

Windhoek

The City of Many Faces



Within the heart of Namibia's Land of Concrete nestles Windhoek "City of Many Faces" a vibrant, modern, cosmopolitan yet spacious and inviting city, where its charm lies in its fusion of African and European influences.

Windhoek is your perfect destination to experience a real taste of Africa through our rich mix of cultural diversity, world class conferencing facilities and business friendly environment. Come and explore Windhoek, where Africa meets Europe, your ultimate destination of choice.

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Namibia



KEY FACTS

Joined Commonwealth:	1990
Population:	2,324,000 (2011)
GDP p.c. growth:	1.9% p.a. 1990–2011
UN HDI 2011:	world ranking 120
Official language:	English
Time:	GMT plus 1–2hr
Currency:	Namibia dollar (N\$)

Geography

Area:	824,269 sq km
Coastline:	1,570km
Capital:	Windhoek

Namibia in south-west Africa is one of the driest and most sparsely populated countries on Earth. It is bounded by the South Atlantic Ocean on the west, Angola to the north, Botswana to the east and South Africa to the south. The Caprivi Strip, a narrow extension of land in the extreme north-east, connects it to Zambia.

Namibia comprises 13 regions (from south to north): Karas, Hardap, Khomas, Erongo, Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Kunene, Oshikoto, Okavango, Omusati, Oshana, Caprivi and Ohangwena.

Time: GMT plus 1hr. The clock is advanced by one hour from the first Sunday in September to the first Sunday in April.

Area: 824,269 sq km (including Walvis Bay 1,124 sq km).

Topography: The country has three broad zones: the Namib Desert to the west; the Kalahari Desert to the east; and the Central

Plateau. The plateau, made up of mountains, rocky outcrops, sand-filled valleys and undulating upland plains, covers over 50% of the land area. It includes Windhoek, the capital, and slopes eastward to the Kalahari Basin and northward to the Etosha Pan, the largest of Namibia's saline lakes. The Skeleton Coast, from Swakopmund to the northern border, is a waterless stretch of high sand dunes pounded by a high surf, much celebrated in tales of the sea. The Kaokoveld Mountains run parallel, covering 66,000 sq km. Shifting sand dunes of the Namib Desert spread inland for 80–130km, covering 15% of the land area.

Climate: Arid, semi-arid and sub-humid. Prolonged periods of drought are characteristic. There is little precipitation apart from rare thunderstorms in the arid zone of the Namib Desert coast, with rainfall rising to 600mm or more in the sub-humid north-eastern border with Angola and the Caprivi Strip. Rain falls in summer (October to April). The cold Benguela current gives the Namib Desert thick coastal fog.

Environment: The most significant environmental issues are the scarcity of natural freshwater resources and desertification.

Vegetation: Much of the terrain is grassland, or plains dotted with scrub. Namibia supports at least 345 different grasses and 2,400 types of flowering plant. Characteristic native plants are acacias, balsam trees, omwandi trees, fig and date palms, makalani palms, mopane (shrubs or trees), monkey-bread trees, marula trees, yellow-blossomed omuparara trees, violet-blossomed apple-leaf trees and shrubs such as the raisin-bush, coffee bush and camphor bush. Aloes, mesembryanthemums and other succulents flower on the Southern Namib dunes after rainfall. White-flowering ana trees flourish in dry river beds. Forest covers 9% of the land area, having declined at 0.9% p.a. 1990–2010. Arable land comprises 1% of the total land area.

Wildlife: Namibia's wildlife is famous, particularly the exceptional range of bird species found in the wetlands. There are 201 recorded species of birds (2002), with 11 thought to be endangered. The pans in game parks provide drinking water for



did you know?

Frank Fredericks, born in Windhoek in October 1967, took the Commonwealth Games Men's 200 Metres record at the 1994 Games in Victoria, Canada.

With population density of less than 3 per sq km, Namibia is the most sparsely populated country in the Commonwealth and in Africa; and it has some 1,570km of coastline.

Namibia is one of the world's major producers of uranium; it was fifth largest in 2011.



Office of the President of the Republic of Namibia



As the Head of State and Government, the President is responsible for the executive functions of the Government, subject to the provisions of the Namibian Constitution and the laws of the country, which he or she is obliged to protect, to administer and to execute. It is in this context that the Office of the President has crafted high level statements to guide the actions of all functional components of the Office as well as staff members in executing their duties and in rendering support services to the President and to the Office of the First Lady.

Mission

To provide efficient and effective support services to the President and Cabinet in order to achieve the national strategic development agenda.

Vision

The institution of excellence in our work and interactions.



left: His Excellency Dr Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia during the ground breaking ceremony of Ohorongo Cement, Otavi

top right: First lady of the Republic of Namibia and President of the Organisation of the First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFILA), Madame Penehupifo Pohamba

right: State House Building, Windhoek



Strategic Plan 2010-2015

The Office of the President has successfully rolled out the Performance Management System (PMS) in compliance with the corresponding Cabinet decision and introduced the PMS as the preferred management tool to manage, monitor and improve performance of public service staff members. In this regard, the Office developed a five-year strategic plan, which was designed to transform the Office of the President into an *institution of excellence in our work and interactions*.

As part of the implementation process of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan of the Office of the President, staff members in the Office have signed Performance Agreements for the 2012/2013 financial year. The Performance Agreements, which each staff member is required to sign, describe the agreed terms of expected level of performance, outputs and deliverables of an individual staff member with his or her supervisor. A Performance

Agreement links individual performance to organisational objectives and plans, and details the agreed performance of the staff member. It guides performance monitoring, feedback, development and assessment. Performance Reviews involve continuous monitoring and coaching to ensure that performance targets are being met.

The Office recently held a Strategic Planning meeting with specific focus on performance reviews and alignment of the Strategic Plan of the Office to the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4). ►





Ongoing Support Programmes

The Office of the President places great emphasis on the continuous development of its human capital. The Office has embarked upon a training programme aimed at inculcating the core values of the Office in the hearts and minds of the management cadres and other staff members of the Office. The aim is to capacitate staff members in accordance with identified staff developmental needs as outlined in the Personal Development Plans of individual staff members.

At management level, the Office has embarked upon a Coaching and Mentoring Programme with the purpose of creating in-house capacity to motivate staff members to perform and achieve their objectives.

Activities of His Excellency the President

The President held various meetings with political, business, community and traditional leaders to consult on issues of national interest. He also undertook missions to different parts of the country to perform official duties and to assess and observe, *in loco*, the implementation of government policies and programmes.

In addition, the President undertook various missions outside the country, including state visits to other countries, and attended heads of state summits of regional and international organisations such as the SADC, the African

Union and the United Nations. He also hosted several heads of State and Government who paid state visits to Namibia. The President used such state visits to strengthen the bonds of bilateral co-operation between Namibia and these countries, through the signing of Bilateral Co-operation Agreements. These include the Framework Co-operation Agreement, which was signed between Namibia and Togo during the state visit to Namibia by His Excellency Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé.

President Hifikepunye Pohamba also paid a state visit to the Republic of South Africa where an Agreement on the establishment of a Bi-National Commission was signed. The Bi-National Commission is expected to provide a broader framework for co-operation and would consist of four commissions, namely Diplomatic, Economic, Social and the Commission on Defence.

During the same visit, a Memorandum of Understanding of Co-operation on Issues Related to Public Works and Infrastructure Development was signed. The MoU aims to promote, develop and increase co-operation in the field of public works, regulatory environment and infrastructure.



top left: President Hifikepunye Pohamba busy cultivating at one of the agricultural projects

top right: President Hifikepunye Pohamba at CHOGM, Perth, Australia 2011

bottom left: Commissioning ceremony of Namibia Defence Force (NDF) Officer Cadets, 15 February 2013

top right: First Lady Madam Pohamba receives a cheque from the EU delegation to support the Programme for Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality in Namibia

middle right: The First Lady with young Muyakuree Kahangana and her mother Petrina Kahangana at donation event organised by Synergy and Nam-Pharm

bottom left: President Hifikepunye Pohamba visits some of the agricultural projects in the northern part of the country

bottom right: President Pohamba congratulates the Champion of Champion's small stock at the 2012 Windhoek Industrial and Agricultural Show



Information Communication Technology

The Office of the President has made concerted efforts to boost ICT usage as part of its organisational culture. The Office was one of the first government institutions to be connected to the West Africa Cable System (WACS). The connection to WACS provides a faster internet service and promotes rapid access to information by staff members of the Office. This is already having a positive impact in terms of boosting effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition, video conferencing facilities have been installed with the aim of enhancing the capacity of the Office to communicate with all thirteen regions of the country and other parts of the world. The video conferencing adds momentum to our ongoing efforts towards efficiency and effectiveness because it saves time and resources.

Office of the First Lady

As President of the Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA), First Lady Penhupifo Pohamba initiated and successfully launched a two-year campaign on the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV infection. She also successfully organised a local fundraising event to mobilise resources for the operations of the Namibia OAFLA National Chapter Office. Through her hard work, Madame Pohamba was honoured with the prestigious award as Ambassador for Peace for her work in supporting Maternal and Child Health Care and in the fight against HIV/AIDS. She received the award in Washington DC, USA.

The First Lady continues to champion and mobilise resources for the Organisation for the Empowerment of Widows/Widowers and Orphans of HIV and AIDS in Namibia (OEWENA). The organisation provides skills training to community members to empower them in the areas of initiating and managing income generating projects and gardening.



www.op.gov.na





The Karas Region, Republic of Namibia

Open for Business. Ready for Investment

The Karas Region in southern Namibia takes its name from the Nama word for 'Quiver Tree'. It is the biggest region in Namibia covering 20% of the landmass of the country, and has enormous potential and scope for economic development and progress.



Quiver tree

The Region includes the constituencies of Lüderitz, Keetmanshoop (Urban and Rural), Karasburg, Berseba and Oranjemund. Contrary to popular perception, the beautiful town of Keetmanshoop is the 'Swakara City of the World'. The Karakul sheep, world-renowned for its Swakara pelts and fur, is only found and bred in southern Namibia.

Diversified and Vibrant Economy

The Region is a strong emerging economic giant.

The stable political atmosphere, access to foreign markets, well-governed financial institutions and economic vibrancy is supported by a reliable and well-functioning infrastructure with four regional airports, and extensive rail and road networks connecting all major towns as well as neighbouring South Africa. The southern coastal line is a major economic artery.

The town of Lüderitz with its marine resource industries (fishing, oysters and abalone) and port facilities, the inland and offshore diamond mining, zinc mining in Rosh Pinah and the prospective Kudu Gas field are just a few examples of local economic activities.

The Aussenkehr Valley along the Orange River, the Naute Dam and the soon-to-be-constructed Neckertal Dam are prime areas for massive agro-industries explosion. Huge land is available for investors to exploit.

Unique Natural Beauty

The Karas Region is home to some of the planet's most exceptional natural wonders, the pristine and delicate flora ecosystems in the Kalahari and Namib deserts, the only-in-Namibia desert horses and the Fish River Canyon, the second largest canyon in the world. Another one-of-its-kind global attraction is Tsau-//Khaeb (former Namib Sperrgebiet) in the Namib Desert that is classified as one of the world's top 25 biodiversity hotspots.

Other prominent tourist attractions include the hot water springs at Ai-Ais and Warmbad, the Quiver Tree forest near Keetmanshoop, and the Brukkaros Mountain (a former volcano) near Berseba and several guest and game farms spread throughout the region.

The Nama speak a Khoisan language notable for its click sounds. Music, poetry and storytelling are important in Nama culture and many stories have been passed down orally through the generations.



Keetmanshoop



Lüderitz Port



Karas is known for its breathtaking beauty and its blend of engrained cultures and traditions



Some of the world's tastiest grapes and dates are produced in the Aussenkehr Valley with exceptional opportunity for additional fresh produce cultivation for domestic and export markets.



Newly promoted 'Cape to Namibia' tourist routes emphasise the great diversity of landscapes, fauna and flora, as well as sites of historic interest in this part of Southern Africa.



Nama woman

www.karasrc.com

most of the typical African wild mammal species. The Etosha National Park, the country's most famous reserve and one of the largest in the world, contains lions, leopards, elephants, rhino and zebras. The government has a strong conservation policy, but game poaching in the reserves is diminishing stocks of many species. The Namibian seas are naturally rich in fish, and in seabirds which prey on fish.

Main towns: Windhoek (capital, Khomas region, pop. 315,900 in 2010), Rundu (Kavango, 81,500), Walvis Bay (Erongo, 67,200), Oshakati (Oshana, 39,700), Swakopmund (Erongo, 34,300), Grootfontein (Otjozondjupa, 29,000), Katima Mulilo (Caprivi, 27,900), Okahandja (Otjozondjupa, 25,300), Otjiwarongo (Otjozondjupa, 23,000), Rehoboth (Hardap, 20,900), Gobabis (Omaheke, 19,900), Usakos (Erongo, 18,700), Lüderitz (Karas, 18,300), Keetmanshoop (Karas, 15,400) and Tsumeb (Oshikoto, 10,800).

Transport: There are 42,240km of roads, 13% paved. Two long-haul road projects were completed in the late 1990s: the Trans-Caprivi Highway and the Trans-Kalahari Highway through Botswana to South Africa. These arteries enable Namibia to provide landlocked central African countries with an outlet to the sea as well as greatly reducing the journey to Johannesburg.

The 2,400km railway network was established under German colonial rule and much-needed upgrading was carried out from the mid-1990s. Walvis Bay, the only deep-water port, which incorporates an export processing zone, is the main outlet for exports. Use of Lüderitz, Namibia's second port, has increased, due to a rise in fishing activities.

Air transport is important because of Namibia's size. There are more than 350 aerodromes and airstrips, with licensed airports in the main towns and mining centres, including the international airport some 40km from Windhoek.

Society

KEY FACTS 2011

Population per sq km:	2.8
Life expectancy:	62 years
Net primary enrolment:	85% (2010)

Population: 2,324,000 (2011); density is extremely low overall and 38% lives in urban areas; growth 2.4% p.a. 1990–2011; birth rate 26 per 1,000 people (43 in 1970); life expectancy 62 years (53 in 1970 and 62 in 1990).

The Ovambo and Kavango together constitute about 60% of the total population. Other groups are the Herero, Damara, Nama and the Caprivians. The San (Bushmen), who are among the world's oldest surviving hunter-gatherers, have lived in this territory for more than 11,000 years. The Basters, who settled in Rehoboth in 1870, stem from marriages between white farmers and Khoi mothers in the Cape. The 'Cape Coloureds', immigrants from South Africa, tend to live in the urban areas. Of the white group of approximately 90,000, about 50% are of South African and 25% of German ancestry; about 20% are Afrikaners (longer-established migrants); and a small minority are of UK ancestry.

Language: English, Oshiwambo, Herero, Nama, Afrikaans and German. The official language is English, first or second language to only about 20%. Oshiwambo is spoken throughout most of the north. The Caprivians speak Lozi as their main language. Afrikaans

is widely spoken and is the traditional language of the Cape Coloureds and Baster communities.

Religion: Christians 80–90% (predominantly Lutherans), the rest holding traditional beliefs.

Health: Public spending on health was 4% of GDP in 2010. 93% of the population uses an improved drinking water source and 32% have adequate sanitation facilities (2010). Tuberculosis and malaria are widespread in the north. Infant mortality was 30 per 1,000 live births in 2011 (129 in 1960). AIDS is a serious problem. In 2011, 13.4% of people aged 15–49 were HIV positive.

Education: Public spending on education was 8.3% of GDP in 2010. There are 10 years of compulsory education starting at age six. Primary school comprises seven years and secondary five. In 1993 English replaced Afrikaans as the main language of instruction. The Namibian Constitution provides free education until the age of 16 or completion of primary education. Some 83% of pupils complete primary school (2008). The school year starts in January.

The principal tertiary institution is the University of Namibia, established in 1993, with its main campus in Windhoek and nine other campuses across the country. The university offers courses in agriculture and natural resources; economics and management sciences; education; engineering and information technology; and law. There is also a polytechnic; technical and agricultural colleges; and four national teacher-training colleges. Namibian College of Open Learning provides open and distance learning. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.32:1 (2008). Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 93% (2010). There are extensive adult literacy programmes.

Media: Daily newspapers include *The Namibian* (in English and Oshiwambo), *Namibia Economist*, *New Era* (government-owned), *Die Republikein* (in Afrikaans) and *Allgemeine Zeitung* (in German). *Windhoek Observer* is published weekly.

The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation provides public TV and radio services; several private and international TV channels are available via cable or satellite, and there are many private radio stations broadcasting in the country.

Some 37% of households have TV sets (2007). There are 239 personal computers per 1,000 people (2007).

Communications: Country code 264; internet domain '.na'. Mobile phone coverage is good in the towns but patchy in rural areas. Internet connection is available in main towns; there are internet cafes in Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Windhoek; and a good postal service.

There are 68 main telephone lines, 964 mobile phone subscriptions and 120 internet users per 1,000 people (2011).

Public holidays: New Year's Day, Independence Day (21 March), Workers' Day (1 May), Cassinga Day (4 May), Africa Day (25 May), Heroes' Day (26 August), Human Rights Day (10 December), Christmas Day and Family Day (26 December).

Cassinga Day remembers those killed in 1978 when the South African Defence Force attacked a SWAPO refugee camp at Cassinga in southern Angola. Africa Day commemorates the founding of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 (now African Union). Heroes' Day commemorates the start of SWAPO's armed struggle against South African rule and those killed in the



OSHIKOTO REGION, NAMIBIA OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



Vision

To be the catalyst for development in Oshikoto Region.

Mission

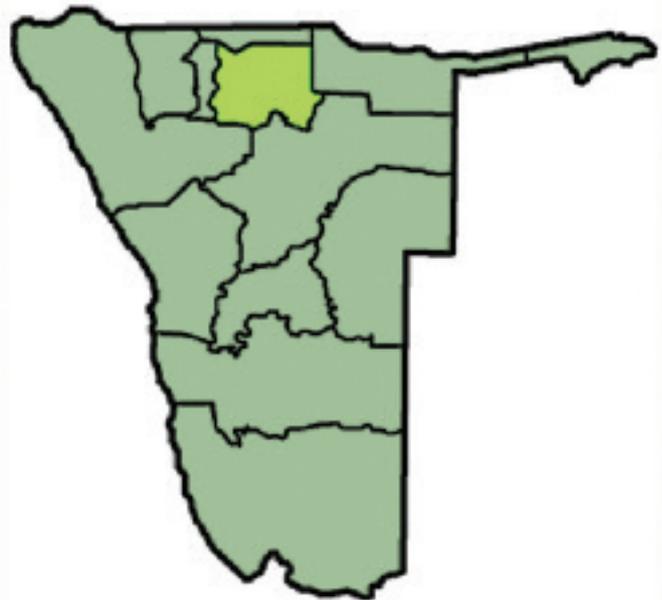
To effectively and efficiently spearhead and direct developmental activities in Oshikoto Region, as well as ensuring that quality services are rendered to our people at all times.

Oshikoto Region has a solid foundation for investment:

- Strategically located in the central north and a gateway to the south and north, Oshikoto Region is considered an industrial hub.
- Major towns are Omuthiya and Tsumeb, with new towns to be proclaimed in the near future. Modern facilities such as banks, schools, hospital, postal and office buildings are available in these towns. The towns also have available land for potential investment, especially in the areas of manufacturing, hospitality, trade and professional services.
- Mining activities are carried out at the Kombat Copper Project and Namibia Customs Smelters. Prospects to develop a salt mine at Omuntele for commercial venture look promising. Oil exploration activities along Etosha National Park are currently underway.
- Some of the tourist attraction sites include Etosha National Park, Oshikoto Lake, several game ranches, the Kuku Helvi Kondombolo Traditional Museum, Nakambale Museum, art and craft centres and the Omuntele Salt Pan. The local tourism industry has room for development, especially for eco-tourism and tourist information centres.
- Farming areas, such as the Mangetti communal farming area, have great potential for development into commercial ranches.
- Communication networks are of a good standard through the region: a tarred trunk road runs across its breadth, linking it to both the north and south of the country.
- Telecommunications are carried across the region and as far as Oshakati by means of a newly-laid optic fibre cable.
- A number of underground mineral water reservoirs in the area have scope for being used for commercial ventures.
- There is potential for the establishment of fresh water fish farming at Okashana Natural Springs.



Hon. John Mutorwa shakes hands with Hon. Penda Ya Ndakolo, Governor of Oshikoto Region, while Agra CEO Peter Kazmaier and Headman Nation Nashikaku are looking on



Hon. Penda Ya Ndakolo,
Governor

Contact

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struggle. Human Rights Day remembers those killed in 1959 when residents of a black township near Windhoek resisted forcible removal to the present-day Katutura.

Religious holidays whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Economy

KEY FACTS 2011

GNI:	US\$10.9bn
GNI p.c.:	US\$4,700
GDP growth:	3.7% p.a. 2007–11
Inflation:	7.1% p.a. 2007–11

Namibia's economy is driven by mining and fish processing. Since independence in 1990, exports of diamonds, uranium, zinc and fish products have grown strongly. Most people in rural areas of this vast country, however, remain largely unaffected by these activities. Government policy is to raise per capita income, to develop the private sector, and to encourage diversification into manufacturing activities, such as clothing and textiles, and eco-

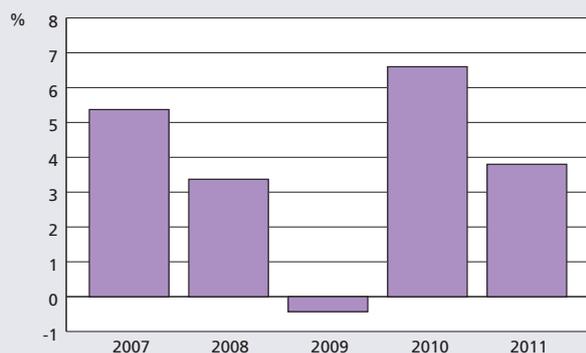
tourism. It is also committed to restraining growth in public spending and controlling inflation.

Having fallen short of the national development plan target of 5% p.a. in the latter 1990s and early 2000s – due to environmental factors such as drought and the finite stocks of fish – growth picked up from 2002 on account of increased diamond production, the opening of a new zinc mine and refinery, and increased textiles output. It averaged 5.7% p.a. during 2004–08. But in the face of the world economic downturn and consequent falls in demand for Namibia's minerals, the economy stalled in the latter part of 2008, stagnating in 2009 (–0.4%), but recovering in 2010 (6.6%) and continuing at about 4% p.a. 2011–12.

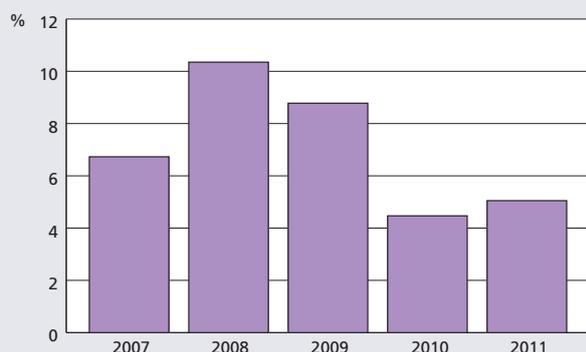
Mining

The sector is the largest source of export earnings. Namibia has great mineral wealth, including diamonds, uranium, copper, zinc, gold, silver, phosphate and oil. Zinc production rose rapidly from the mid-1990s. Onshore reserves of diamonds are becoming depleted, but offshore output has risen quickly, helped by new mining technology. The large Husab uranium mine is due to start production in 2014. Large offshore phosphate deposits have been discovered near Walvis Bay. Recent reports suggest good prospects of significant discoveries of offshore oil.

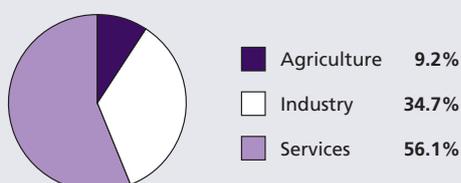
Real Growth in GDP



Inflation



GDP by Sector (2011)



Constitution

Status:	Republic with executive president
Legislature:	Parliament
Independence:	21 March 1990

The constitution provides for a multiparty democracy in a unitary republic. The president is head of state and government and commander-in-chief of the defence force. Elected by direct universal adult suffrage at intervals of not more than five years, he or she must receive more than 50% of the votes cast. The president appoints the government, the armed forces chief of staff and members of a Public Service Commission, but the National Assembly may revoke any appointment. He or she can only serve two successive directly elected five-year terms. The president may dissolve the National Assembly, and may also proclaim a state of national emergency and rule by decree, subject to the approval of the National Assembly.

Legislative power is vested in a National Assembly of 72 elected members, and up to six nominated but non-voting members, all members serving for a maximum of five years. The National Assembly can remove the president from office by passing an impeachment motion with a two-thirds majority. The prime minister is leader of government business in parliament.

An upper house, the National Council, is provided for in the constitution and was formally convened in February 1993. It consists of two members from each of the 13 regions, elected by regional councils and serving for a term of six years. The National Council has limited powers to review legislation passed by the National Assembly and can block bills.

The constitution includes 25 entrenched clauses regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms. There is no death sentence nor detention without trial and the practice and ideology of apartheid is expressly forbidden. Private property rights are guaranteed. Amendments to the constitution can only be made by two-thirds majorities of both houses.

Politics

Last elections:	November 2009 (presidential and legislative)
Next elections:	2014
Head of state:	President Hifikepunye Pohamba
Head of government:	the president
Ruling party:	SWAPO

History

The San (Bushmen), who are among the world's oldest surviving hunter-gatherers, have lived in this territory for over 11,000 years.

In the 19th century, taking advantage of tribal conflicts, Europeans acquired land from chiefs in return for weapons. The British authorities in the Cape annexed the Penguin Islands in 1866 and Walvis Bay in 1878, in response to a request for protection from missionaries. Germany declared a protectorate in 1884 over a 20km-wide belt of land from Lüderitz to the Orange river, and then gained control of the interior. The inhabitants were relegated to 'native reserves' from 1898 and a 1905 German decree expropriated all Herero land and prohibited Herero people from keeping cattle. This led to the Great Resistance War, 1904–08, during which a large proportion of the Herero and Nama population was massacred by the German military. Pass laws were introduced in 1907, as was the institutionalisation of migrant contract labour. Diamond and copper mining began in 1908–09.

During the First World War, German South-West Africa was occupied by South Africa; after the war South Africa extended its control to the northern Namibian communities, helped by the Portuguese rulers of Angola. The Allied Powers refused to allow South Africa to annex the country, renamed South-West Africa (SWA). Instead, South Africa became the designated power under a League of Nations mandate.

Following the founding of the UN in 1945, South Africa refused to convert its mandate into a UN trusteeship. In 1949, 1955 and 1956, disputes between South Africa and the UN over SWA were taken to the International Court of Justice.

A series of petitions to the UN from black leaders in SWA sought to end South African rule. The first black nationalist movement, the South-West Africa National Union (SWANU), was set up in 1959 with the support of the Herero Chiefs Council. In 1960 the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was founded, Ovambo migrant workers forming the base of its membership. SWAPO launched a guerrilla campaign inside Namibia, first clashing with South African police in August 1966. In October 1966, the UN terminated South Africa's mandate and called for it to withdraw from the country, formally named Namibia in 1968. The International Court of Justice ruled in 1971 that South Africa's administration was illegal.

In 1977 a UN contact group comprising the five Western members of the Security Council – the UK, France, the US, Canada and West Germany – began to negotiate plans for Namibia's independence directly with South Africa and SWAPO. In 1978 South Africa announced its acceptance of the contact group's settlement proposal. However, in May that year, South

The elections in November/December 1999 produced a clear win for both the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and President Sam Nujoma. Nujoma secured close to 75% of the votes cast in the presidential poll, while Ben Ulenga of the recently formed Congress of Democrats (CoD) took 11% and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) candidate Kautuutire Kaura 10%. In the parliamentary contest, SWAPO won 55 seats (76% of the votes), the CoD seven (10%) and the DTA seven (9.5%).

African forces attacked SWAPO's refugee transit camp at Cassinga in southern Angola, leaving 600 dead.

Independence discussions continued for ten years, in the course of which South Africa made several further attacks on SWAPO bases in Angola. In 1981 South Africa demanded that Cuban troops (which were in Angola assisting the Angolan government in a civil war against UNITA rebels) should withdraw from Angola, and made this a condition of its agreement to the UN plan.

At the same time, South Africa began to ease its grip on Namibia, allowing a 'transitional government of national unity' (a coalition of six parties) control over internal affairs from June 1985.

In December 1988, two agreements were signed: one between South Africa, Angola and Cuba, creating the conditions for implementation of the UN plan, the second between Angola and Cuba, setting out a timetable for withdrawal of Cuban troops. A formal ceasefire came into effect in April 1989; this was followed by clashes in northern Namibia between SWAPO and South African forces, resulting in the deaths of some 300 SWAPO fighters.

Nonetheless, progress towards independence continued through 1989. The interim government was dissolved and by September 43,000 exiled Namibians had returned home. Many SWAPO members had been in exile for 27 years. Namibia achieved independence on 21 March 1990 and became the Commonwealth's 50th member.

In 1977 South Africa had annexed Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port, together with a surrounding 1,124 sq km enclave and the 12 offshore Penguin Islands. Walvis Bay remained a subject of dispute until March 1994, when it and the islands were returned to Namibia.

Independent state

UN-supervised elections were held in November 1989. Ten political parties stood, including SWAPO, which gained 57% of the votes and 41 of 72 seats in the Constituent Assembly. In February 1990 Dr Sam Nujoma was elected by the Constituent Assembly to be the first president of an independent Namibia. Nujoma (76% of the popular vote in the first presidential election) and SWAPO (73% in the National Assembly elections) were returned to power in the December 1994 elections.

In late November 1998, parliament passed a constitutional amendment to allow Nujoma to serve more than two terms. Namibia's High Commissioner to the UK, Ben Ulenga, resigned in protest against both the amendment and Namibia's military involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ulenga later formed a new political grouping which was registered as the Congress of Democrats.

In 2001 Nujoma announced he would not seek a fourth term of office and, at its 2004 congress, Hifikepunye Pohamba was chosen as the SWAPO candidate for the presidential election in November 2004.

The November 2004 presidential and legislative elections were won in landslide victories by Pohamba (76.4% of votes) and SWAPO (55 of 72 seats and 75% of the votes). Ulenga (CoD) received 7.3% of the votes in the presidential election and Kaura (DTA) 5.1%, while the CoD won five seats and DTA four.

Pohamba and SWAPO were again returned to government in November 2009 in another landslide. In the presidential poll Pohamba received 76.4% of votes and his main challenger, Hidipo Hamutenya of the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), 11.1%. In the legislative elections SWAPO won 54 seats (and 75.3% of votes) and the RDP 8 seats (11.3%).

International relations

Namibia is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, African Union, Non-Aligned Movement, Southern African Customs Union, Southern African Development Community, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

Namibia hosts the secretariat of the Southern African Customs Union; the SADC Tribunal; and the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

Traveller information

Immigration and customs: Passports must be valid for at least six months from the date of departure. Visas are required by all Commonwealth nationals. Prohibited imports include plants and plant material.

Travel within the country: Traffic drives on the left. Visitors wishing to hire a car need an international driving permit.

Scheduled flights link Windhoek and other main towns. Luxury bus services connect main towns throughout Namibia and South Africa. Rail services are generally slow and most trains run overnight. There are two luxury train services, one connecting with Upington in South Africa, and the other a weekly connection between Windhoek and Swakopmund that crosses the Namib Desert. Taxis provide urban transport.

Travel health: Prevalent diseases where appropriate precautionary measures are recommended include cholera, diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rabies, schistosomiasis (bilharzia) and typhoid.

There were 984,000 tourist arrivals in 2010.

Further information

Government of Namibia: www.grnnet.gov.na

Electoral Commission of Namibia: www.ecn.na

Parliament: www.parliament.gov.na

Bank of Namibia: www.bon.com.na

Namibia Tourism Board: www.namibiatourism.com.na

Commonwealth Secretariat: www.thecommonwealth.org

Commonwealth of Nations:
www.commonwealthofnations.org/country/namibia