

Messe Berlin cancels ITB 2020

ITB Berlin 2020 officially cancelled by Messe Berlin after days of intensive talks, exhibitor withdrawals and public calls for the trade fair to be dropped because of the potential health risks to an expected 150,000 visitors and exhibitors from the rapidly spreading Covid-19 virus

Messe Berlin GmbH finally confirmed on Friday evening that ITB Berlin 2020 will not take place. Due to the rapid spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) the German Federal Ministry of Health and the Federal Ministry of Economics have stated their opinion that ITB Berlin be cancelled. The responsible health authority of the district of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf in Berlin imposed significantly tighter restrictions on holding the event. Among its requirements the authority stipulated that each participant would need to prove to Messe Berlin that they were not from a designated risk area or had not been in contact with a person or persons from a risk area. It is not possible for Messe Berlin to satisfy these requirements overall.

Dr. Christian Göke, CEO of Messe Berlin GmbH, said: „With more than 10,000 exhibitors from over 180 countries ITB Berlin is extremely important for the world’s tourism industry. We take our responsibility for the health and safety of our visitors, exhibitors and employees very seriously. It is with a heavy heart that we must now come to terms with the cancellation of ITB Berlin 2020.“

Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Berlin Wolf-Dieter Wolf said: „Not once in the 54-year history of the event have ITB Berlin and Messe Berlin experienced a similar situation. We would like to thank all exhibitors and partners from all over the world who over the past few days and weeks have stood by ITB Berlin. We look forward to continuing the trusted relationship with our partners in the market.“

Digu //Naobeb, Chief Executive Officer of the Namibia Tourism Board said: “ We regret the situation has arisen, as the ITB would have given the Namibian Tourism Industry a great and professional marketing platform to promote the destination Namibia under the umbrella of the Namibia Tourism Board for the 29th consecutive year.“

He further said: „The Namibia Tourism Board would like to thank all the Namibian trade partners for their continued support towards the promotion of Namibia as a preferred holiday destination in our target markets. We equally sympathise with all our Namibian co-exhibitors who have to encounter severe losses due to the cancellation of ITB 2020.“

“Never before has the Namibia Tourism Board registered so many partners at the ITB: a total of 43 co-exhibitors, representing 122 accommodation establishments, 24 travel operators and five car rental companies, would have presented their products under the motto *Namibia. Inspired by Conservation* from the 4th to the 8th of March 2020. Three upcoming small and medium-sized enterprises were also part of the delegation from Namibia. Air Namibia, Namibia Wildlife Resorts and Gondwana Collection Namibia again supported the Namibia Tourism Board as strategic partners.



The strong demand from Namibia confirms the role of the ITB as an important platform for strengthening the reputation of our destination, growing the network, discovering new market opportunities and analysing the products of competitors," // Naobeb said.

The Namibia Tourism Board would like to thank following companies who have registered for participation at ITB 2020 for their continuous support:

Abenteuer Afrika Safari, African Monarch Lodges, African Profile Safaris, Africa on Wheels, AfriCar Car Hire, Air Namibia, Asco Car Hire, Africa Tourist info / ATI Holidays, Blue Crane Safaris & Transfers, Caprivi Car Hire, Cars & Guides for Hire , Exclusive Reservations & Marketing, Finesse Hospitality Support Services, Gondwana Collection Namibia, Intermix Tours and Safaris, Journeys Namibia, KALI Guesthouse, Lüderitz Nest Hotel, Matiti Safaris, N/a'an ku sê Wildlife Experience, Namibia Collection, Namibia Tours & Safaris, Namibia Tracks & Trails, Namibia Wildlife Resorts, Natural Selection Safaris, Naturally Namibia, NatureFriend Safaris, O&L Leisure Hotels and Lodges, ONDILI lodges & activities NAMIBIA, Pack Safari, Private Safaris, Rafiki Tours & Safaris, Reservation Destination, Safari2Go, Sense of Africa, SWA Safaris, The Swakopmund Collection, Taleni Africa, Terra Nova Tours & Incentives, The Elegant Collection, Ultimate Safaris, Wild Africa Travel, Wild Dog Safaris and Wilderness Safaris Namibia.

Digu //Naobeb concluded: "Surely the cancellation of the ITB will have an impact on the overall tourism industry. The Namibia Tourism Board supports a statement by the UNWTO, that during times of crisis, tourism has to live up to its responsibility as an integral part of wider society. The sector must put people and their wellbeing first. The cooperation of the tourism sector will be vital in stopping the spread of the virus and limiting its impact on people and communities. Tourists also have a responsibility to inform themselves before they travel in order to limit the threat of transmission, and they should follow the recommendations of the WHO and their own national health authorities. Tourism is vulnerable to the effects of public health emergencies."

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