

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Namibia Summary 8 October 2025

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) preferential trade programme expires on 30 September. While the expiration is not set to hold significant short-term consequences for the Namibian economy, it could impact the country in the long-term by slowing down economic diversification efforts. Wildfires destroy an estimated 34% of the Etosha National Park (ENP), highlighting the threat of climate change for Namibia. Cabinet approves a decision to add 36 countries to its visa-on-arrival programme, a bid to increase accessibility to Namibia.

African Growth and Opportunity Act expires

The **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)** expired on 30 October, ending the **United States (US)** longstanding preferential trade programme that not only granted Namibia, but the whole of Africa, duty free access to US markets. Under AGOA, Namibia largely exported mineral and metal products, including uranium and diamonds as well as processed fish products, beverages and manufactured goods. Namibia will not feel the short terms effects of the expiration of AGOA too aggressively as its exposure to the act has been limited - the US is not even one of Namibia's top five export destinations and in 2024, Namibia only [exported](#) approximately \$181.6m worth of goods to the US. Furthermore, Namibia's exports markets are varied and include exporting gold and diamonds to **South Africa**, radioactive chemicals, zinc and lead ore to **China**, and refined petroleum, diamonds and cement to **Botswana**, which helps protect the economy.

However, in the longer term, the expiration of AGOA could lead to a slowdown in Namibia's economic diversification potential as there is now less demand for processed goods which may have a knock on effect on Namibia's efforts to prioritise diversification. AGOA's expiration could also hinder the government's own policy frameworks such as the **National Development Plan (NDP5)** which is designed to move the economy away from dependence on primary economic activities such as mining and agriculture. The NDP5 aims to diversify the economy by fostering the growth of industry and manufacturing in the country. Additionally, the NDP5 also focuses on boosting small and medium enterprises (SME) through promoting labour-intensive industries, which includes manufacturing, textiles and the production of value-added goods, such processed minerals.

While Namibia exported a small percentage of its national natural resources to the US under AGOA, the value-added industries specifically targeting the US market will slow down which erodes Namibia's long term economic diversification. To increase economic diversification over the long term, Namibia should focus on bolstering local and regional value chains under the **Africa Tree Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)** to open new markets for value-added industries.

Etosha National Park fire highlights climate change risks

A wildfire [broke out](#) on 22 September in the **Etosha National Park (ENP)**, one of Africa's largest nature reserves, burning down up to 34% of the park and highlighting the threat of climate change to Namibia. Authorities - which deployed 500 soldiers and two helicopters on 25 September in a bid to bring the fire under control - determined that the wildfire was able to

escalate so quickly due to a lack of rain and extremely dry vegetation, side effects of climate change.

President **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** (2024-present) [addressed](#) the **United Nations (UN) General Assembly** on 24 September, while the wildfire was still burning, requesting greater implementation of the **Namib Declaration**. The Namib Declaration is a framework to end desertification and land degradation by the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**. The Namib Declaration was adopted in 2013 at the the 11th **Conference of the Parties (COP)**, which was hosted in Namibia. However, since its adoption in 2013, the Namib Declaration has not been [fully implemented](#) due to a lack of political will, insufficient resources, and underdeveloped national action programmes.

Namibia is economically dependent on its primary (agriculture) and secondary (tourism) sectors, which climate change poses a direct threat to. ENP is one of Namibia's biggest tourist attractions and hosts over 200,000 [visitors](#) annually. Visitors not only contribute to the park directly but also support local communities and the wider tourism sector. The damage to the park's biodiversity, infrastructure, and visitor experience is likely to result in reduced tourist arrivals lower revenue for lodges and tour operators and hold economic ramifications for local communities. Overall, tourism contributes 7% to Namibia's GDP.

The agricultural industry is also facing environmental risks through desertification, droughts, and inconsistent rainfall patterns. The agricultural industry plays an [enormous](#) role in the country's economy, with 70% of the population depending directly or indirectly on this sector for their income. Apart from national income, agriculture also plays a key part in food security as the country [grows](#) rain-fed crops like pearl millet, sorghum and maize which are staple food sources for many Namibians.

While effects of climate change can already be felt, as illustrated by the fire, the increasing unpredictability of global and national weather patterns indicates that climate change remains a long-term threat that is highly likely to increase in consequences, requiring greater action from the government.

Namibia increases lists of countries qualified for visa on arrival

During a cabinet meeting on 2 September, cabinet members approved a plan to [add](#) 36 countries to Namibia's visa-on-arrival programme, which the home affairs ministry implemented in April. Previously, up to 33 countries, including the US, **United Kingdom**, **France**, and **Germany**, had visa free access to Namibia. However, in April, the government opted to end this visa exemption programme and introduce a new visa-on-arrival programme, citing principle of diplomatic reciprocity.

Currently, 90 countries are already eligible for the visa-on-arrival programme, but the government is now looking to add an additional 36 countries, including **Central African Republic**, **Bermuda**, **Slovenia** and **Sweden**. However, notably, these 36 countries' citizens had to previously apply for a visa in person at a Namibian diplomatic mission, meaning the visa-on-arrival programme will mark an ease in travel for them.

The expansion of the visa-on-arrival programme is an important strategy from the home affairs ministry to encourage tourism and accessibility especially as the end of the visa exemption programme for certain nationalities did increase the administrative and bureaucratic burden. The expansion of the visa-on-arrival programme also supports the government initiatives to attract international investment.

However, the expansion of the programme, and the success thereof, includes some logistical aspects which the government must take into account. The visa-on-arrival programme encourages visitors to apply for their visas online beforehand meaning that the programme's

success is dependent on efficient digital processing and trained immigration officers. However, inefficient state bureaucracy is a significant challenge for Namibia and **GAN Integrity**, a government monitoring index, [classifies](#) Namibia's customs administration as a very high risk to the ease of doing business.

While the expansion of the visa-on-arrival programme is a step forward for Namibia to encourage international business and increase accessibility to the country, the government must also ensure that the logistical aspects of such an initiative is properly accounted for to ensure success.

Planner

26 Nov 2025 **(Namibia)** Regional councils and local authorities elections

Chronology

6 Oct 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *Business Day*. **South Africa**-headquartered **Standard Bank** CEO **Sim Tshabalala** states Namibia could become Africa's next major growth story, with oil and gas discoveries potentially boosting the country's economic growth to 7% by 2030;

6 Oct 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *Ministry of International Relations*. The second session of the **Botswana-Namibia Bi-National Commission (BNC)** convenes during which the two countries discuss avenues of cooperation on diplomatic, economic, defence, security and social issues;

5 Oct 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. **United Kingdom**-headquartered **Amnesty International** calls on **Germany** to formally acknowledge its responsibility for the 1904–1908 genocide of the **Ovaherero** and **Nama** peoples in Namibia and to provide reparations directly to descendants of victims;

3 Oct 2025 **Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)** *Ministry of International Relations*. Deputy international relations and trade minister **Jenelly Matundu**, leads a Namibian delegation to the 22nd **Africa-Nordic Foreign Ministers** meeting to discuss trade and investment between Africa and the Nordic countries;

2 Oct 2025 **Havana (Cuba)** *Ministry of International Relations*. International relations and trade minister **Selma Ashipala-Musavyi**, concludes the **Intergovernmental Commission on Bilateral Cooperation** between **Namibia** and Cuba, confirming that agreements were signed regarding areas of health, sports and education;

30 Sep 2025 **Montréal (Canada)** *New Era*. Works and transport minister, **Veikko Nekundi**, attends the **International Civil Aviation Organisation Assembly** and affirms Namibia's commitment to the **Chicago Convention**, which dictates the international standards for air travel and aircraft safety;

28 Sep 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. Justice and labour relations ministry defends spending N\$24m (\$1.38m) on private lawyers between May 2024 and March 2025, citing the need for specialist expertise in high-profile and complex cases, including disputes over the 2024 presidential and **National Assembly** elections;

27 Sep 2025 **New York City (United States)** *Ministry of International Relations*. International relations and trade minister **Selma Ashipala-Musavyi**, participates in the 80th session of the **United Nations General Assembly**;

23 Sep 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *UNESCO*. The **United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** hosts a workshop for Namibian youth in conjunction with the **Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)** and the environment, forestry and tourism

ministry to strengthen the role of indigenous and local knowledge in national biodiversity planning;

18 Sep 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. President **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** announces a new team of ambassadors to key countries, including **China, Russia, the United States, Germany and France**, with appointments set for four years;

15 Sep 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. President **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** warns that service delivery in Namibia could stall if the ruling **South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)** fails to secure a majority in the upcoming regional and local elections, urging members to ensure victories in all constituencies;

13 Sep 2025 **Cape Town (South Africa)** *EWN*. A **Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC)** report reveals that **Namibia** is a source of illegal firearms for gangs in South Africa's **Western Cape Province**;

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