

MINISTER MALIMA VISITS FINLAND WITH SHILONGO

Helsinki - Namibia is a recipient of Finnish aid, in particular the area of natural resource management, forestry. This visit came as a result of an official invitation to Minister Malima by his Finnish counterpart. Mr Shilongo was requested to accompany the minister, along with six other delegates from Namibia and the Namibian Ambassador to the Nordic countries, Ambassador Willbard Hellao. Many fruitful meetings were held the highest officials of the following sectors:

- Finnish Ministry of Environment, Development, Trade & Industry and Tourism
- Major players in the manufacturing of forestry products
- Parliamentarians
- Finnish Tourist Board and Travel Exposition
- Major tour operators featuring Southern Africa (Töölo Travel)
- Travel media (Olympia Magazine and MTV3)
- Tourism Training institutions (Perho)

The Nordic market is a potential growth point for Namibia tourism, but much more aggressive marketing is needed. This market shows a strong interest in the cultural segment, especially in the North.

Tour operators, who are already including the cultural element in their product portfolio who are keen to enter this market, may provide us with their details so that we could pass it onto the Finnish counterparts.

Since Namibia do not have sufficient resources to expose herself in this market, discussions was initiated on donor funding possibilities to support Namibian exposure. We are deliberating on this subject and these discussions are continuing.

An educational tour comprised of media, travel agents and tour operators from the Nordic market to Namibia, is being planned for the first quarter of 2003. Once the itinerary has been finalised, we would seek support from the industry for sponsorship. However, we would appreciate to receive an indication from those who wish to be considered part of the itinerary.

Two of the tourism training institutes that Mr Shilongo visited, are amongst the oldest and well-established hotels schools in Europe. They have shown support for the idea of educational exchange programmes with Namibian counterpart institutions.

BOARD-TALK

At the Retosa Board Meeting, Mr Shilongo presented the views of NTB, government and the private sector. Although SADC Tourism Ministers during their earlier meeting in Kasane decided to convince their governments for continued Retosa funding, lack of coordination in some cases have failed this commitment. For now, Retosa will be funded during the upcoming financial year 2003/04, and further deliberations are being made through the finalization and presentation of a convincing business plan to determine the future funding of this organisation.

Amongst the many activities being undertaken, we would like to share the items of interest: Following a Retosa research study in the North American market, a road show will be undertaken as from 25 March to 2 April 2003. It will cover New York, Los Angeles, Denver, San Francisco and Toronto. These cities were selected as the market study showed that major tour operators serving more than one SADC country operate from these cities. This road show is certainly worth participating in, especially tour operators who would wish to meet with North American trade and media partners. Retosa certainly learnt from the previous road show in Europe, and every effort is being made to ensure the success of this one. Interested parties could contact Retosa at retosa@iafrica.com or phone at 0027 11 315 9752/3 for more information.

The next board meeting will be held during April/May in Malawi as per the SADC policy of rotation.

THEY SAID GOODBYE - WE SAY HELLO

At our Windhoek office we had to say good-bye to some of our staff that had been with us for a long time:

Christine Slabbert (she joined her husband in their own business)

Sisco Auala formerly from our London office (she moved to Oranjemund)

Sonja Benade (joined Gambling dept at MET)

Isabel Siegrist (finally retired)

Kauna Tjihumino (decided to become a house wife)

Though it was sad to see them all go, we wish them all the best in their new positions!

Elsie Skrywer – Senior Accountant
Tuhafeni Nekongo: Senior Personnel Officer

Elizabeth Sibindi: Assistant to the Marketing Manager

Chriteline January: Secretary to the CEO

Ella-Betty Shilongo: Management Secretary

In January 2003 we will be welcoming **Madeleine Cronje** and **Nambula Mwongeeli** back to Windhoek from our Cape Town office. They have gained a wealth of experience in the South African market, and will strengthen our capacity at Head Office.