



**BUSINESS AND INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY AUTHORITY**
Protecting Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Address

By

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Acting Chief Executive Officer of BIPA

at the occasion of the

**ROUND TABLE MEETING WITH POLICY MAKERS ON
TOURISM, CULTURE, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
EDUCATION**

at the Hilton Hotel in Windhoek

on 4 April 2019 at 08h00

Representatives of the Government of the Republic of Namibia;
Representative of the World Intellectual Property Organization;
Esteemed partners in Tourism, Culture and Education
Colleagues
Members of the media
Guests,

The Government of the Republic of Namibia, in partnership with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), undertook a 3-year Special Project on Intellectual Property, Tourism and Culture. The outcomes of the study define a clear roadmap for the implementation of adequate IP services and strategies to promote local tourism and local development, in line with the priorities and mandate of the project.

The government, through the Minister of Finance during the Budget Statement for the Financial Year 2019/2020 last month, recognised that the current economic situation in Namibia is causing hardships for our citizens. As a country, we continue to struggle to find ways to alleviate unemployment and stimulate economic growth.

As the saying goes, “Times of great calamity and confusion have been productive for the greatest minds. The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace. The brightest thunderbolt is elicited from the darkest storm.” It is, indeed, during such trying times, that humanity makes greatest discoveries and invent breakthrough solutions. This is the natural response of the human-race to any occurrence which threatens existence or progress. It is therefore not a secret, that the solution to our prevailing economic difficulty, lies with the people and is a product of the intellect of people. A people that has created the space to imagine,

invent, create and innovate, will never cease to grow and advance. It is with this understanding that the Government of Namibia has identified intellectual property as a stimulus for economic growth through the creation of distinctive and unique value in products and services. Competitiveness is an essential element for survival on the global playing field; and intellectual property is a tool through which competitive advantage is created.

Namibia has identified the Tourism sector as a priority sector for socio-economic development. As the Minister of Environment and Tourism indicated recently – tourism is the largest-earning sector, which contributed N\$5.2 billion directly, and N\$15,1 billion indirectly, to the GDP in 2015. The industry supported over 100 000 jobs in the same period; and by 2020, tourism-related value addition is expected to reach 11,7% of overall GDP and create more than 123 000 jobs.

To this end, Government recognizes the role of intellectual property in the creation of value services in the tourism industry.

Initially, one might ask, but how does tourism and intellectual property fit together? The short answer is that intellectual property mechanisms support the strengthening and enhancing of competitiveness of tourism enterprises. One such example is ‘destination branding’ – and local institutions like NWR and the Namibia Tourism Board here play a vital role in marketing the enormous potential of Namibia to the market.

However, ‘destination branding’ should be supported by other vital intellectual property vehicles, such as trademarks, copyright, industrial designs, trade secrets and patents. This will support the Namibia-as-a-

destination-brand that we want to market to the world, which in turn will attract more tourists, resulting in more employment and income for the country.

The International Chamber of Commerce recognises that there are numerous ways through which IP contributes to the economic advancement of a country, notably:

- Sectors that rely on IPR represent a significant part of developing economies in terms of GDP, employment, tax revenues and strategic importance;
- IP protection promotes innovation;
- IP protection helps firms monetize their innovations and grow;
- SME's that use IPR report higher growth, income and employment than those that do not;
- IPR helps provide consumers with innovative products and services in virtually every area of life; and protects consumers against counterfeit and pirated products.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This meeting will consider various recommendations emanating from engagements with stakeholders in this project; with the view of adopting the implementation roadmap for Namibia with respect to the use of intellectual property rights in the tourism sector. The roadmap will also cover capacity building in the area of IP and Tourism at the academic institutions.

I want to thank the Ministry of Environment for acting as the custodian of the implementation of the strategy; WIPO for making this project possible; and every partner that is present and willing to make a contribution.

Thank you.