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in particular and the Namibian Government (i.e. such as the conservancy programme which focuses on communal areas, and the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme (AALS) of AGRIBANK) in general to improve the livelihoods of historically disadvantaged Namibians.

Five species of wildlife has been identified as founder populations to be used for the scheme. These species are, Hartmann’s Mountain Zebra (Equus zebra hartmannae), plains zebra (Equus burchelli), gemsbok/oryx (Oryx gazelle) and springbok (Antidorcas marsupialis) eland (Tragelaphus oryx).

Since 2007, game has been translocated to a total of 114 farms around the country. The total number of animals translocated to these farms is 1983.

The table below shows the number of species translocated to farms during 2007-2014.

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Number of species distribution per region

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The ministry has concluded the first round and an evaluation was conducted. This evaluation was aimed at determining the future of the scheme. The findings of the evaluation was presented to management for its decision which will be made public once available.
The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has successfully held the 5th International Symposium and Annual Conference of Partners of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism from 23 - 26th February 2015 at the Windhoek Country Club, Resort and Casino.

Participants and experts from different countries were warmly welcomed at an official dinner that preceded the sessions of the symposium. The welcome dinner was officiated by Hon. Uahekua Herunga, Minister of Environment and Tourism.

Hon. Uahekua Herunga announced that tourism is defined in Vision 2030 as one of the pillars of economic growth and is one of the few industries that contribute directly to poverty alleviation and economic development in rural areas. Nearly 45% of the land in Namibia is under conservation management.

The Minister assured all United Nation Environmental Protection partners that they can count on the Namibia government in ensuring tourism sustainability in accordance with the Namibian Constitution, Article 95 (I) and the National Tourism Policy.

With the support from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the tourism sector needs to streamline the country’s efforts at preserving and conserving its biodiversity in the face of adversity form the impact of climate change and other environmental challenges.

“In terms of sustainability, our government believes that the resource user is the best manager. This has been translated into policies and legislation that grants the right to the sustainable use of our national resources, especially our wildlife, to communities”, the minister added.

On his part, Dr. Dirk Glaesser of the World Tourism Organization highlighted the importance of tourism to the traveler and placed significance on the roles of government. He added that governments advocate for tourism development as it brings revenue and income to the country but was also quick to point out they should also ensure the preservation of the country’s heritage and cultures and protection of natural resources.

“Endless growth in tourism- it is addressed in the right way, are we protecting the natural resources in the right way?” he questioned while setting the stage for discussions.

The UNEP representative Dr. Desta Mebratu added that tourism is among the top 3 contributors to GDP in over 20 countries in Africa. He stressed that addressing sustainability won’t be an easy task but assured participants that with a strong collective partnership, the goal will be met.

The symposium also saw the political heads of ministries engage in a discussion panel on the contribution of the tourism sector towards National Development Priorities.

During the discussions, issues of Public private partnership and domestics tourism; income generation and sustainable tourism received priority.

The event was attended by over 300 participants of which included South African Minister of Tourism, Hon. Derek Hanekom, Zimbabwean Minister of Tourism and Hospitality, Hon. Dr W. Mzembi, and a representative of the Minister of Morocco, Ms. Nada Roudies, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism.

The 2015 symposium was held under the theme: “Advancing Sustainable Tourism: Securing the Legacy of Our Cultural & Natural Heritage”.

5th International Symposium and Annual Conference of Partners a success
New Recruits

Transfers:
• Mrs. Khuberskey Ziandre - Keetmanshoop (tourism officer)
• Mrs. Adelaide Stanley J - Etosha (tourism officer)
• Ambambi Kaagwana - Opuwo (tourism officer)
• Mrs. Costance Situmbeko - Katima (tourism officer)
• Hausiku N. - Rundu (tourism officer)

Promoted:
• Tjikurunda H. (from scientist to senior conservation scientist)
• Groenweld Thecha (from ranger to warden)
• Nghidinwa Kirsti (from senior scientist to chief conservation scientist)
• Mateus T (from senior scientist to senior conservation scientist)
• Haingdongo K (from admin officer to tourism officer)
• Mutendere R (from admin officer to warden)
• Henrick J.N (from Letographer to assistant HR practitioner)

Promoted

Henrick J.N
(from Letographer to assistant HR practitioner)

Nghidinwa Kirsti
(from senior scientist to chief conservation scientist)

Groenweld Thecha
(from ranger to warden)
Namibia receives an international award at the 11th UNWTO awards

Namibia, well-known as The Land of the Brave, was a finalist in the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Ulysses Award for Innovation in Non-Governmental Organizations. UNWTO recognizes 14 finalist organizations from 12 Countries around the world that have led innovative tourism initiatives in Public Policy and Governance, Enterprises, Non-Governmental Organizations and Research and Technology.

The UNWTO Award winners were thoroughly chosen and evaluated by an international jury committee formed by tourism policy makers, practitioners, academia and previous UNWTO Awards laureates. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) partners with local NGO’s, the Government and the tourism private sector to bring income into rural communities and empower Namibians to manage and benefit from their wildlife.

WWF promotes Namibia as a Conservation Travel Destination, attracting conscientious travelers. Other contestants included Bangladesh, Turkey and the Netherlands. Amsterdam emerged as the leader whereas Namibia and Turkey where the first runner-ups and Bangladesh the 2nd runner up.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has attributed Namibia’s achievements on a Constitutional provision that allows for sustainable utilization of its biodiversity. This has led to the creation of the programme for community based conservation of wildlife. The Country’s Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme has assisted in setting the scene for a conservation strategy in an independent Namibia.

The Namibian tourism sector is based on wildlife, landscapes and cultures. In terms of sustainability, the ministry believes that the resource user is the best manager. This has been translated into the country’s policies and legislation and granting the rights to the sustainable use of the natural resources.

Through this process, the country has created thousands of jobs for the Namibian people particularly those in rural areas. Conservation presents additional opportunity for people in rural areas bring income and jobs alongside their normal activities of livestock management and crop growing.

Ministry of Environment and Tourism

The event was attended by approximately 100 participants from 10 eligible SADC region countries who shared information about GEF’s strategies, programmes, policies and procedures under its current funding cycle.

It also shared lessons and experiences in the design and implementation of GEF projects and their integrations within national policy frameworks.

Addressing the workshop, deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism Mr. Pohamba Shifeta noted that the Global Environmental Facility has been of critical importance in promoting sustainable environmental management in Namibia.

“Since 1998, Namibia has benefitted from over 25 GEF-funded projects to the tune of almost US$60 million. These projects have covered a wide range of areas including biodiversity conservation, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable land management and climate change and adaptation,” he said.

The GEF was established in 1991 as a World Bank pilot programme to assist in the protection of the global environment and to promote environmental sustainable development.

It has since become a permanent and independent organisation, which is now also the financial mechanism for various UN conventions including those on climate change, biodiversity and desertification.

The national GEF operational focal point and Environmental Commissioner, Mr. Teofilus Nghitila outlined that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is currently implementing four GEF-funded projects in the areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management.

According to Mr. Nghitila, these projects are making a significant contribution towards sustainable environmental management and the achievement of national priorities in the environmental sector.
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