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Astronomy as a tool for sustainable development in Namibia

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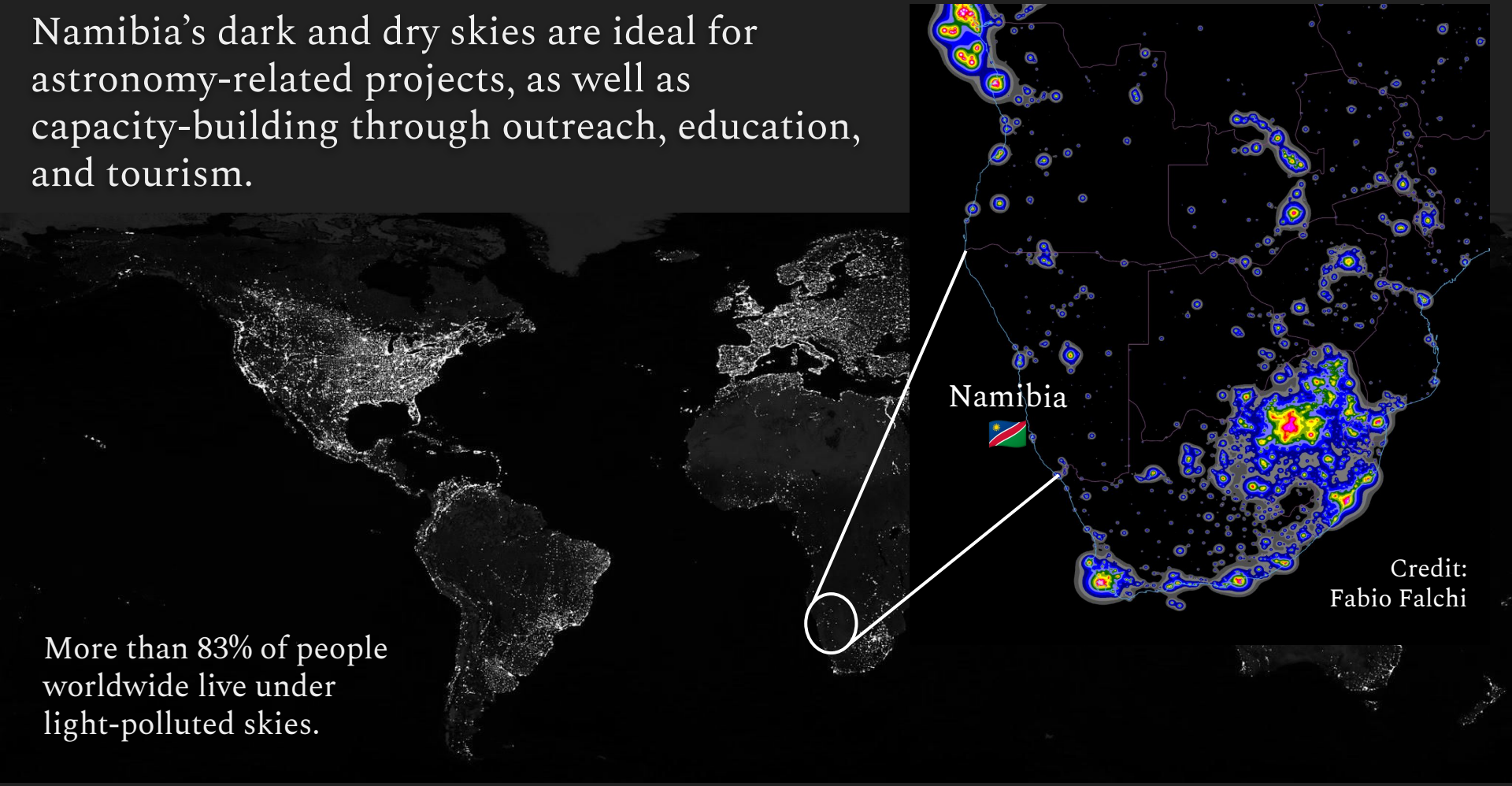
Namibia's dark and dry skies are ideal for astronomy-related projects, as well as capacity-building through outreach, education, and tourism.



Credit: J. Stevens (NASA Earth Observatory), M. Román (NASA Goddard Space Flight Center), Suomi NPP VIIRS

H.E.S.S. and the AMT

Namibia is home to the High Energy Spectroscopic System, and the upcoming Africa Millimetre Telescope.

Observatories have great potential for capacity-building, alongside research. For example, through:

- School visits → inspires the next generation of scientists and engineers
- Training and jobs → provides work and opportunities for local people/students
- Open days → generates excitement and raises support for science and astronomy
- Tourism → fosters trust in science, and provides opportunities for collaboration and socio-economic growth

Credit: Sabine Gloaguen

Credit: Sangku Kim/ESO

Credit: Dave Laney

Dark sky tourism (DST)

DST empowers marginalised communities, through education and training, diversifying income and the preservation of cultural heritage.

At the same time, tourists experience new, non-Western perspectives via indigenous stories. They also learn about the harmful effects of light pollution upon humans and other living things.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Light pollution is detrimental to our health, meanwhile dark sky activities can promote good health and well-being.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

DST brings ample opportunity for astronomy and light pollution education, both for locals and tourists.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Dark sky tourism creates jobs and opportunities for rural communities throughout the year.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

DST promotes investment in infrastructure in rural areas and fosters innovation for the sharing of astronomy knowledge.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

Studies have shown that anthropogenic light likely has a detrimental impact on seafloor ecosystems.

15 LIFE ON LAND

Light pollution harms many ecosystems, from disrupting the migration of birds to the hatching of sea turtles.

The UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs)