

The Gateway to Namibia

By **BISEY /UIRAB**

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BISEY /UIRAB previously served as CEO of the Namibia Ports Authority and worked in senior and executive management capacities in the mobile telecommunications environment at MTC, Namibia's leading mobile telecommunications provider, and Somali Telecoms Group. Prior to that he worked for Bank of Namibia as Human Resources & Training Manager and for the Legal Assistance Centre, as Paralegal & Office Manager. He has been CEO of NAC since 2019 and holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from Edinburgh Business School (Herriot-Watt University).

The Namibia Airports Company (NAC) Limited was established in 1998 as a state-owned entity under the Ministry of Works and Transport with the aim of being a world-class service provider in airport operations and management. It currently manages and develops eight airports in the country of which two are international airports:- Hosea Kutako International Airport some forty-five kilometres east of Windhoek and the Walvis Bay International Airport on the Atlantic coast.

The Hosea Kutako International Airport is the flagship airport of Namibia serviced by Discover Airlines (part of Lufthansa) from Frankfurt, Qatar Airways from Doha, Ethiopian Airlines from Addis Ababa and South Africa's Airlink and South African Airways from both Johannesburg and Cape Town. TAAG Angola serves the Luanda, Angola route, while Namibia's only airline, Fly Namibia connects from Windhoek to Cape Town. Many British visitors arrive via the good connections from London via Johannesburg. The airport is named after Namibia's first nationalist leader and its world class facilities including retailers, ground-handlers, restaurants, lounges which includes truly Namibian cuisines and souvenirs, bureau de change services, car rentals, parking (short and long-term) and tax refund facilities, amongst others. Transport to and from the airport is available by means of airport shuttles with a new dual carriage connecting the airport to the city of Windhoek to be completed next year.

Recent terminal building improvements have seen the expansion and refurbishment of a modern duty free restaurant, public parking and VAT tax refund facilities. As part of the company's strategic plan, future projects are envisaged to develop and/or upgrade infrastructure and facilities in order to increase airport capacity and the variety and quality of service.

Hosea Kutako International Airport is set to develop a hotel as part of the main airport attraction. Expansion of

the terminal building, in-flight kitchen, cargo facilities, and conference facilities are additional projects envisaged by the company as immediate and future prospects. It is also aimed at doubling the handling capacity of the airport to increased passenger movements up until 2030. New terminal buildings are also planned at Katima Mulilo, Rundu and Lüderitz Airports.

With Namibia being a preferred tourist destination with tourist arrivals by air touching one million annually, aviation has been the largest enabler of tourism in Namibia. The airports are the gateway to the country and most economic activities between Namibia and the rest of the world hinge on the aviation industry. The top ten tourist source markets in 2022 were South Africa, Angola, Germany, Zambia, Botswana, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Italy, and Switzerland. Over the years Namibia has become a popular destination for tourists from the UK with almost 35,000 arriving annually. Many hearts and minds continue to be enthralled by this land of compelling natural wonders, unique variety of wildlife, contrasting beautiful scenery, abundant sunshine and wide open spaces not to mention the cultural diversity and hospitality accustomed to its people.

Visitors are engulfed by a sheer sense of freedom generated by wide and breathtaking horizons, the bluest of skies and a population density which ranks among the lowest in the world. Respectively, Namibia's capital Windhoek has been voted many-a-time as the cleanest city on the continent.

Namibia was one of the first countries in the world to include the protection of the environment and sustainable utilisation of wildlife in its constitution. About 15.5 per cent of the country has been set aside as national parks. Particular attractions include the Etosha National Park, one of the largest game reserves in Africa which is home to a variety of animals and birds, the Namib-Naukluft Park, a vast wilderness and the fourth largest nature conservation area in the world; the Skeleton Coast National Park; and the Fish River Canyon, the world's largest after the Grand Canyon.

Namibia, being a young and vibrant democracy, prides itself in its commitment towards the maintenance of peace, stability and socioeconomic development. Coupled with a first-world interconnected infrastructural network, Namibia is truly a rare African gem.



Hosea Kutako International Airport