

Joint Press release

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Namibian-German Development Cooperation to construct staff houses, offices and park entry gates for the Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park

German Government continues its support for the development of Namibia's national parks

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The Ministry of Environment and Tourism officially launched the construction of staff houses, offices and park entry gates for Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park. The groundbreaking ceremony took place at the Kolmanskop Ghost Town near Luderitz where the first diamond was discovered in 1908. The development would include refurbishment of the historic old post office building at Luderitz as the Ministry of Environment and Tourism local office, construction of a new office at Aus, extension to the existing offices at Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund. Furthermore, park entry gates will be constructed at Luderitz Peninsula, Kolmanskop, Rotkop, Garub, Aus, Obib, Sendelingsdrift and Swartkop.

This valuable infrastructure has been funded through the Namibia National Parks Programme (Namparks) Phase IV to a total amount Euro 21.499 million, with the German Government through KfW committing a grant amount of Euro 14.499 million for the implementation of activities and Euro 7 million by the Namibian Government in support of the country's development and conservation initiatives. The new park management infrastructure to be constructed in Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park as well as the on-going construction of the

Buffalo Park Management Station in Bwabwata National Park and Shuno in Mudumu National Park represent the latest phase of the Namibia National Parks Programme (or NamParks), which has been running since 2006. Previously, new stations were built at Mahango, Susuwe in Bwabwata National Park; Ngenda in Mudumu National Park, Khaudum and Sikeretti in Khaudum National Park. All these stations in the North Eastern Parks are operational and provide ideal conditions for enhanced park management.

Yesterday, on the 12th July 2018, the official ground breaking of the Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park infrastructure in //Karas Region was undertaken by the Minister of Environment and Tourism, Honourable Pohamba Shifeta, joined by the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Christian Matthias Schlaga and the Deputy Minister of Economic Planning in the Presidency, Honourable Petrus Jacobus van der Walt. The Governor of the //Karas Region, representatives of the local Traditional Authorities and the German Development Bank (KfW) witnessed the ground breaking.

At the same ground breaking event, the German Ambassador to Namibia officially handed over park management equipment to enhance the management of the park. The equipment includes a 4 x 4 truck co-financed by the German Government and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (through the Game Product Trust Fund), park tourist information signage, water point equipment, tool boxes for water maintenance, fencing materials, biodiversity monitoring equipments, GPS, cameras and office based equipments.

These high-quality new stations and equipment will improve the MET's ability to manage Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park that was proclaimed as a national park in 2008 after being closed to the public for over a century. Prior to the proclamation of the then Sperrgebiet Diamond

Area No. 1 as a national park, diamond mining was the area's main land use. Today, the park is part of what has become one of the longest protected coastlines in the world, stretching from the Iona National Park in south-western Angola bordering the Skeleton Coast Park, through the Dorob National Park, the Namib-Naukluft Park, to the /Ai-/Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park and the Ramsar Site at the Orange River. In addition to the terrestrial parks, the Tsau //Khaeb lies adjacent to Namibia's only marine protected area proclaimed by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.

After a decade since its proclamation as a national park, access is still strictly regulated by the Ministry of Mines and Energy through the Diamond Act (Act 13 of 1999). To improve public access to one of the world biodiversity hotspots, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has been discussing with the Ministry of Mines and Energy and Namdeb on access into the park for both tourism and for park management. To improve access to the park, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the Ministry of Mines and Energy aim to reduce the boundaries of the Diamond Area No. 1 by de-gazetting 70% of the park that falls outside Namdeb Mining Licence from the diamond area status. Furthermore, the two Ministries are working on amending the Diamond Act so as to allow for controlled tourism and restricted traversing rights for tourism concessions holders through Diamond Areas as well as to empower park officials to enter diamond areas. Both processes are expected to be completed by March 2019. Meanwhile, access negotiations are continuing with Namdeb on controlled tourism access to part of the park under their mining licence.

In preparation for tourism development, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism with support from the NamParks IV Project is revising the Park Tourism Development Plan to guide tourism development in park. Other investment include the development of park specific regulations, tourism

information signage, revision of the Park Management Plan, provision of park management equipment and staff capacity development.

The efforts and results of the Namibian-German Cooperation to develop the Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park and the north-eastern parks, are steadily improving the effectiveness of park management. This is having a positive effect on wildlife numbers and the park environment. Proper park management therefore also influences experiences of visitors positively, which are bringing considerable benefits to the region in general and to local communities in particular.

The contribution to the development of Namibia's Parks, through the German Development Bank (KfW), is part of the support for the focal area "Natural Resource Management" – one of the three main German-Namibian Cooperation Areas. This support is also in line with the Namibia National Parks Programme that was initiated in 1995 by the MET to foster both nature conservation and socio-economic development in the country. Within the framework of their bilateral development cooperation efforts, the Namibian and German Governments have long realised the substantial contribution National Parks bring to economic development. The promotion of sustainable tourism, which is directly linked to National Parks, is an effective strategy to enhance growth and employment and thereby reducing poverty. Germany, through KfW Development Bank, has committed a total of approximately N\$400 million (€30 million) for its past and present support to MET's development and management of Namibia's National Parks.

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