



Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Republic of Namibia

Statement by

**HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

**During the announcement of the ban of plastic bags in
Protected Areas**

**Daan Vijoer National Park,
Windhoek**

Director of Ceremonies

Hon. Bernadette Jagger, Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism

NWR Board of Directors

Mr. Teofilus Nghitila, Acting Permanent Secretary & Environmental Commissioner

Mr. Colgar Sikopo, Director of Wildlife and National Parks

Ministry of Environment and Tourism Staff Members

Members of the media present

All protocol observed

Today is a historic day in the waste management and pollution control programs of our country. The announcement we are making today signifies our serious commitment to control pollution in our country in line with the recently launched National Solid Waste Management Strategy, the National Development Plan and United Nations Sustainable Goal No. 3 on health and wellbeing.

I would specifically wish to inform the nation and the tourists visiting our country that plastic bags are banned in our protected areas. Government Gazette No. 6285 of April 2017 amended the regulations of the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975 with the insertion of a new provision that no person shall enter a game park or nature reserve with a plastic bag.

It should be noted that the amendment makes provision for some exceptions such that a person may enter a game park or nature with types of plastic bags that:

1. Are designed to be used for the disposal of waste;

2. Are designed for agricultural purposes;
3. Are used for sampling or analysis;
4. Constitute, or form an integral part of, the packaging in which goods are sealed prior to sale in the local market or for export; or
5. Are transparent resealable bags.

A person who contravenes this ban is liable to a fine not exceeding N\$500 or to imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or to both such a fine and such imprisonment.

It has come to our attention that there is both limited awareness of and compliance with this amended regulation. Therefore I am taking this step to sensitize all affected stakeholders that this regulation is in force and I call upon all of you to comply with it.

So we are calling on all tourists not to carry plastic carrier bags into our protected areas – tour operators, tourism associations and Namibia Tourism Board, please convey this message and new measures to your clients and customers. Ministry staff working at the gates to all our game parks and nature reserves – let us increase our diligence and search arriving vehicles for plastic bags and confiscate them accordingly. To Namibia Wildlife Resorts – let us cease offering plastic bags to customers in protected areas and offer alternatives as appropriate. At the same time, we are in the process of developing signage that will be placed at the entrance points to all of our protected areas to inform visitors of these new arrangements.

Lastly, I herewith notify all visiting tourists and the general public that we will be stepping up our efforts to enforce this ban over the coming months. Namibia's game parks and nature reserves are areas of outstanding natural and ecological value that are managed to protect their ecological integrity and for the long term conservation of nature.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The increasing volumes of tourists we are experiencing and the increasing amounts of waste being generated pose a threat to the ecological integrity of these areas. We therefore believe that the health and image of these most important areas for biodiversity and tourism will be enhanced through this ban. The bottom line is that we do not want to see plastic bags blowing and being prevalent in these areas and being consumed by our wildlife.

I call on all stakeholders to support us in ensuring zero plastic in our protected areas so that the current and future generations of animals and humans alike are able to enjoy a healthy and clean environment free from the risks of plastic pollution.

I thank you.