

# Red Card for Tourism?

10 Principles

and challenges  
for a sustainable  
tourism  
development  
in the 21st Century



TURISTÄKNAK  
TOURIST

## AG Rio +10

- ❖ akte — Working Group on Tourism & Development, Basel
- ❖ FernWeh — Tourism Review, Freiburg i. Br.
- ❖ Friends of Nature International, Vienna
- ❖ respect, Vienna
- ❖ TOURISM WATCH — EED, Bonn

## DANTE

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Rio: Ten years on

## Red card for tourism?



At the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, the international community adopted important resolutions on how the precious resources of our planet should be equitably shared and protected for future generations.

In preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa in August 2002, the achievements of the so-called Rio process are being evaluated and new strategies planned. Such strategies are urgently needed given the failure of international actors to implement most of the promises and hopes of Rio, not least in tourism, which in recent years has become one of the world's leading industries. Since tourism profits from beautiful landscapes and natural and cultural diversity, and relies on peace and security for its development, it would be in the tourism industry's interest to contribute to the protection of the global environment and social justice. The WSSD offers an opportunity for a re-oriented tourism to be integrated into strategies for sustainable development.


### Chances and hopes — but also costs

Never in the history of humankind have so many people travelled, whether for leisure or business. At the start of the 21st century, about 700 million international arrivals were registered world-wide, almost twice as many as 15 years ago. In addition to this, approximately ten times as many domestic trips were undertaken in 2000. This expansion of travel ought to provide a historic opportunity for people from different backgrounds to meet and learn from each other. However, this possibility is reserved for very few people. According to estimates published by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO-OMT), only about three to five percent of the world's population are able to travel abroad, and these are primarily people from rich industrial countries or the upper classes in developing and transitional countries. Travelling has gained enormous importance as an expression of lifestyle and leisure activity in the North, but the global disparities are clear.

It is undeniable that tourism offers new possibilities for employment and development, especially in poorer, structurally weak regions, and the countries of the South have substantially increased their share in international

tourism since the beginning of the eighties. However, the rich industrial countries continue to book more than half of all arrivals and approximately two thirds of the world-wide receipts from international tourism which, according to the statistics of WTO-OMT, came to an impressive 476 billion US dollars in 2000.

Despite recessions and crises, tourism has shown above-average growth rates in recent years, and rates today among the world's leading industries. With over 200 million employees, it is considered the world's largest employer. Tourism is seen as a pacemaker for globalisation, and even as the engine for development in the 21st century. This promising sector is thus actively promoted in all indebted regions with private and public funds, often in the form of more or less hidden subsidies for the construction of infrastructures, with tax exemptions, incentives and other liberalisation measures. Consequently, more and more tour operators as well as host regions and countries come onto the global market with almost identical offers — hotels, beaches, ski slopes, cultural »highlights« etc. — resulting in bitter competition. Travel prices have fallen dramatically in recent years, and concentration in the tourism sector is increasing rapidly. Today the world wide tourism business is dominated by a handful of integrated companies which operate internationally and which have access to travellers' demand, and simultaneous control of the entire package of services provided to them.



Among the losers in this competitive struggle is the environment — depletion of natural resources seems to be free of charge since the environmental costs of boundless mobility are not included in travel fares. The smaller suppliers in the North and South who often aim at environmentally and socially more responsible offers are at a competitive disadvantage since they have a much weaker position on the globalised tourism market. Among human groups, the major victims are the disadvantaged populations in the tourism areas, particularly in the South: women, children, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. Due to the excessive consumption of resources by tourism, they must often accept a further cut in their standard of living, without compensation or means to fight for their rights.

## »World Champions of Travel«

### Travel data from Germany, Austria and Switzerland

Country/ Population	Travel Propensity*	Domestic Travel	International Travel	Travel to developing countries
<b>Germany</b> /82 m. (63.8 m. above 14 years)**	75,9%	18,2 m.	44,0 m.	4,7 m.
<b>Austria</b> /8.1 m. (6.5 m. above 15 years)***	55%	8,4 m.	6,4 m.	0,05 m.
<b>Switzerland</b> /7.2 m.	80%	10,5 m.	12,4 m.	1,2 m.

\* Percentage of the population that goes on holiday at least once a year, for Germany and Switzerland at least 3 nights of stay, for Austria at least 4 nights

\*\* all further data for Germany is for the population above 14 years

\*\*\* data for travel propensity and international travel / Austria is for the population above 15 years

Sources:

Germany: Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen e.V. (F.U.R.), Hamburg, The Reiseanalyse RA 2001, Holidays 2000. Austria: TourMIS Austria; Nationalbank/Fessel GfK 2000. Switzerland: National Department for Statistics 2000, College of Trade St. Gallen (HSG) 1998.

## The conflict between tourism and sustainable development

At the 1992 Earth Summit, tourism was not on the agenda, despite efforts by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Not until 1999 did the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the body which supervises the implementation of the Rio agreements, decide to establish an international work programme on sustainable tourism. This opened up a new political space at the international and national level to bring tourism development into line with the commitments undertaken in Rio: (1) to acknowledge sustainability as an ecological, social and economic contract between generations, (2) to respect the limits of ecological carrying capacity, (3) to create a global environmental justice able to eradicate poverty and (4) to adjust the consumption patterns of the North to the requirements of sustainable development — this with the full involvement and participation of all relevant stakeholders. However, the promising new framework route for tou-

rism sketched out by the CSD-7 decision has hardly been noticed by the leaders of the industry, let alone explored or implemented.

Travel suppliers, hotels, tour-operators, and local communities which offer tourism products in the North and in the South have worked towards more appropriate tourism in recent years, if only to ensure their future. More and more travellers, especially from industrial countries, are declaring an interest in environmentally and socially responsible forms of tourism. However, this potential is not being developed sufficiently due to a lack of adequate supply. Such new, more appropriate initiatives and practices in tourism often remain regional and one-sided, and are generally aimed at restricted ecological issues such as water conservation or waste management without including the social dimensions of sustainability. These dimensions raise the question of who has access to and control over which resources, in order to avoid excessive use. In contrast, leaders of the industry throughout the world continue to pursue a policy of tourism growth, which has long been shown to be unsustainable. Moreover, this policy exposes promising initiatives in the North and the South to harsh competition with low-priced travel and the struggle for market share.



The re-orientation of the tourism industry towards environmentally and socially responsible tourism and leisure activities which is needed for sustainable development, has not yet appeared. It will not be rung in with the »International Year of Ecotourism« proclaimed for 2002 by the United Nations. The vaguely-defined concept of »ecotourism« is loudly promoted without adequate opportunities for comments or critical questioning from those affected. Nor can a decisive turn-away from non-sustainable forms of tourism be achieved simply with new guidelines for tourism such as those presently being drafted in the frame of the UN Convention on Biodiversity in the Rio process. Even here — though the advance is welcome — the experiences of those affected by tourism have not yet gained the weight that they should have as experts. »Best practice« or guidelines, however detailed they may be, can by no means replace the comprehensive, integrative and cross-sectoral politics of tourism required for a new orientation of tourism towards sustainable development. A coherent, responsible and equitable co-operation among all stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous peoples, political authorities, the tourism industry, travellers and civil society of North and South, is needed to shape the necessary policies at all levels.

## Breaking new ground in tourism

In preparation for the WSSD, tourism NGOs from Germany, Austria and Switzerland — the countries which are the »world champions of travel« — are presenting ten principles and challenges designed to serve as a basis for discussion and to suggest new initiatives for sustainable development of tourism. These ten principles and challenges correspond to some of the most important agenda items in the Johannesburg Summit. The accompanying strategy paper develops these ten themes. This approach may lead to some contextual overlapping but opens up new perspectives and space for action and permits a more comprehensive examination of tourism within the Rio process.

If the three pillars of sustainable development — public welfare, economy and environment — are to be effectively built into tourism, the contradictions of current tourism strategies must be recognised and understood. Only then can fruitful strategies be identified, and these must always follow two parallel tracks: adverse developments such as worsening work conditions or excessive use of resources must be combated through concrete measures such as hedge clauses or eco-efficient technologies; at the same time, action must be taken against the underlying causes of poverty and environmental crises. This means eradicating the structures that cause poverty and destroy the environment. At present, available environmental and social directives are often considered the only effective means to tackle problems, even if they only relieve the symptoms. As uncomfortable as it may appear, more initiatives by all stakeholders are needed in order to grasp the root causes of harmful touristic developments.

With their strategy paper, NGOs from Germany, Austria and Switzerland want to raise such challenges. The global concerns of the Rio process favour a North-South approach. However, this does not mean that only long-distance travel and tourism is problematic or that tourism in the North or the growing domestic tourism in the South do not equally require new strategies for sustainable development. A complex topic such as tourism cannot be covered adequately in a brief paper. Instead, the authors wish to stimulate interest in the area and encourage further work. The strategy paper should be used in the preparations for the Rio Earth Summit in Johannesburg and initiate a broader debate among NGOs, in politics and in the tourism industry as to how tourism should be redesigned in a sustainable way on all levels and how everyone can contribute to it.



Rio + 10:

# Ten principles for tourism

1

1 Poverty/Development

**Tourism must help overcome poverty — social and environmental justice and the participation of local people in destinations must be the foundations for this.**

2

2 Climate: Travel/Energy

**Escape from traffic jams, forget jetlag, choose sustainable mobility!**

3

3 Land: Soil/Food security

**Our holidays — their home**

4

4 Biodiversity

**Tourism feeds off the natural and cultural diversity of the planet — it must contribute to its survival.**

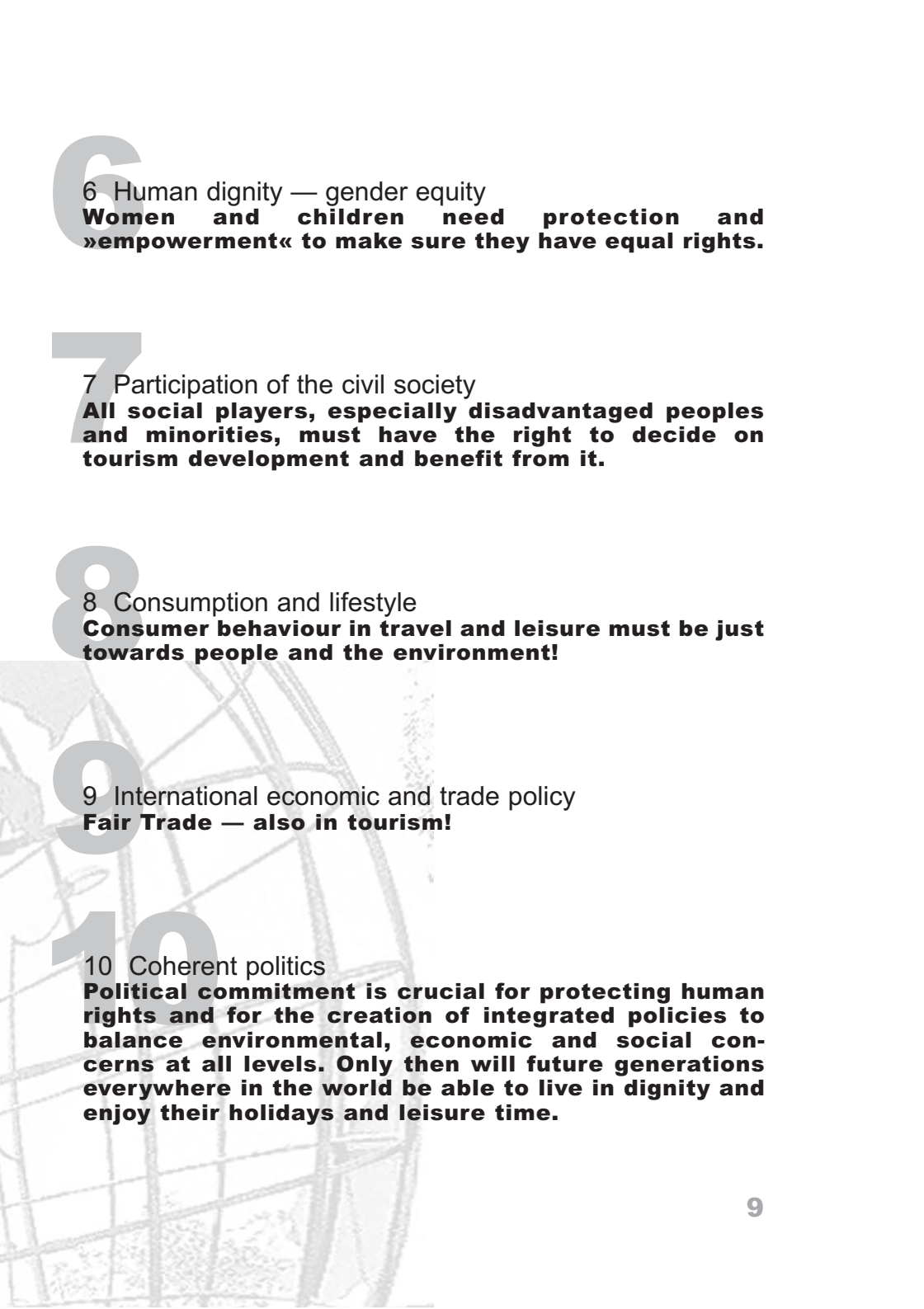
5

5 Water

**Refreshing water is more precious on our travels than at home.**

8





6 Human dignity — gender equity

**Women and children need protection and «empowerment» to make sure they have equal rights.**

7 Participation of the civil society

**All social players, especially disadvantaged peoples and minorities, must have the right to decide on tourism development and benefit from it.**

8 Consumption and lifestyle

**Consumer behaviour in travel and leisure must be just towards people and the environment!**

9 International economic and trade policy

**Fair Trade — also in tourism!**

10 Coherent politics

**Political commitment is crucial for protecting human rights and for the creation of integrated policies to balance environmental, economic and social concerns at all levels. Only then will future generations everywhere in the world be able to live in dignity and enjoy their holidays and leisure time.**

# 1

## 1 Poverty/Development

**Tourism must help overcome poverty — social and environmental justice and the participation of local people in destinations must be the foundations for this.**

1.3 billion people world wide are presently living in extreme poverty, this means on less than one US dollar a day. Despite economic growth at global levels, to which tourism has contributed significantly, approximately 60 countries have become poorer since 1980. Only by overcoming poverty can the foundation for a sustainable development be established. The efforts for eradicating all structures that cause poverty must take first priority.

The belief that the travels of the rich help poor countries and regions to prosperity has existed as long as tourism has. Recently, the UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UN-LDC) adopted their first programme of action on tourism in which the LDCs are urged to promote a climate conducive to tourism. At the same time, funds from development assistance were requested for tourism.

The basis for this was a new report by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO-OMT) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It revealed how certain LDCs, thanks to tourism development, were able to improve their position on the world market. However, data and statistics can be compiled and interpreted in very different ways. From a global perspective, tourism has not been able to reduce poverty: 80 percent of the people living in extreme poverty live in just thirteen countries in the world and ten of these have an important tourism sector which has shown above-average growth in the past years.

In the hope of quick foreign exchange earnings and employment creation, many governments frequently turn to tourism. In many indebted countries, the promotion of tourism is a part of the structural adjustment programmes prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In order to be able to keep the pace of global competition, host countries are forced to invest more and more into increasing their attractiveness. Yet the construction of infrastructure such as airports, streets, energy and water supply for tourists, is a heavy burden for the national economies of the destination countries and often makes them incur further debts. Foreign investors are lured to the country through generous incentives such as tax exemptions, tax-free repatriation of profits etc. Concessions to private industry, which were further expanded by the trade agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO-OMC), lead to heavy losses of income for the tourism countries (see chapter 9).

According to UNCTAD, an average of 40 to 50 percent of foreign exchange earnings from tourism leak back to the home countries of the travellers and tourism companies for imports of consumer and luxury goods. Transnational tourism companies, who offer not only tour operation but also transportation, accommodation and food and who have access to international reservation systems take advantage of their domination of the market in the form of new »all-inclusive« offers as well as in price negotiations with local suppliers. UNCTAD denounces such unfair competition practices and complains that often only a quarter or even less of the price paid by guests to the travel company for his or her holiday actually reaches the destination country. UNCTAD experts themselves are beginning to suspect that in certain cases, poor countries of the South are subsidising the holidays of rich tourists.

If new funds, for example from official development assistance, help tourism to grow further, then competition on the global tourism market could intensify. This would have serious consequences particularly for smaller suppliers — not just in the South — and for local communities in tourism destinations. Instead, the destinations, particularly in the South, require specific support in order to break new ground in tourism so that the broader population can finally benefit more from it.

National economic statistics offer little insight into the local distribution of revenue or the ecological and social costs of tourism. Tourism certainly creates employment and this contributes to income. But in this personnel intensive industry, the fall in the cost of travelling in the past years has also affected the work conditions of many employees in tourism. In its new report on the effects of globalisation in the hotel, catering and tourism sector, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that the wages in tourism are on average 20 percent lower than in other sectors. Even in the North, for example in Switzerland, many of the »working poor«, people who work full time yet whose earnings are under the minimum subsistence level, can be found in the tourism industry. In many places, people work under precarious conditions in tourism: long and irregular working hours, lack of job security due to seasonality, few opportunities for qualification and promotion. The minimum labour standards as they are set in the ILO Core Conventions as well as in Convention N° 172 (Working Conditions in Hotels and Restaurants, 1992) are hardly respected in tourism. According to ILO, flexible work (eg irregular part-time jobs, work on call) have increased in the past years. Increasingly younger workers are being recruited for jobs in tourism; today, about one half of the employees in tourism are under 25 years of age (see chapter 6).

Particularly the poorest of the poor in the host countries generally benefit very little from tourism. When attempting to earn a living in the informal sec-

tor as self-appointed »guides« or street vendors they are often repressed by authorities. The informal sector does offer a wide range of employment possibilities, but especially in this area, employment seekers require support, such as basic education, business know-how, language skills and financially accessible »starter aid« so that they are not exploited.

But tourism does not only create employment, it also destroys jobs in traditional sectors such as fishing or agriculture (see chapters 3, 4, 5). Not only the extensive demands on resources by tourism businesses are responsible for this. In the course of liberalisation, farmers in many countries have had to give up their occupations due to a lack of sales potential since the large hotels are able to import food and materials for accommodation and construction from the cheapest suppliers. Typically, such losses of work places are not accounted for in tourism statistics. The impoverishment of disadvantaged groups of the population through increasing costs of living in tourism areas is equally neglected.

Economic and development organisations emphasise that beautiful, unscathed landscapes and cheap labour are valuable advantages when recommending the promotion of tourism to poor countries and regions. This shows that to some extent tourism always feeds off the poverty of host regions — a fact that pervades the history of tourism. The difference is that development and structural change occurred much more slowly in the past. Today, this fact is much more politically explosive especially when tourism developments drastically increase social disparities in the destinations. Social disruption and incursions on travellers are often the results. A sustainable vision for tourism is to turn away from the »strategy« of encounter between poor and rich towards an encounter between equals. Political and economic stakeholders, as well as travellers, carry the responsibility of actively working towards this goal.

## Challenges

❖ Tourism plans must be in line with the goal of social- and environmentally sustainable development of regions and countries and be controlled through careful market research carried out by independent organisations. Instead of large, growth orientated projects, decentralised approaches should be preferred which are targeted towards public welfare and the participation of all those affected. With the help of legal regu-



lations and binding agreements, it should be ensured that private tourism companies, especially foreign and transnational companies, operate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner and create guaranteed markets for local producers. This must become a standard of quality in tourism and be ensured through the appropriate education of all those responsible.

❖ The responsible players from politics and industry, especially from the governments of the industrialised countries and the administrative levels of the large tourism companies are urgently requested to redesign the international economic and trade policy frameworks in such a way that disadvantaged population groups in tourism countries can benefit more from tourism.

❖ The industrialised countries are requested to substantially increase funds for development co-operation and to contribute at least 0.7 percent of their gross national product for official development assistance. These funds should be primarily used for the eradication of poverty, for health care, food security, education, »empowerment« and participation.

❖ No money from development aid should be used for the expansion of tourism or infrastructure from which local communities do not benefit.

❖ Development co-operation is needed to empower disadvantaged groups of the population in their response to tourism. This includes health care in all areas of life as well as empowerment for the people to ensure their own interests and rights. Only then can specific support for local suppliers such as in education or access to affordable financing for tourist facilities as well as technical aid (the transfer of technology) come to fruition.

❖ Funds from development co-operation should continue to be used to ensure that the interests of those disadvantaged by tourism development are heard at an international level and to expand awareness raising and information for travellers.





## 2 Climate: Travel/Energy

### **Escape from traffic jams, forget jetlag, choose sustainable mobility!**

Holidays more and more frequently begin and end in traffic jams. In Switzerland, leisure travel accounts for 60 percent of the kilometres driven on the road; approximately two thirds of this travel is done in private automobiles. The carbon dioxide emissions from traffic in Austria have even increased by 30 percent since Rio. This not only means stress and accidents instead of rest and relaxation, but also an immeasurable consumption of natural resources, and exhaust fumes instead of fresh air.

Yet almost every trip to the South — even to an eco-lodge — depends on airplanes. The World Tourism Organization (WTO-OMT) predicts that long-haul travel is increasing more quickly than regional travel. An estimated eleven million Germans will travel abroad in 2005. Already 38 percent of all German holiday travelling is done by plane. In Frankfurt, just as many planes take off and land in ten minutes as in some Third World countries in an entire day. Although estimates of the Worldwatch Institute indicate that 43 percent of all international trips are done by plane and 42 percent on the road, tourism is hardly ever recognised as an integral part of the traffic problem.

Air travel is responsible for an amount of green house emissions that will increase the present emissions of the industrial countries by several percent by 2012. Presently, 75 percent of air travel world wide consists of passenger flights. About one half of the world wide 130 million tonnes of aircraft fuel for civil purposes is used by tourism. Yet barely six percent of the world's population has the privilege of flying. One flight, depending on the distance, height, type of aircraft and capacity, can be one hundred times more environmentally damaging than a train trip. Scientists estimate that the fumes from air travel which are much more harmful for the climate at high altitudes than close to the ground, contribute at least three times as much to the green-house effect as the emissions of travel at ground level. At the end of the 1990s, the average coverage of vapour trails in middle Europe presumably caused a warming which is at least as high as the effect of carbon dioxide emissions.

International air travel is not included in the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. »Pollution rights« from air travel are thus claimed for free — this means, they are not calculated in the national emission allowances agreed upon in the Kyoto Protocol — primarily by the countries in the North. According to the Kyoto Protocol, the

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialised agency of the UN, is responsible for limiting the output of green house gases from air travel. This organisation is not only against a kerosene tax but also against standards for carbon dioxide emissions. The present ICAO standards only consider the emissions put out at take-off and landing. There are no regulations for the rest of the flight.

Since air travel moves in a very sensitive layer of the atmosphere, action must be urgently taken. Paying an additional charge to the ticket which is then used to plant trees as »compensation« for the emissions caused cannot repair the damages. The 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> which would need to be planted yearly to make up for the carbon dioxide given off by air travel (an area the size of Haiti) cannot patch up the multi-layered damages to the climate. A more efficient usage of energy through technical innovations is effective only if it is not offset by the growing rate of air travel.

One hour of flying, converted to each passenger, causes more emissions than one person in Bangladesh during the activities of an entire year. Yet the effects of climate change must be substantially carried by people in the South and in fragile mountain and coastal regions. In June 2001, at their regional preparatory meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Caribbean countries emphasised that people in small island states are threatened by rising sea-levels, an increase of flooding, and weather catastrophes. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), these problems caused damages worth 40 billion German marks in the 1990s. Due to a global warming of 0.3 degrees since 1980, 70 percent of the coral reefs in parts of the Indian Ocean have already faded and fishing is suffering heavy losses. Once beaches are washed away, the tourist usage itself and thus also the income from tourism is threatened. In the European mountain areas landslides and the melting of glaciers are already a threat. The lack of snow is already harming winter (sport) tourism.

Additionally, tourism world wide is accompanied by an enormous transfer of goods and transport of cargo in order to fulfil tourist expectations even at the furthest reaches of the world. The production and transport of building materials and luxury goods lead to an exploitation of natural resources, water, energy and clean air which is generally not considered in the climate balance. The energy costs for air conditioning and heated pools in tourist resorts are enormous. Additionally, the construction of landing ramps, roads and harbours generates health-damaging noise nuisance and destroys local landscapes and culture. Large state subsidies and tax reductions for air travel and road construction, generally financed by tax money, encourage the increase in traffic. Repeatedly unloading the costs of an environ-

mentally harmful travel infrastructure onto the general public for a more frequent, faster and increasingly immoderate tourist consumption by a privileged minority undermines the goal of social justice.

The trend in travel must be changed to a manageable, sustainable mobility for all and a regional cycle of supply relying on local producers and energy suppliers, especially in tourism. Tourism must be properly considered in traffic planning and tourist travel must be included in the planning of holiday landscapes and areas. Decision makers at all levels and in international cooperation are required to assume responsibility and take appropriate action.

## Challenges

✦ Air travel in and from industrial countries and all the emissions it causes must urgently be reduced. The international community must reach an agreement for an environmentally effective and just reduction. The European Union is requested to initiate measures for climate protection above and beyond the goals of the Kyoto Protocol, especially regarding tourism and air travel.



✦ Only transparent prices including an awareness of the impact that travel on ground and in the air has on the climate can express the actual resulting costs of transportation. The costs must be borne by those causing them. No subsidies or tax reductions for air travel! Instead, control measures such as fuel taxes, noise and emission regulations — not only for take-off and landing! — should be made obligatory.

✦ Prevention includes banning night flights, reducing short-haul flights and abandoning the expansion of air travel infrastructure. Travellers and tourism companies are requested to abandon short-haul flights.

✦ Governments at all levels must recognise air travel as well as motorised individual transportation for tourism and leisure as challenges on the path to sustainability. The targeted promotion of »eco-mobile« forms of transport and the expansion of public transportation must be encouraged for a responsible mobility for all. At the same time, travellers and holiday guests in the destinations must be made aware of their possibilities of contributing to climate protection.

✦ A regional supply of goods, energy and water could save, ie avoid, enormous transportation costs. All stakeholders are required to build up and support a regional supply in tourism through Local Agenda 21 processes and integrated regional planning.



## 3 Land: Soil/Food security

### **Our holidays — their home**

In the process of tourism expansion, entire coasts are often built up, attractive mountain areas are spoiled, valuable wet and drylands are sealed up. This has not only environmentally relevant consequences. The new development of ski slopes in the Alps and the insufficient glacier protection encourages erosion and damages the ground. The obstruction of coasts along the Mediterranean spoil marine ecosystems and ruin coastal landscapes including the variety of species which inhabit them. It is not enough that nature is thus disturbed and its habitats destroyed. In many places, local inhabitants must make way for tourism and reduce or even give up their traditional use of resources, often without adequate alternatives or compensation.

In Thailand, poor water quality due to herbicide pollution, lack of potable water as well as increasing land prices are the direct consequences of the expansion of hotels and golf courses. Those affected are often farmers and their families. Many of them were forced to sell their fields which were no longer suitable for the production of rice. The only alternative to this indirect expropriation which was left for some of them was to work as caddies on the golf courses, directly on the land where they had once grown their rice.

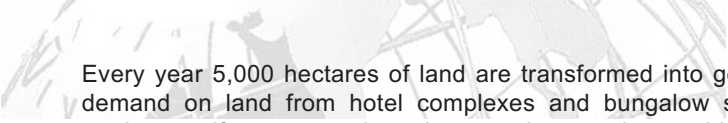
The fishermen and women of the archipelago Bazaruto on the coast of Mozambique lost their access to water and land after nature reserves were established. At the same time, concessions to tourism projects were made, and the country has been open to foreign investors in accordance with the Structural Adjustment Programme of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Development projects often claim to have the goal of reducing the debts of developing countries under the guise of nature conservation and at the same time propagate tourism as a new source of income. This can lead to the loss of rights of disposal over land and to the further impoverishment of the local population.

Even in Costa Rica, which is considered to be a prime example for »ecotourism«, very few people actually benefit from the revenue brought in by tourism. Thus, the case study of the area around the nature park Arenal Volcano arrived at the following results: the earnings in the minimum wage sector in tourism may be higher than the income in agriculture, but today the population no longer has food security. Since the land was sold to investors and is strictly reserved for natural conservation projects, agricultural production decreased and expensive food had to be imported. Only a few of

those who once lived on the land are able to find jobs in tourism. As the people no longer had the possibility to produce food for their own subsistence, they were no longer able to earn their living.

In many ways, tourism is often responsible for the inhabitants' loss of land rights. According to reports of the Wall Street Journal, the abundance of fish on the coast of Prainha do Canto Verde (Brazil) is increasingly being fished out by foreign high-tech cutters. After many fishermen had to give up their jobs due to poor catches, the community was put under even more pressure. In search for alternatives, some people were forced to sell their land. Due to unregulated land-ownership, real estate agents have an easy job — land is thus given away to foreigners for tourism projects. The fishermen's unstable economic situation due to the dwindling fish population causes uncontrolled tourism growth, which aside from a few poorly paid jobs scarcely brings any advantages for the community. Once the local economy is weakened, people are much more susceptible to the ill effects of tourism.

These examples show how complex the processes are that can be set into motion by tourism and that can — sometimes indirectly — close access to land. Especially people who live from jobs in the informal sector such as traditional livestock keeping and agriculture or gathering, are affected by tourism's land consumption. However, in some areas, these forms of income total up to 60 percent of the costs of living especially for indigenous peoples or marginalised minorities. The informal sector is essential for food security and health care especially in poor countries that do not have a functioning social security system. Each restriction of access to land is a concrete life risk for these communities. Tourism thus undermines the economic, social and cultural rights of the general human rights pact. Even projects realised in the name of nature protection and sustainable development can endanger the ability of local communities to design and realise their own perspectives of development.



Every year 5,000 hectares of land are transformed into golf courses. The demand on land from hotel complexes and bungalow settlements with marinas, golf courses and tennis courts is not only a problem in the South. Spacious tourism complexes, holiday apartments, winter sport facilities and casinos also take up a great deal of land in the Alps and on the Mediterranean. Moreover, these holiday resorts also require land for water and energy as well as sewage and waste. As a source of income, especially in the Alps, tourism is also a possibility of securing one's existence. It can thus help to prevent migration and to take care of the landscape. Do people need to accept tourism's enormous demand on land and resources in exchange?

## Challenges

❖ Without fair access to land and guaranteed rights of usage for local and indigenous communities sustainable development is not realisable — whether with or without tourism. The obligations of the International Pact on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights must also be fulfilled with respect to land and soil, particularly by those responsible for tourism.



❖ The often legally unregulated land rights, or collective forms of land ownership and use that do not include private property, must not be undermined by (foreign) land speculators. All countries must take responsibility for this.

❖ A change in the trends in tourism to ecological and socially appropriate forms is possible only if tourism is integrated into efforts for environmentally and socially sustainable regional development. Tourism planners are requested to link tourism to an environmentally sustainable regional agriculture, energy and water supply and sewage treatment and to help establish regional cycles of production, recycling and recovery. With appropriate political measures, private investors and tourism companies should be urged to supply food from regional/local markets. In the Alpine region in Europe, the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention) is to be considered a forward-looking framework for comprehensive sustainable development including tourism. Ratification of the implementation protocols must be encouraged.

❖ Including tourism aspects in Local Agenda 21 processes is indispensable for the integration of tourism in a sustainable regional development. The tourism industry and those responsible on local to national levels are thus called upon to initiate and finance multi-stakeholder processes.

❖ The protection of land and soil from the expansion of a ruinous tourism infrastructure must take absolute precedence in fragile mountain areas: no competitive building of mountain railways, no new ski areas in the Alps, no overloading of trekking paths in the Himalayas and in the Andes!

❖ The development of tourism must not be permitted or promoted without measures for nature conservation and for the sustainable management of natural resources. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of coasts, mountains, wet and drylands.

# 4

## Biodiversity

### **Tourism feeds off the natural and cultural diversity of the planet — it must contribute to its survival.**

Expeditions into the rain forest, hikes in the mountains and over glaciers, boat trips through mangrove swamps, diving safaris, walks across the dunes, »traditional landscapes with picturesque villages«, »exoticness« and »colourful customs« — one glance in a travel catalogue is enough: what would tourism be without the diversity of nature and forms of life that grow from it? Since traditional lifestyles and economic activities as social forms of expression are unthinkable without ecological foundations and since tourism feeds off both, the connection between biological and cultural diversity must be recognised.

Around the world, approximately 100 animal and plant species become extinct daily, not only in tropical areas. Right at our doorstep in Europe, the diversity of species is dwindling. There are many reasons for the dramatic reduction of habitats. The tourist use of »wilderness« is eagerly presented as a more appropriate alternative to forestry and agriculture which are often destructive. Additionally, tourism claims to protect nature and to finance this protection. Under this illusion, more and more so-called »ecotourism« projects are being initiated. In this process, the infrastructure required for tourism is often overlooked, and so are the complex effects that the development of sensitive, hardly accessible areas has on nature and the people living in these areas.

In the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), rights of disposal over and access to biological resources are negotiated. The sharing of benefits from the use of resources is also discussed in the convention, including tourist use. Apart from the direct impacts of tourism on species and habitats, we should also look at the changing legal frameworks and their consequences for the local population. Where does tourism promote and where does it prevent justice in the use of biological diversity? Who has rights of disposal and control over the use of biodiversity, and for what interests?

The creation of protected areas with tourism components directly effects the rights of the local population over natural resources and their cultural heritage. Especially indigenous peoples are affected by this — they total approximately 300 million people who live in an estimated 90 percent of the areas which harbour the greatest biological diversity and the rarest species in the world. Since their land rights are legally unregulated (see chapter 3), tourism poses a double threat to their existence. In Kenya's Samburu National

Park, the traditional herdsmen are prohibited access to the pastures. The chairman of the Kenya Pastoralist Forum complains that even in the dry season, the herdsmen are denied access to the water in the park through force of arms. In Bangladesh, 1,000 families are fighting for access to their forests. After the plan for an »eco-park« was announced, the forest and environmental authorities suddenly declared the inhabitants' settlements illegal. The villagers living adjacent to the historical sites in Kuelap, Peru, are to be expelled from their fields and their cultural heritage in order to make room for a tourist project. To these purposes, the national culture authorities do not shy away from making threats and violent attacks on farmers.

When a combination of protected areas and »ecotourism« is discussed, excluding the population instead of including them, the process is often accompanied by a loss of intellectual property. Knowledge of traditional forms of fishing or forestry is lost if it is not used and passed down to the following generations. The promise of jobs as »nature interpreters« is not a viable alternative source of income nor is it a path to development for entire communities. The loss of intellectual property as a societal asset can quickly lead to economic dependency which undermines the right to a self-determined development as well as the protection of a variety of species and ecosystems.

Additionally, species are purloined and knowledge of their use is transferred abroad through channels which have been created by people on tourist visa. More and more often, botanical and medicinal knowledge is offered along with a tour into the rain forest. The environment ministry of the Philippines has become aware of several cases in which scientific material was smuggled out of the country and through patenting has now become the possession of foreign pharmaceutical and agricultural companies. An effective protection or national regulations against the illegal smuggling of genetic material or the knowledge of its use barely exists. The intellectual property rights of the local people involved with tourism are not effectively protected. The goal of a fair and equitable sharing of benefits from biological diversity which was agreed upon in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is thus undermined.

Furthermore, economic activities no longer practised also mean a heavy loss of a region's cultural attractiveness for tourism: the East African savannahs have been moulded by the Massai, who are regularly confronted with expulsion, and by their nomadic livestock keeping, just as much as the Lüneburg Heath has been shaped by shepherding. Paragraph 8(j) of the CBD recognises the special importance of indigenous and local communities for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Their

traditional lifestyles, which include land rights and rights of use, should be respected. However, the ownership of biological diversity remains in the hands of national states, and national legislation does not automatically guarantee the rights of all inhabitants.

The idea that tourism should help to finance nature protection seems plausible. But in many cases, this does not work. In Kenya, for example, it is claimed that without the money from diving and safaris, it would not be possible to finance the many national parks. While the sewage from hotels north of Mombasa heavily damages coral reefs, snorkelling fans are taken to the underwater national park south of the coastal city with speedboats. The proceeds from the park, however, cannot stop the extinction of the reefs. The ecological damage caused by tourism outside the parks' fences and on the way to the parks must be fully included in the balance. Controlling the numbers of park visitors would be an appropriate measure for protecting nature, but this also costs money, which many park administrators do not have or are not willing to give up. Nature tourism, which is eagerly sold under the label of »ecotourism« is gaining popularity and often opens up the doors to more massive developments which damage these fragile areas even more.



The United Nations have declared the year 2002 the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE). In the foreground stands the international promotion through the illustration of »best practices«. But as long as the impacts of nature tourism and so-called ecotourism offers are not considered more comprehensively, this concept is highly questionable. The many initiatives for more appropriate forms of tourism, and not all of these are cloaked under the vague concept of »ecotourism«, must be welcomed. But the dangers and sometimes devastating consequences of »ecotourism« for biological diversity and the population concerned must be fully taken into account in order to set the basic conditions for further developments. Those affected must have

the opportunity to adequately participate in planning and decision making. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) made possible a decision on biological diversity and tourism — negotiated as an aspect of sustainable use. The decision pays particular attention to the importance of the knowledge of the indigenous and local communities. However, it fails to demand their binding, comprehensive, active and effective participation in tourism. Similar loopholes can be found in the draft for »International guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development and biological diversity« in its present version. Representatives of local and indigenous communities have declared that their possibilities of participating in the CBD process on tourism were insufficient. Additionally, the draft for »International guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development and biological diversity« under the CBD alone cannot cover the goals of the work programme on tourism which was passed at the 7th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). It is just a building block in redesigning tourism. In order to create the necessary awareness for social and economical aspects, such as the needs of subsistence economies, the draft urgently requires revision, fully including those who will be affected.

## Challenges

...❖ We request those responsible in the tourism industry and politics to not play the sovereignty of the countries over their biological resources off against the rights of indigenous communities. For this reason, paragraph 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) needs to be respected and adhered to by public and private players in tourism. The rights of indigenous peoples regarding their access to and control of the land used by them must be ensured through the ratification on the part of the countries in the North and the South of the ILO-Convention N° 169 on the protection of indigenous peoples. The ILO Convention must also be recognised by the tourism industry and be considered in their strategy.



❖ Those responsible in tourism politics are requested to insist on the observation of limits posed by the ecological and socio-economic carrying capacity of areas with regard to biological diversity. Local communities must be able to take part in deciding on the criteria for evaluating these limits, also with regard to culturally shaped landscapes.

❖ The social dimensions of biological diversity must be recognised and considered in the planned international guidelines on tourism and biological diversity. Useful and helpful amendments were offered by representatives of southern NGOs at a workshop in New Delhi in September 2001. These should be included in the draft of the guidelines. The draft requires comprehensive revision in a multi-stakeholder process.

❖ »Ecotourism« cannot be recommended or promoted as a general concept for nature conservation. Instead, tourism developments which are a part of this concept need to be reviewed. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are requested to have an independent committee analyse the positive and negative impacts of so-called ecotourism on the environment and the every day life of the affected people.

❖ Tourism must be recognised as a catalyst for biopiracy and theft of intellectual property and must be taken seriously. Binding legal instruments are needed to prevent biopiracy at national as well as international levels. The theft and marketing of local people's knowledge without their consent must be prevented with appropriate measures.





## 5 Water

### **Refreshing water is more precious on our travels than at home.**

»Whoever plays with the Nile waters, declares war on us«, said the Egyptian president Sadat. However, it did not occur to Sadat that water from the Nile can also be taken from within national borders. To supply the lavish luxury resorts on the Red Sea, more and more water pipelines are built across the desert directly into swimming pools. And this despite considerable deficits in the water supply for the Egyptians and their irrigation dependent agriculture along the Nile. Development and distribution are poor and keeping water potable is difficult.



For a while now, water — originally public property which was often managed communally — has become a contentious issue in global environment and development politics. A basic human right to water, as many NGOs demand, does not yet exist. Water, however, means life. Without access to clean drinking water there is no food security. Precisely this situation affects 1.2 billion people in 50 countries. By 2025, approximately 5 billion people will be affected by a lack of water, even now 2.5 billion people live without sanitary facilities. Tourism's water requirements often increase existing shortages. Presently, the privatisation of water is being encouraged in many places and is also being negotiated in the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) under the World Trade Organisation (WTO-OMC). Once privatised, the distribution of this vital good will be controlled by private interests and regulated by market prices. This will have devastating consequences for the affected people, particularly in tourist destinations. The private sale of ground water from Egyptian oases to the newly booming hotels is already a serious problem, especially for livestock keepers who must make do with fewer wells.

In some places, water shortage is due to deforestation and soil erosion in mountain areas. Tourism is often involved in the (over-)consumption of water from these catchment areas — for example in the Himalayas or in the Alps. On the Balearic Island of Mallorca, water must often be transported from the mainland in the peak season. In Goa, the elimination of sand dunes for the construction of hotels has caused a leakage of salt water into the ground of the hinterland and thus into the ground water. According to the World Bank, farmers in Tunisia lack the water which is pumped out of the hinterland into the coastal hotels. Their fields dried out and had to be abandoned.

Green golf courses in Tunisia, freshwater swimming pools and artificial gardens on the Red Sea are an expression of the wasteful behaviour of holiday guests. The daily 2,000 litre consumption of water per guest in a Tanzanian hotel may be an exception, however even 400 to 600 litres is much higher than the average 25 litre consumption in Zanzibar. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 20 litres per person is the local average. The water consumption of hotel guests is also above the approximately 150 litres consumed per person per day in the industrialised countries. The industrial production of consumer goods such as canned beer requires an additional 20 litres of water for the production of beer and 40 litres for the production of the can. Absolutely questionable are the sprinkler systems for lawns which in some places are responsible for up to 50 percent of the water used by a hotel. The lawns of an 18 hole golf course require more than 2.3 million litres of water daily. In the Philippines, the water used up on a golf course could irrigate 65 hectares of fertile land. 15,000 inhabitants of the capital Manila or 60,000 people living in rural areas could be provided for.

Ground water reserves which have been tapped out or polluted endanger the water supply especially in arid zones and on islands. There is an extreme shortage of freshwater reserves in these areas. The predicted rates of tourism growth put future supplies at stake. Some holiday islands are dependent on rain water as their only source of freshwater. When freshwater supplies are tapped on coral islands, the fragile ecosystem can be disturbed, the protective reef can be damaged and the island could collapse. When the island inhabitants finance the construction and operation of energy intensive desalination units in order to prevent the ecological effects of the ruinous consumption of hotels and golf courses, the water problem is by no means solved in a sustainable manner.

Especially »water tourism« often destroys precisely its own tourist attraction: coral reefs are damaged by untreated sewage and chemically reactive discharges from the desalinating units. Or they suffocate, as in Hurgada/Egypt, on the imported fine sand from artificial beaches. The manifold untreated sewage and garbage from the kilometre long hotel coasts and from cruise ships on open sea damage coastal and marine ecosystems. Algal blooms endanger the fish population. Water sport tourism then moves on to new spots, while island and coastal communities must cope with losses in fishing.

The extreme consumption of fresh water is not possible without sewage. Both cause a series of reactions which especially affect the local economy and environment and often take on dimensions which are difficult to solve. Pesticides used on the lawns of golf courses are found in the drinking water and in the agricultural crops of the surrounding areas (see chapter 3). The

West African adage that »filthy water cannot be washed« reflects a situation which — despite modern sewage technology — has become precarious. The self-purifying power of ground water reserves takes approximately 1,400 years. Two to four million people already suffer from lethal diseases due to a lack of access to clean water. Re-naming this lack of access a »water shortage« while at the same time a boundless waste is being practised, disguises the reasons for the vulnerability of many people and releases those causing this problem from their responsibility. In the tourism industry, water saving measures carry an enormous potential — similar to energy saving measures or waste reduction — which, even in the short term, could be of financial interest. Yet this potential has hardly ever been realised.

## Challenges



❖ The right to an equal access to water as a basis of life is a precondition for socially sustainable development in general, and in tourism in particular. The international community is called upon to maintain water as a public good through appropriate agreements and to secure the right to water for all.

❖ The international community is requested to proceed with establishing the still ineffective international precautionary and polluter pays principles with respect to the consumption and management of freshwater and oceans. Tourism as one of the causes for water conflicts must be integrated into international programmes to solve the water crisis. Those responsible in industry and politics are requested to implement concrete precautionary measures.

❖ Governments must ensure that the planning of water supplies is based on communal and participatory principles. Local Agenda 21 processes offer an appropriate framework for this. No one should be able to use water without the active and prior-informed participation of the local population. Regional water supply should be in the hands of the community. Tourism as a user would then have to be integrated in appropriate ways.

❖ Those responsible in the tourism industry and governments are urged to introduce and implement immediate water saving measures and sewage reduction. Just as urgent is the self-commitment of the tourism industry to an immediate sewage management. Governments should encourage this through appropriate regulations and guiding measures. Especially garbage and sewage from cruise ships do not belong in the ocean or in inland waters!

❖ Travellers everywhere are urged to be thrifty in their use of water.



## 6 Human dignity — gender equity **Women and children need protection and »empowerment« to make sure they have equal rights.**

Women account for 70 percent of the people living in extreme poverty world wide. In virtually all areas of life, women have a weaker position than men, which has a direct effect on children whose well-being is mostly dependent on their care. There can be no sustainable development if — as it is emphasised in Agenda 21 — the gender question, the relationship between men and women, is not given due consideration.

Those responsible for tourism emphasise that tourism offers many opportunities for women. Women do have an important role in tourism. According to recent ILO estimates, 70 percent of tourism employees are women. Not included in these calculations are the women who attempt to earn a living in the informal sector — as fruit sellers, souvenir producers, landladies, restaurant owners. Women can often successfully earn their main or secondary source of income with jobs like these. But in order to be successful, they require a »starting capital«, whether a house for renting rooms, a farm for receiving holiday guests, fields to grow produce, or special knowledge such as cooking, handcrafting, accounting or language skills.

It's a different story for many women who are employed by tourism companies. World wide, they earn 20 to 30 percent less than men in the same positions. Women with families have a double burden. On top of the long working hours, they also have housework to complete, which often comes to more than 90 hours a week. In all fields of service, women are in danger of sexual abuse. The more dependent their position is, the more they are susceptible to sexual exploitation.

Yet many women who do not work directly in tourism suffer due to tourism development. Those living adjacent to tourism resorts are generally directly affected by enormous ecological and social pressure from tourism (see chapters 3, 4, 5). When traditional forms of income disappear and at the same time food becomes more expensive due to tourism, then women often have no other choice but to earn money in tourism in order to support their families.

Prostitution is often seen as a way out of poverty, especially since sex business is booming in the tourism areas of developing and transitional countries. The dubious offers are popular among sex tourists: sex with local people offers not only »exoticness« but also the opportunity to be dominant if only due to economic superiority. Unprotected contacts put the partici-

pants at risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases which have a wide range of consequences for them with respect to medical and social care. Not only women are disastrously involved in the sex business in tourism destinations, and those affected are not all under the same pressure to earn their living with prostitution. In light of the lack of good job opportunities in tourism destinations and the imbalance of power in the global society, sex tourism remains an expression of structural violence and an attack on human dignity.

In tourism areas, children must often begin to earn their living and help support their families at an early age. According to ILO estimates, thirteen to nineteen million children and youths under eighteen years of age are employed in tourism. Child labour thus counts for approximately ten percent of the formal tourism labour market and the latest trends show an increase. An investigation of the informal sector would reveal that the number of children and youths working for tourism is actually much higher. A study done by the Swiss Working Group on Tourism & Development shows that boys and girls from all age groups can be found in various jobs and work situations in tourism, even in industrialised countries.

Not all young employees in tourism are exploited. Yet their jobs in tourism prevent many millions of children and youths from going to school. They often must do difficult and dangerous work for little or no pay and often have no chance for an education. In many cases, the work of children and youths in tourism counts among the hazardous, exploitative forms of child labour which, according to the new ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (N° 182), must be particularly combated.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is one of the worst forms of exploitation. According to careful estimates by UNICEF, one million children and youth enter the commercial sex trade globally every year. In many countries, the illegal business with children is flourishing. Criminal circles earn billions from child prostitution, child pornography and child slave trade. The tourist infrastructure is purposefully utilised for these crimes. Travellers who abuse children in tourism destinations take advantage of low-priced flights and holiday offers. The World Tourism Organization (WTO-OMT) itself calls upon the responsibility of the tourism industry explicitly stating that the sexual exploitation of children is a contradiction to the fundamental goals of tourism. It is important that the code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in tourism be implemented world wide. This code of conduct was recently developed by the child rights organisation End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for sexual Purposes (ECPAT) and signed by many travel and tourism compa-

nies. It is much more than a declaration. The commitment is connected with a monitoring of activities to protect children from exploitation. Only if the travel and tourism industry actively participates in the fight against the sexual exploitation of children and youths can the victims be comprehensively and effectively protected.

## Challenges

- ❖ Full consideration of gender aspects in all tourism and development plans. This includes women's interests and perspectives as well as their grievances on how development in general and tourism in particular affects them and their children.
- ❖ Consistent measures at all levels against gender discrimination and for the protection of women against exploitation in tourism: equality and the specific promotion of women in tourism companies; education and support for local suppliers.
- ❖ Immediate implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; appropriate funding; ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- ❖ Ratification of the ILO conventions on the protection of children against exploitative labour as well as targeted measures against the exploitation of children in all forms of labour including appropriate prevention: obligatory and free education for all; specific protection and rehabilitation for children in exploitative work situations; implementation of child protection laws and consistent interpretation in favour of the children, increased persecution of perpetrators who exploit children, also on the basis of extraterritorial legislation.
- ❖ Tourism companies are requested to assume responsibility, to actively support all measures promoting women and to effectively protect all children from exploitation in tourism. Self-commitment on the part of the tourism industry is indispensable. The Code of Conduct on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism with its report and monitoring systems is one appropriate measure.
- ❖ No abusive — discriminating, sexist or racist — portrayals of women and children in tourism advertisements!



## 7 Participation of the civil society

**All social players, especially disadvantaged peoples and minorities, must have the right to decide on tourism development and benefit from it.**

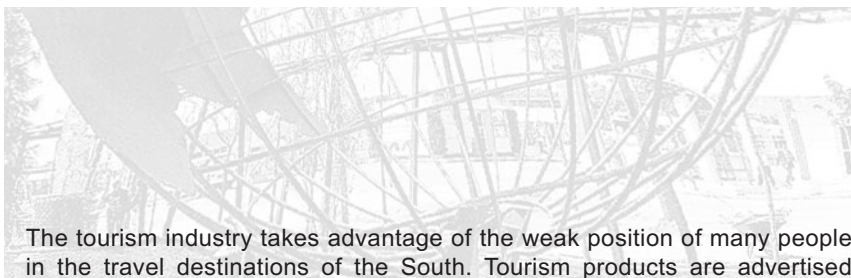
Tourism plans are often made without the participation and even without the knowledge of the local population. Land is sold to hotel chains, beaches are shovelled away and golf courses are built, forests are redefined as »eco-resorts« and land for the construction of roads is appropriated before the people living there are even informed of the plans and can enquire about their land rights. In Mozambique, 20,000 people were thus offered jobs—although there were not enough for all — as compensation for leaving the area of the future national park on the South African border. They are now demanding compensation, but legal land titles are indispensable in order to succeed with such complaints.

Zanzibaris first heard about the project of the largest East African hotel complex to be built on the peninsula Nungwi through the local press only after the plans had already been officially approved. The map submitted by the East African Development Company for the four billion US dollar project comprising 16 luxury hotels, 100 villas, a marina, golf courses and sports fields no longer shows any villages. No room is provided for the 20,000 people who live there and no one had thought about water supply systems or sewage and waste disposal.



At the same time, scarcely any other terms in development jargon have enjoyed such a boom as participation. »Participation« is used particularly in international agreements on tourism. The programme for the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE), designed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO-OMT), is full of »participation« phrases. In the »International guidelines for activities related to sustainable tourism development and biological diversity« which are presently being negotiated, »involvement« and »participation« are equally emphasised. Yet declarations of intentions fail, as the most recent preparatory process for the IYE showed. If there is no funding for the participation of interested representatives from southern NGOs and no appropriate time frame for preparation, consultation and a participatory formation of opinion at local level and within local communities, the actual effect will be exclusion rather than participation. Representatives of indigenous peoples and NGOs had already drawn attention to such weak points at the 8th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8).

The possibility for the various players, particularly from civil society, of having a say in political decision making at various levels has clearly improved thanks to the Rio follow-up process. It is summarised under the term »multi-stakeholder process«. International agreements alone certainly cannot replace universal democratic rights. The participatory approach of Local Agenda 21 processes is progressive, and so is the growing presence and participation of NGOs and representatives from civil society at politically decisive international conferences. But their involvement must be expanded, especially in international economic and trade policy. It must be secured through appropriate funding. The way in which people are informed of important international processes and how the participation of all those affected is guaranteed, must follow transparent criteria. This has obviously been neglected in political decision-making on tourism. Who, particularly from civil society, has access to important international events and papers and how their participation can, in turn, benefit others interested, must urgently be discussed in NGO circles. It is important to remember that NGOs never represent the entire spectrum of civil society.



The tourism industry takes advantage of the weak position of many people in the travel destinations of the South. Tourism products are advertised using pictures that respond to the wishes of tourists rather than show the actual living conditions in the destinations. In travel advertisements, Burma (Myanmar) becomes the »mysterious country of golden pagodas« and nothing is said about the fact that during more than a decade of military junta, tourism expansion was pushed forward by exploiting forced labour. The image of Thailand as a country of smiles is an image created in Europe. Africa stands for an attachment to the land, the Orient for »A thousand and one nights«. These attributes are obviously superficial, but they work because they respond to the wishes of the masses to consume images and symbols. With reference to this kind of tourist demand built on clichés and prejudices, tourism companies justify their intrusion into the private sphere of local communities. »Visits« to local homes reaching as far as the back corners of the houses or »participation« in ceremonies often take place without the previous consent of those being visited. Even the »primitive« life in poverty, often a result of structural adjustment programmes and debt policies, is marketed as a tourist attraction. Instead of encounters between equals, racist perceptions are created or at least confirmed.



The exotic images of the local population in the destinations portrayed in travel advertisements find their equivalents in the travel reports in magazines. Commonly, travel journalists allow their trips to be financed by tourism companies. This leads to tendentious »reports« often supplemented by advertisements from tourism companies, as the media make their profits from commercial advertisements. Local communities hardly have the possibility of presenting themselves, nor do they have the right to correct the images produced of them. In the German media, there is practically no room for their perspective on tourism, especially since the coverage of Third World countries is on the decline.

## Challenges

❖ In order to achieve sustainable tourism development and the fair and equitable sharing of profits from tourism, all those affected must be fully involved in all decisions on tourism. This includes processes to establish the criteria for decision making itself.



❖ Participation can only be guaranteed if decision-making processes are fully transparent. Logistic, technical, and financial support and means of communication should be made available to make the participation of all those affected possible. This applies especially to disadvantaged population groups. In order to ensure the comprehensive, prior-informed and active equal participation of all stakeholders in tourism, the flow of information, education and communication must be improved. The relevant authorities and the tourism industry in particular are requested to support this process at international and local levels.

❖ All those political spheres responsible for tourism — including employment, traffic and energy and water supply — should feel obligated to participatory planning and decision-making in tourism. This applies to all questions relevant to tourism. Local Agenda 21 processes can be a helpful framework to this end.

❖ Following the demands of indigenous representatives with regard to »ecotourism« at the 8th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8), those responsible for tourism in government and industry as well as NGOs are requested to initiate a debate involving all stakeholders, especially disadvantaged groups, on standards of participation.

❖ Participation in tourism also means access to tourist facilities such as hotels and to travel offers for all. No discrimination of local people!

❖ In order to counteract the degradation and commercialisation of culture and the local people's private sphere, those affected must be able to have a say with regard to their representation in travel offers. They must have the possibility of self-presentation and of corrective counter-presentation. Local communities must be able to decide on whether, where and how they wish to be presented.

❖ The media is expected to report on tourism in an independent, truthful and enlightened manner. This applies to radio, television and journals such as travel magazines. The media should offer those affected by tourism a forum and comprehensively inform travellers about the impacts of tourism. In line with their important role in civil society, the media should take on the challenge of creatively using their resources to help change the trends in tourism towards a globally sustainable development.



## 8 Consumption and lifestyle

### **Consumer behaviour in travel and leisure must be just towards people and the environment!**

20 percent on the world's population, the inhabitants of the industrialised countries, consume 80 percent of the world's resources. In Rio in 1992, the industrialised countries obligated themselves to redesign the consumption patterns and lifestyles of their population to be more »compatible with the world«.

Germans, Austrians and the Swiss belong to the world champions of travel and are lavish with their travel and leisure behaviour. The large footprints left by tourism are even more serious as travellers visit other countries and regions and consume the often scarce resources much needed by the local population.

Yet appeals to the responsibility of tourists often go unheard. More conscientiousness, even a bad conscience, has not stopped them from taking their »well-earned« pleasure, as the tourism industry calls it at every possible chance. Everything that has the slightest hint of moral, consideration or sacrifice during leisure activities chases away even the most open-minded clientele in our leisure society keen on »events« and individual experience.

It is not surprising that travellers seek out their »experiences« on holiday seeing as the sinking prices make travelling more affordable. Tourists often don't notice until they have arrived that sewage limits their swimming or that other unpleasant details reduce their holiday enjoyment. But then the tourist travel law with its money-back guarantee comes to the tourist's aid. Within the scope of the existing consumer protection neither the travellers nor the tour operators realise that it might be the »bargain prices« which leave hotels without the financial scope to take the necessary measures for an environmentally sustainable sewage and waste management.

Representative surveys show that in Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland, more and more travellers would accept a price increase in exchange for guaranteed environmentally and socially acceptable offers. In Switzerland, the travel industry first showed disbelief at the results of the survey. No tour operator has yet put together a creditable product transparently showing its environmental and social effects (including the negative ones). The reason undoubtedly lies in the fact that such transparency is not profitable in the short term, but it means a criminal neglect of potential for more appropriate forms of travel!

NGOs in the most important tourist sending countries work with only a fraction of the advertisement budget of travel companies. Yet they have the challenging task of inventing tempting slogans to promote the necessary changes in tourism and leisure trends, of revealing unpleasant global interrelations and of making practical and efficient suggestions, while the tourism industry itself offers very little.

In the last few years, tour operators, tourism destinations and suppliers have made an effort at making their products more appropriate. This resulted in an impenetrable jungle of »blue flags«, »green trees«, »golden carline thistles« and other labels. The consumers receive little help in deciding what to book and even less information on which offer has more advantages and seeks to avoid ecological and social damage. Creditable certification processes with independent monitoring systems, however, are expensive. This means that especially small businesses who make an effort to develop appropriate products cannot afford them.

Sustainable forms of tourism and leisure have a clear profile:

- Rest and relaxation in everyday life.
- Attractive opportunities for recreation close to home.
- Holiday offers which are oriented to sustainable regional development and can be reached with environmentally friendly public transportation.
- Long-distance travel, especially flights, should be a rare and valuable pleasure. Thanks to new forms of yearly holidays, for example through saved-up holiday time, holidays can be of longer duration and offer real opportunities for meaningful encounters with people from other cultures.

This urgently needed change in tourism and leisure trends requires the active and responsible participation of all players.

## Challenges

❖ Every decision made by travellers from the preparation to the choosing and purchase of a travel product, including its price, to the consumption and behaviour during the holiday as well as in everyday life sets the course for sustainable development — or just the opposite. This must be made clear to the consumers. It is their responsibility to make consistent decisions and to actively demand appropriate tourism and leisure products from decision-makers in industry and government.



❖ One prerequisite for sustainable consumption and lifestyles is also to daily review one's own needs for rest, relaxation and entertainment and to thus gain a new quality of everyday life from restful leisure activities for one's own well-being.

❖ Instead of the previous non-sustainable activities, tour operators and suppliers in the leisure industry are requested to bring new attractive products onto the market which fulfil the requirements of globally sustainable development, and to advertise them appropriately. Fair trade in tourism initiatives must be considered more carefully. The complete range of products must be differentiated in order to clearly show the environmental damages and social costs and enable consumers to compare and make informed decisions. The credibility of such declarations must be secured through transparency, regular reporting and independent monitoring. Consumers must be informed comprehensively.

❖ Governments and authorities especially in tourist sending countries are requested to create appropriate political frameworks which take account of tourism and leisure as a cross-cutting political issue in order to make a comprehensive sustainable development possible. In countries where a large number of citizens go on holidays abroad, the political responsibility for sustainable development in tourism cannot end at national borders. Instead, political measures must also consider out-going tourism. Environmentally and socially appropriate forms of tourism and leisure activities must be specifically supported through incentives as well as regulations in various political fields (transportation, regional planning, environment, economics, education, foreign affairs, development politics etc.). This includes:

- The promotion of a broad spectrum of attractive products in leisure and recreation close to home which are easily accessible with ecomobile modes of transportation.
- Clear conditions regarding the sustainability of tourism development for all promotional measures. The creation and support of new initiatives for more sustainable travel and leisure activities.
- Targeted promotion of Local Agenda 21 processes including both tourism within the community and outbound tourism.
- Information and education for travellers and consumers financially supported not only by development agencies, but also out of budgets for environment, travel security, health care and research. Education on tourism for youths in and outside of school must be expanded and improved.
- Training programmes in tourism must be in line with and actively work towards the goal of sustainable development. This means including comprehensive courses on sustainable development in tourism at all levels of vocational training.

❖ Transparency instead of a mess of labels! Governments, authorities and NGOs must accept the fact that a complex product such as a holiday cannot be creditably explained with a simple label. Criteria must be defined and transparently labelled in such a way that helps consumers to a conscientious decision in purchasing a holiday package. Standardised labels and differentiated product declarations revealing all dimensions of sustainability and inspected by independent authorities would be a step towards sustainability. Small-scale suppliers and poor regions must be given special support. A close cooperation of all those involved in tourism — from suppliers to consumers — is indispensable.

❖ Consumer protection in travel and leisure activities is important! Consumer associations are now particularly challenged to take on the goal of sustainable development in protective regulations for travellers and to make suggestions for revised priorities. The European Union regulations must thus be reviewed and improved.



## 9 International economic and trade policy

### **Fair Trade — also in tourism!**

Liberalised trade has not brought prosperity to the tourism countries of the South. Under the pressure of debts or from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to implement structural adjustment programmes, many countries have taken on liberalisations promoting tourism as an export sector and a source of foreign exchange earnings. Many of these liberalisations were initiated or expanded in 1994 under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO-OMC). Most of the countries of the world committed themselves to further open their tourism markets. Privatisations, majority shareholding for foreign companies, generous incentives for foreign investors and further concessions to private tourism companies such as unrestricted imports or the employment of foreign personnel drastically reduce the possibilities for the host countries to profit from tourism.

Furthermore, free trade agreements have dramatically limited the leeway for destinations to influence tourism according to their own needs. For example, Indian critics of trade liberalisation in tourism complain that the GATS intervenes with domestic regulations and puts communal self-government at stake. It becomes virtually impossible to maintain commitments from foreign suppliers to the education and employment of local personnel, social and ecological standards of operation, consumer protection, or limitations of golf courses or hotels in protected areas.

In contrast, private tourism companies have been given comprehensive rights without having to make the necessary commitments. In the past years, hotels, carriers and tour operators have increasingly committed themselves in so-called »voluntary initiatives« to more environmentally friendly business methods. This must be welcomed, especially in the case of transnational companies who can easily circumvent national regulations. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been extremely limited and has been in conflict with the paradigm of growth. The tourism industry, who otherwise like to present themselves as being environmentally friendly, did their best to stop the implementation of an eco-tax on the Balearic Islands/Spain. The complaint of unconstitutionality which they submitted has not yet been settled. The social dimensions of sustainability are usually neglected in self-commitments by the private sector. At the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Human Resources, Development, Employment and Globalization in the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Sector in April, 2001, delegates complained that in various countries the working conditions in hotels

that had been privatised and often taken over by international chains had clearly worsened. Employees had no freedom of association and collective bargaining. The new private operator of the train from Cuzco to the ancient Inca site of Machu Picchu, the most important tourist attraction in Peru, increased the train fare so dramatically that local people could no longer afford it. Especially transnational tourism companies have access to international computer reservation systems which are unavailable to local suppliers — they thus have a virtual monopoly of access to the customers.

This is the starting point for Fair Trade in tourism which has so far remained more or less a vision. The concept has clear objectives: Trade between travellers and hosts must strengthen the position of disadvantaged communities in the tourist destinations in all respects — economically, socially, ecologically and culturally. Unlike other tourism concepts which are more or less restricted to environmentally and socially acceptable forms of tourism in the destinations, Fair Trade is aimed at all the players in the complex chain of production — from guests to hosts (including tour operators and travel agents in the tourist sending and receiving countries, transportation companies from international to local levels, tourist guides, souvenir producers and vendors etc.). Fair Trade also challenges governments and inter-governmental organisations who set the frameworks for international economic and trade policy, since this is where more justice, transparency and participation are most urgently needed. The structural disadvantages for the countries of the South must be eradicated so that tourism development can be fair and can contribute to sustainability.

## Challenges

❖ Substantial debt relief for developing countries and reforms of debt recovery and credit policies in order to make funds available for poverty alleviation and to ensure that indebted countries are no longer forced to promote unsustainable forms of tourism under the pressure of having to earn foreign exchange.

❖ Multilateral donors such as the World Bank and its subsidiaries as well as the European Union are urgently requested to revise their promotion practices in tourism and to clearly orientate them to the principles of sustainable development.





❖ No further obligations to liberalise trade in tourism under the GATS and the World Trade Organization (WTO-OMC) until the consequences of the liberalisations already in place have been comprehensively evaluated. On this basis, the extreme disadvantages of the tourism countries of the South must be corrected in the course of future negotiations. No liberalisation of basic public services in the new WTO rounds, which would put protection and fair distribution of natural resources in tourism destinations as well as basic health care and education at stake!

❖ In trade agreements, environmental and social standards are non-negotiable. On the path to sustainable development, such standards must be given a new, much stronger position in the world economic order in order to counter-balance financial and trade agreements.



❖ The ILO core conventions as well as Convention N° 172 (Working Conditions in Hotels and Restaurants, 1991) must be recognised as minimum standards in regard to working conditions and adhered to by all those responsible in tourism politics and in the private sector.



❖ Tourism companies are urgently requested to incorporate sustainability thinking into their business objectives and to consistently implement respective measures. There must be more commitment to environmentally and socially responsible operations, specifically considering all social aspects in connection with tourism development. Independent schemes to monitor these commitments are essential in order to ensure credibility.

❖ All distorting, often hidden subsidies in tourism, especially incentives for foreign investors which are often extremely disadvantageous for local suppliers, must be abolished. In all areas relevant to tourism, costs must be transparent and must be borne according to the polluter pays principle.

❖ Initiatives aimed at Fair Trade in tourism, especially those which help small-scale enterprises to compete in terms of product quality and which improve their access to consumer markets, should be actively promoted.

# 10

## 10 Coherent politics

**Political commitment is crucial for protecting human rights and for the creation of integrated policies to balance environmental, economic and social concerns at all levels. Only then will future generations everywhere in the world be able to live in dignity and enjoy their holidays and leisure time.**

Principally, how tourism can contribute to sustainable development has been intensively discussed in many papers and talks. There are concepts, guidelines, regulations and resolutions from communal levels to the upper spheres of international politics. But even the best concepts can do nothing if they are not implemented.

At its 7th session (CSD-7) in April 1999, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development presented a comprehensive programme of action on tourism and sustainable development. But who of the actual players — travel agents, tour operators, etc. — has heard of the CSD-7 decision? The paper has not reached the practitioners who are called upon to implement the measures expected from the tourism industry. Apparently far too little efforts have been made on the part of the authorities and tourism associations to even inform these actual players. In these circles, »Rio« is primarily associated with Copacabana. Very few travel agents in the North are aware of Agenda 21 or even the »Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry« which was developed in 1995 by tourism associations.

In the fall of 1999, the World Tourism Organization (WTO-OMT) adopted a »Global Code of Ethics for Tourism«. It outlines ethical principles and guidelines for a wide range of situations in tourism and for different players. In its current version, the Code of Ethics merely presents a framework for the individual players. Yet there have been few signs of actual implementation. The WTO-OMT was successful in having the paper approved by the UN General Assembly, but the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to be set up as announced in the Code of Ethics still only exists on paper. Again, only very few practitioners in tourism and travellers are even aware of the existence of the Code of Ethics for Tourism.

These are just two examples of the wide gap between good intentions and an effective implementation of measures that could contribute to sustainable tourism development. The list of stranded »eco«-intentions and questionable economic promotions at all levels is long. The examples also show the gap between decisions made at international levels and their imple-

mentation at national, regional and local levels. And they illustrate how little influence these kinds of decisions on environmental and social sustainability in general have. Such non-committal moral recommendations remain soft law at best. In order to promote free trade, however, the industrialised countries readily agreed on a global institution to establish »hard«, legally binding commitments and sanctions.

With the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in mind, politicians at all levels should now work on restoring the balance between the ecological, social and economical dimensions of sustainability and revise priorities in all fields of policy accordingly. The demands formulated in both the North and the South, especially on the side of NGOs, often seem to present a vision of policies for sustainable development that is still very vague. Nevertheless, some of the main points are worth mentioning in this context:

- Co-operation at global levels must be in line with the goal of sustainability agreed upon by the international community in Rio in 1992. This requires effective multilateral institutions with a high degree of responsibility and transparency that follow democratic, participatory rules and guarantee equal opportunities of participation for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- At national levels we need responsible, coherent governmental leadership. Public funds must be used in a transparent manner and must be in line with the goal of sustainability, supported by an appropriate trade and investment policy. Decision-making processes must be democratic and participatory.
- The tourism industry, especially transnational corporations, must follow the principle of responsible management and leadership (Corporate Social Responsibility). They must actively contribute to sustainable development in the social dialogue with employees, by observing labour standards and continuously improving working conditions, by consistently implementing codes of conduct and the already existing comprehensive commitments for environmentally and socially responsible business ethics, by acknowledging the principles of good governance and by fighting corruption.
- Last but not least, citizens and travellers must responsibly orientate their travel and consumer behaviour to the goal of sustainability. They must closely follow the implementation of political measures to achieve this goal. To be able to do so, independent, critical media coverage is indispensable.

## Challenges



✦✦✦ Agenda 21 and the international conventions of Rio must no longer be subordinate to international economic and trade regulations. Striving for global environmental and social sustainability means improving the status of environmental and social standards in international policies in the UN and providing the necessary structures to ensure that these standards are fully considered in economic and trade policy.

✦✦✦ The multilateral economic and trade organisations, especially the World Trade Organization (WTO-OMC), are in urgent need of reforms with respect to transparency, democracy and the equal participation of all countries in all procedures.

✦✦✦ The World Bank and the IMF as the major decision-making institutions in international economic and financial policies, but also the EU and other multilateral donors are requested to make their tourism policies transparent. They should open up their decisions on tourism to discussion and orientate them towards sustainable development in a democratic, participatory process with governments and representatives from civil society of tourism receiving countries.

✦✦✦ The plan of the European Commission, announced in November, 2001, to promote the sustainability of tourism activities in Europe by setting up an Agenda 21 must be welcomed. Guidelines, however, are not a substitute for integrative cross-sectoral tourism policies. It is the latter that are needed to effect major changes towards sustainability in tourism, including the tourism activities of EU citizens on other continents.

✦✦✦ At national levels, governments are requested to implement the strategies for sustainable development agreed upon prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) 2002 in Johannesburg. This includes all tourism and leisure activities, and especially in the North also outgoing tourism. In tourism as in any other sector, measures must be implemented in all relevant fields of politics and must involve all players. They must be adequately financed, backed by appropriate institutions and made transparent e.g. through regular reporting and media coverage.





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The background of the entire page is a grayscale photograph of a person climbing a complex rope structure, possibly a climbing wall or a team-building exercise. The person is positioned in the upper left quadrant, reaching up. The ropes form a dense, crisscrossing grid that fills the rest of the frame.

## **SST**

Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism  
Schweizerische Stiftung für Solidarität im Tourismus

The Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST) supports projects and initiatives which promote sustainable development in tourism. SST funding is intended to contribute to the improvement of the standard of living and economic security of people who live in tourism destination areas and to the protection of the environment. Furthermore, SST seeks to promote equitable cultural exchange between hosts and guests.

This non-profit foundation was launched in 2001 in Zurich, Switzerland, with funds raised by the sale of the Swiss tour operator "Students Travel Service" (SSR).

For further information please contact us at:  
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