*Sustainable Tourism*

Briefing Paper

# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – TURNING THE TIDE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are a myriad of definitions for Sustainable Tourism, including eco-tourism, green travel, environmentally and culturally responsible tourism, fair trade and ethical travel. The most widely accepted definition is that of the World Tourism Organisation. They define sustainable tourism as "*tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.*" In addition they describe the development of sustainable tourism as a process which meets the needs of present tourists and host communities whilst protecting and enhancing needs in the future (World Tourism Organisation 1996).

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries. For developing countries it is also one of the biggest income generators. But the huge infrastructural and resource demands of tourism (e.g. water consumption, waste generation and energy use) can have severe impacts upon local communities and the environment if it is not properly managed.

To reach this current state, we have witnessed an exponential growth in global tourism over the past half century. 25 million international visitors in 1950 grew to an estimated 650 million people by the year 2000 (Roe et al 1997). Several factors have contributed to this rise in consumer demand in recent decades. This includes an increase in the standard of living in the developed countries, greater allowances for holiday entitlements and declining costs of travel. Tourism is an important export for a large number of developing countries, and the principal export for about a third of these. Statistics for domestic tourism are not so easily available. However it is certain that domestic tourism is also growing rapidly in many Asian and Latin American countries (Goodwin 2000).

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates show that in 2002 travel, tourism and related activities will contribute 11% to the world's GDP, rising to 12% by 2010. The industry is currently estimated to generate 1 in every 12.8 jobs or 7.8% of the total workforce. This percentage is expected to rise to 8.6% by 2012. Tourism is also the world's largest employer, accounting for more than 255 million jobs, or 10.7% of the global labour force (WTTC 2002).

It is clear that ecotourism [1], in the strictest sense of the word, still only accounts for a small proportion of the total tourism market. Current estimates are between 3-7% of the market (WTTC, WTO, Earth Council 1996). Taking the WTO's full definition of tourism, there's a risk that ecotourism alone will fail to fully realise the potential to support more sustainable development across the entire sector – suggesting that there may be real benefits trying to make all of the Travel and Tourism industry more sustainable.

## 2. CURRENT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

### 2.1 Tourism and Travel Statistics and Trends

The magnitude of the tourism industry can be clearly seen from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) statistics. The WTTC estimates that in the year 2002, travel, tourism and related activities will contribute to approximately 10% of the world's GDP, growing to 10.6% by 2012. The industry is currently estimated to help generate 1 in every 12.8 jobs, 7.8% of total employment. This will rise to 8.6% by 2012 (WTTC 2002).

Tourism has helped to create millions of jobs in developing countries. For example official estimates for 2002 suggest China has 51.1 million jobs associated to tourism and India 23.7 million jobs. In terms of the relative importance of different sectors for job creation, the largest contributors in travel and tourism employment are found in island states and destinations - ranging from 76.3% of the total number of people employed in Curacao, to 34.6% employment in Antigua and Barbuda. The top ten countries with greatest expected relative growth in employment over the next ten years are all developing countries. Vanuatu is predicted an annual growth rate of 8.8% in employment and tops the list. The balance of bene-

Table 1. Global and regional trends in tourism

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|---|---|
| **Global** | * Distribution - Tourism is a significant sector in almost half of the low income countries, and in virtually all the lower-middle income countries.<br>* Destinations - The top 15 tourism destinations in the developing world (in terms of absolute numbers of arrivals or receipts) tend to be populous, low-middle income and upper middle-income countries. 5 out of these 15 destinations have a population of over 10 million living below a $ a day.<br>* Employment - World-wide forecasts predict a growth in tourism employment of over 100 million jobs by 2007. Global tourism already accounts for over 250 million jobs.<br>* Growth – tourism contributed to an aggregate economic growth of over 50% between 1990 and 1997<br>* Pro-poor tourism - In most countries with high levels of poverty, tourism is a significant contributing factor, providing over 2% of GDP or 5% of exports). Some 12 countries account for 80% of the world's poor (living on less than a dollar a day). In 11 of these countries, each with over 10 million poor people, tourism is significant addition to the economy and this contribution is growing |
| **Africa** | <u>Central & S. Africa</u><br>* Economic contribution - Travel & Tourism contribution is significantly lower for this region than for world averages (GDP 6.2% as compared to 10% globally). But expected growth is actually significantly higher than the world average (a predicted annual growth rate of 5.6% GDP as compared to world average of 4%)<br><u>N Africa and Middle East</u><br>* Economic contribution - Economic statistics are comparable to world statistics. Cultural tourism is an important sector. Evidence suggests that in practice ecotourism can fail to help local people e.g. tourism around the Maasai Mara generates approx. $18 million a year but little appears to reach local people<br>* Biodiversity – there are 5 internationally recognised 'biodiversity' hotspots (areas of particularly high species richness and under threat) in this region. These areas are important attractions for tourists and valuable as a source of foreign exchange, but are increasingly under pressure from tourism, leading to environmental degradation & resource depletion.<br>* Notable successes - tourism is largely responsible for saving the mountain gorillas of Rwanda from extinction and protecting their forest habitat.<br>* Lack of infrastructure and poverty – are preventing potential local opportunities to gain from tourism and support for livelihoods.<br>* Political insecurity – has a direct impact on tourism levels in some countries because of the possible risks involved in visiting those areas.<br>* Water shortages for local people occur as a result of excessive water use by hotel developments.<br>* Coastal zone – there is currently little regulation of coastal development to prevent excessive impacts to environmental and local communities. |
| **Asia & the Pacific** | * General statistics – Current growth rates in relative terms tend to be lower than world average. With a very large population, the scenario in absolute terms is different however. Domestic and regional tourism are significant and growing in importance. Both mass and alternative tourism have grown in past & despite economic down-turns and currency fluctuations, continue to grow.<br><u>SE Asia</u><br>* Economic contribution - Some 21 million people are employed in tourism, its economic impact is expected to grow by 80% in next decade<br>*Coasts and seas - In coastal and marine areas, tourism pressures (along with increasing urbanisation, industrialization etc) have contributed to the degradation of coastal areas, reduced water quality and increased pressures on marine resources<br>* Tourism pressures, industrialisation and urbanisation - are resulting in critical depletion of coastal resources.<br>* Coral reefs - More than half the world's coral reefs are located in the Pacific Island countries, and large areas are already degraded. Tourism and recreation activities are one factor that leads to this degradation e.g. unsafe diving activities, tourism development.<br>* 'Ethical tourism' – is a growing sector. Tourists and tour companies are staying away from countries like Burma (Myanmar is the military Junta's new name for the country) where torture, human rights abuses, forced labour on tourism projects, and mass disruption for local communities from tourism developments occur.<br>* Waste - Litter and discarded waste in popular sites like Himalayas (Mt Everest) has been a major problem for a number of years. Parts of the Himalayas recently underwent a clean-up campaign which has been a major success for the area. |
| **Europe, Central Asia & North America** | <u>N. America & W. Europe</u><br>* Economic contribution - In absolute terms the contribution of Travel and Tourism activities to these regions is very important. For instance, North America and EU together account for 68% of the total amount of personal travel and tourism, 74% of business travel, 61% of visitor exports, 69% of other travel and tourism related exports and 64% of capital investments.<br>* Trans-national companies - Companies in the region dominate the international tourism market. However, domestic and regional tourism are important segments of the market and growing.<br>* Coastal zone – Areas along the Mediterranean coast are facing major environmental pressures (i.e. nitrogen loading) through a combination of urban growth, inadequate waste water treatment, tourism and intensively farmed crops. Linear coastal ribbon development in places like Cyprus is now acknowledged to have been the wrong development model.<br>* Land degradation – Degradation of land is associated with tourism development and industrialisation<br>* Protected areas – e.g. US National forests and parks are set aside to maintain wildlife habitat and often serve dual tourism and recreation purposes but these require active tourism management/visitor impact management e.g. Yosemite.<br><u>Central Asia & E. Europe</u><br>* Economic contribution - Contribution to GDP is significantly lower for the region than globally. Employment statistics are comparable. Growth projections are better than world averages.<br>* Coastal zone - 85% of European coasts are at high or moderate risk from development-related pressures. Two thirds of Europe's tourism is centred on coastlines. In 1990 the Med. coast had 35 million tourists and is expected to receive 235-353 million tourists annually by 2025.<br>* Growing tourist trade in Arctic (over 1.5 million visitors in 2000) is prompting fears of environmental degradation. |
| **Latin America & Caribbean** | * Economic contribution - Statistics for current situation and for expected growth tend to be significantly higher than world average. For instance GDP contribution is estimated at 14% (10% globally). In several individual countries travel and tourism is a very important sector of the economy, the key catalyst for growth.<br><br>* Protected areas - More than 10% of region is currently protected and the creation of private / community-managed forests are on the increase. Also there have been isolated successes in curbing the illegal trade in endangered species. Tourism has been linked to providing a financial incentive to maintain these areas and species.<br>* Urbanisation -Nearly 75% of the population lives in urban areas. Urbanisation is expected to reach 85% by 2025.<br>* Child sex tourism – There are growing concerns about tourism related paedophilic activities in several countries of the region |

Sources: UNEP 2002, WTTC 1998, Ashley et al 2001, Roe et al 1997

fits begins to tilt toward the developed countries in terms of visitor exports and capital investments, in absolute terms. The top ten list for visitor exports is led by the US. The rest are all European countries, except for China (at number 7). On capital investments, US receives an estimated investment of US$ 205.2 million - far ahead of all other countries. Japan with an investment of US$ 42.7 million and China with US$ 42.5 million follow. The expected growth rates for capital investments over the next ten years are significant for developing countries. Turkey has an annualised growth rate of 10.4% (WTTC 2002). Whilst it can be argued that tourism creates an incentive for environmental conservation, tourism is also responsible for damage to the environment. The phenomenal growth of the sector has been accompanied by severe environmental and cultural damage. The projected growth for the industry frequently occurs in destinations that are close to or have exceeded their natural carrying-capacity limits. The consequences are that short term economic gain clearly incurs long term environmental and social costs (European Parliament 2002). Beyond these environmental aspects, other issues of a more social, cultural and rights-based nature have gained increased attention since the mid-1990's. These include financial leakages [2], disruptive impacts to local livelihoods and culture, gender bias, sexual exploitation, formal vs. informal sector, domestic vs. international tourism, the growth of "all-inclusive" package tours. Some of the key issues and challenges related to these problems are outlined in the sections below.

## 3. ISSUES: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

### 3.1. Tourism and the Environment

The natural environment is an important resource for tourism. With increasing urbanisation, destinations in both industrialised and developing countries with significant natural features, scenery, cultural heritage or biodiversity are becoming increasingly popular sites for tourist destinations. Efforts to preserve and enhance the natural environment should therefore be a high priority for the industry and for governments. But the reality is not quite as clear cut. Environments where past human interaction has been minimal are often fragile. Small islands, coastal areas, wetlands, mountains and deserts, all now popular as tourist destinations, are five of the six 'fragile ecosystems' as identified by Agenda 21 that require specific action by governments and international donors. The biophysical characteristics of these habitats often render them particularly susceptible to damage from human activities. As the scale of tourism grows, the resource use threatens to become unsustainable. With a degraded physical environment, the destination is in danger of losing its original attraction, increasing the levels of cheaper mass tourism and forcing more "nature-based" tourism to move on to new destinations, which are likely to be even more inaccessible and fragile. Mainstream "ecotourism", as promoted after the Rio Earth Summit, hasn't always enjoyed a good reputation. Tour operators have used the concept merely as a "greenwash" marketing tool. In reality it often meant introducing unsustainable levels of tourism into fragile areas, having scant regard for either the environment or for the residents of the destination areas. As the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) pointed out:

"*Tourism in natural areas, euphemistically called "eco-tourism," can be a major source of degradation of local ecological, economic and social systems. The intrusion of large numbers of foreigners with high-consumption and high-waste habits into natural areas, or into towns with inadequate waste management infrastructure, can produce changes to those natural areas at a rate that is far greater than imposed by local residents. These tourism-related changes are particularly deleterious when local residents rely on those natural areas for their sustenance. Resulting economic losses can encourage socially deleterious economic activities such as prostitution, crime, and migrant and child labour*" (ICLEI 1999).

Some of the different kinds of impacts that tourism development and operational activities can have include:
- Threats to ecosystems and biodiversity – e.g loss of wildlife and rare species, habitat loss and degradation,
- Disruption of coasts – e.g shoreline erosion and pollution, impact to coral reefs and fish spawning grounds,
- Deforestation – loss of forests for fuel wood and timber by the tourist industry also impact on soil and water quality, bio-diversity integrity, reducing the collection of forest products by local communities,
- Water overuse – as a result of tourism / recreational activities e.g. golf courses, swimming pools, and tourist consumption in hotels,
- Urban problems - Congestion and overcrowding, increased vehicle traffic and resultant environmental impacts, including air and noise pollution, and health impacts,
- Exacerbate climate change – from fossil fuel energy consumption for travel, hotel and recreational requirements,
- Unsustainable and inequitable resource use - Energy and water over consumption, excessive production of wastes, litter and garbage are all common impacts.

Further study could be carried out regarding the negative relationship between tourism and environment (Roe et al 1997), however the many examples across the globe indicate this scenario is quite typical and widely recognised, emphasising the need to identify more mutually beneficial approaches in tourism development.

### 3.2 Tourism and Economics

Economic gains have been a major driving force for the growth of tourism in developing countries. The initial period of growth happened in the late 1960's and 1970's, when tourism was perceived as a key activity for generating foreign ex-

change and employment by both development institutions, such as the World Bank, as well as by governments (Goodwin 2000).

Despite the negative economic impacts of tourism (such as inflation; dominance by outsiders in land and property markets; inward-migration eroding economic opportunities for domestic industry including the poor) the demand for travel and tourism continues to grow. The WTTC has estimated there was an approximate 40% cumulative growth in tourism demand between 1990 and 2000. This demand was largely driven by economic gains at all levels, including in the communities in remote, and hitherto relatively isolated, destinations (Ashley, 2000). There is significant scope for enhancing the possible gains through addressing a number of issues that can help improve opportunities for entrepreneurs and the communities in the destinations, for the poorer sections within these communities, as well as at the macro level for the national economy. Some of these are options are discussed below.

*Financial leakages*

Powerful trans-national corporations (TNCs) continue to dominate the international tourism market. Estimates suggest that about 80% of international mass tourism is controlled by TNCs. These companies have an almost unhindered access to markets and use this to drive down the cost of supplies. The result is high levels of financial leakage, and limited levels of revenue retention in the destination or host countries.  Financial leakages tend to occur due to various factors, including importation of foreign building material, skilled labour and luxury products, and packaged travel arranged with TNCs. This is as opposed to locally sourcing the necessary resources. It has been estimated that, on average, at least 55% of tourism expenditure flows back out of the destination country, rising to 75% in certain cases e.g. the Gambia and Commonwealth Caribbean (Ashley et al 2000).

During the seventh UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) meeting (1999), financial leakages was identified as a key area for stakeholders to take action and work together in order to try and assess the situation, as well as seek solutions to better support local communities in host / developing countries. The CSD called upon the UN and the World Tourism Organization, in consultation with major groups, as well as other relevant international organizations, to jointly facilitate the establishment of an ad-hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism to:
- Assess financial leakages and determine how to maximize benefits for indigenous and local communities,
- Prepare a joint initiative to improve information availability and capacity-building for participation, and address other matters relevant to the implementation of the international work programme on sustainable tourism development (UN CSD 1999).

*Impacts on livelihoods in destination communities*

In most tourist destinations of developing countries, the livelihood impacts of tourism, takes various forms. Jobs and wages are only a part of livelihood gains and often not the most significant ones. Tourism can generate four different types of local cash income, involving four distinct categories of people:
- Wages from formal employment.
- Earnings from selling goods, services, or casual labour (e.g. food, crafts, building materials, guide services).
- Dividends and profits arising from locally-owned enterprises.
- Collective income: this may include profits from a community-run enterprise, dividends from a private sector partnership and land rental paid by an investor.

Waged employment can be sufficient to lift a household from an insecure to a secure footing, but it may only be available to a minority of people, and not the poor. Casual earnings may be very small, but more widely spread, and may be enough, for instance, to cover school fees for one or more children. Local participation in the industry can be categorised into three different categories; the formal sector (such as hotels), the informal sector (such as vending) and secondary enterprises that are linked to tourism (such as food retail and telecommunications). Experience from Asia suggests that:
- As a destination is developing, accommodation for tourists can be as simple as offering home stays at the early stage, with lodges, guest houses and hotels replacing more basic options as tourism grows, and some of these may include foreign companies. Once luxury resorts start to develop, the scenario becomes more complex with international investors beginning to play a much more dominant role.
- Transport tends to fall into a grey area between formal and informal sectors. Most destinations have taxis, jeeps or other motorised forms of transport, often driven by the owners. As things expand organised associations of owners, operating on a rota system become more common.
- Data about employment in the formal sector is scattered and collection is often not very systematic. There are references of cases where high-status jobs in resorts typically go to non-locals, expatriate staff or foreign-trained nationals. However, there is almost no analysis of who is employed in middle and lower ranking jobs. The potential for employment of local staff seems to improve as one moves away from the luxury resorts into less established areas.
- The informal sector includes activities such as vending, running stalls and collecting fuel wood for the tourist industry. The informal sector often provides an easy entry into the industry for the poor, especially for women. The incomes can be substantial but unreliable as it is often a seasonal activity. However it can still provide a substantial boost to the income of the poor.

- The informal sector tends to get the least attention when interventions are planned, and interventions such as planning permissions are frequently detrimental to this sector. However, there are cases where initiatives such as flexible licensing systems and cooperatives and associations have helped the sector.
- Causal labour and self-employment provide major opportunities for local communities to enhance their livelihood opportunities from tourism. Unlike formal employment, self-employment tends to highlight the entrepreneurial spirit of village communities. Villagers are used to stringing together a livelihood from a diverse variety of sources, often giving them a knack for enterprise. Causal labour includes porters, cooks, guides, launderers, cleaners, caterer and entertainers. Nepal, for instance, has a well- organised labour market to employ porters, cooks and guides on a seasonal basis. An estimate made in 1989 showed that trekking alone generated 0.5 to 1 million person days of employment in a year in Nepal.
- Significant gains also accrue from economic linkages between tourism and other economic sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and handicrafts.
(Shah & Gupta 2000)

There continues to be fairly poor quantitative data available regarding the economic gains that can be generated from travel and tourism, particularly data that quantifies the impacts to formal, informal and indirect activities as touched upon above. There is a need for a standardised framework and guidelines for the collection and analysis of comparative data sets, to better identify the possible economic impacts for different segments of the market, as well as to develop policies which better reflect the needs of the informal as well as formal tourism ventures. Another gap in research about tourism relates to understanding how domestic tourism benefits formal and informal segments in a country and the degree to which the extreme poor gain at all from the industry (Ashley 2000)

- Domestic or regional tourists are particularly important clients for self-employed sellers and owners of small establishments (the skilled poor and not-so-poor). Studies in Yogyakarta (Indonesia) and elsewhere in South East Asia show that domestic and other Asian tourists tend to buy more from local vendors than Western tourists (Shah, 2000).
- Budget and independent tourists, particularly backpackers are also more likely than luxury tourists to use the cheaper guest houses, home-stays, transport and eating services provided by local people. They tend to stay longer at a destination than groups of tourists and interact more with the local economy, but also spend less per day, often bargaining over prices.
- Nature-based tourism (including 'eco-tourism') does not necessarily provide more opportunities for the poor than 'mass tourism'. Nature tourism does offer some potential advantages however. It takes place in less developed areas, often involves smaller operators with more local commitment. It involves a higher proportion of independent travellers, and if marketed as 'eco-tourism' can stimulate consumer pressure for ensuring domestic socio-economic benefits. But it remains a niche in the market, can be heavily dependent on imports, and can spread disruption to less developed areas.
- Mass tourism is highly competitive, and usually dominated by large suppliers who have little commitment to a destination. They are less likely to use local suppliers. However the segment does generate jobs and negative impacts are not always spread beyond immediate localities. Further knowledge is needed about how local economic opportunities can be expanded under such circumstances, as well as to identify how the negative impacts can be minimised in the mass tourism segment.
- Cruises and 'all-inclusives' [3] are rapidly growing segments of the market, but by their nature are unlikely to generate few economic linkages. Some governments are trying to actively reduce this, for example the Gambian Government has recently decided to ban 'all-inclusives' in response to local demands.
- The informal sector is where opportunities for small-scale enterprise or labour by the poor are maximised. For example, at Bai Chay, Ha Long Bay in Vietnam, almost a dozen local families run private hotels, but local involvement in tourism spreads far beyond this, to an estimated 70–80% of the population. Apart from those with jobs in the hotels and restaurants, local women share the running of noodle stalls, many women and children are walking vendors, and anyone with a boat or motorbike hires them out to tourists. However, the informal sector is often neglected by planners.

### 3.3 Tourism and Society/Culture

Tourism developments often stop people from having the right of access to land, water and natural resources. NGO's such as Tourism Concern and Rethinking Tourism have reported on examples worldwide where the articles in the UN Declaration of Human Rights are flouted, and where indigenous rights are lost or exploited. Adverse social impacts also include poor working conditions, low wages, child labour and sex tourism. The International Labour Organisation and International Confederation Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) note that some parts of the tourist industry still degrades labour and drives workers to the lowest levels, exhibiting the worst side of unsustainable production.

*Cultural transformation*

Fears of tourism threatening local cultures can be misplaced and many cultures have proved resilient enough to be able to take rapid changes required by tourism in their stride. However it is true that popular destinations are typically transformed at a very rapid pace. Buzzing small towns can replace sleepy one lane bazaars. Areas where once only officials rode in motorised vehicles become a familiar site for traffic jams, and dealing with unknown faces can become a daily occurrence for people whose previous focus had been confined to a few score square kilometres to their home and work.

Communities visited by tourists can (or have to!) adapt surprisingly quickly. For example, they rapidly adopt businesslike attitudes to maximise profits. They are creative in inventing and staging events to entertain and provide information on their culture. These attractions, while usually not explicitly developed to protect back regions (i.e. areas

of a host society reserved only for local residents, where tourists are not welcome), can function to deflect the tourist gaze from private space and activities. Host communities take specific, active measures to protect their values and customs. This can either be covert action such as private communal functions, fencing off of domesticities but also overt action such as organised protests and even aggression to protect their interests (Harrison and Price 1996). Tourism development in remote areas can be positive however, bringing with it infrastructure, health services and education facilities. It could be a by-product, or a result of increased incomes, or as is happening increasingly, a result of corporate and customer social responsibility. Nevertheless, rapid tourism development can come at a price and often creates its own unique problems. Tourism activities can degrade the social and natural wealth of a community. The intrusion of large numbers of uninformed foreigners into local social systems can undermine pre-existing social relationships and values. This is particularly a problem where tourism business is centred in traditional social systems, such as isolated communities or indigenous peoples (ICLEI 1999). There are also examples in ecotourism segment, of communities becoming marginalised and forced out of traditional lands as protected areas and destinations become established. Involving host and particularly local communities in all stages of tourism development, from planning right through operations, will help to alleviate some of these issues - if their needs and perspectives are properly taken into account. There is growing amount of work in this area and an expanding body of good practice examples but such approaches need to extended. In addition, programmes which aim to train and assist communities adversely affected by tourism development i.e. providing a social safety net need to be openly assessed for their suitability, and promoted where appropriate.

*Tourism and Child Prostitution*

On the darker side to global tourism, the sex trade and drug tourism remain areas that are poorly reported or regulated, especially where it concerns children. The root causes behind these growing problems may not wholly lie with growth in tourism, but it is significant and should be a real cause for concern throughout the sector. In recent years the industry has started to try and tackle such problems. In 1998 it collaborated with ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes) to draw up a Code of Conduct for tour operators in relation to child prostitution and tourism.  Signatories to ECPAT's Code of Conduct commit themselves to:

- working against child exploitation in their policy documents;
- training staff on how to combat child exploitation;
- provision of information to customers;
- putting pressure on suppliers by including a clause against the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the contract (with hotels, for example);
- provision of information to key local people and organizations by creating a network in destinations to raise awareness amongst local people.

The Fritidresor Group (FRG), a subsidiary of Thomson Travel Group, has risen to the challenge by following up on this initiative in a systematic manner. Since 1999 it has designed and conducted workshops, developed an elaborate customer information programme and initiated pilot programmes in five destinations where child abuse is common (Brazil, Cuba, Dominican Republic, India and Thailand). Feedback from ECPAT from one of the pilots has been positive, e.g. the number of paedophiles in Thailand is decreasing. There are concerns, however, that this is happening at the expense of other countries, especially in Central America, where ECPAT has a weaker presence (Tour Operators Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism Development).

*Gender*

Gender dis-aggregated data for the tourism sector are not easily available. Using the data for restaurant, catering and hotels as proxy, the Gender and Tourism Report prepared by Stakeholder Forum for the CSD in 1999, reached some tentative conclusions. The general picture suggests that the formal tourism industry seems to be a particularly important sector for women (46% of the workforce are women, compared to 34-40% in other general labour markets). However the proportion of women in the tourism workforce varies greatly – from as low as 2% in some countries and up to over 80% in others, depending upon the maturity of the tourism industry. For example, in countries where there is a mature industry, women generally accounted for around 50% of those employed in the industry. Using data from 39 countries, the proportion of women's working hours compared to men's working hours was 89%. Whilst the proportion of women's wages to men's wages is 79% (based on data available from 31 countries). This suggests that women continue to receive disproportionately lower wages than their male counterparts – often in equivalent positions of status in an organisation. Furthermore the statistics, typically do not include the contribution of women employed in the informal sector. Several studies have indicated, whilst this area is frequently ignored, it also tends to be a significant contributor, particularly in developing countries (Hemmati 1999).

## 4. SOLUTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS –TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism was only specifically mentioned in a few sections of 1992 Rio Agenda 21, despite its huge economic significance [4]. Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry was written in 1996 by the World Trade Organisation, the World Travel and Tourism Council and Earth Council to try and fill this gap. It noted that with a growing standing in the

world economy the tourism industry has "a moral responsibility in making the transition to sustainable development. It also has a vested interest in doing so.". The document highlights the vital importance of the environment as the main base upon which the market relies.

These and other activities have supported a growing awareness of the positive and negative impacts of tourism, including a growing realisation of the impact that a degrading environment has on the livelihoods of communities living in destination areas. This has contributed towards the initiation of positive actions for mitigating and minimising the more negative aspects. Various different approaches have been explored, especially in the last couple of decades. Emerging from these efforts is a better recognition of the importance of the role of local communities, their valuable knowledge base and understanding of local circumstances, as well as their strong vested interest in preserving a sustainable system. Establishing partnerships with local communities is being increasingly recognised as necessary for sustainable tourism. The trend now is moving towards more integrated approaches, which include communities working with governments. Some broad proposals and responses for moving towards more sustainable tourism, from various stakeholders, are outlined below.

### 4.1 International institutions, agreements and action plans

International institutions such as UNEP are working in a number of ways (often in partnership) to promote sustainable tourism (Box 1). This includes a proposal by UN Economic and Social Council to the UN General Assembly to designate 2002 the "UN International Year of Ecotourism". Though facing some controversy regarding the definition and breadth of the term "ecotourism", the idea was that the year would aim to recognise tourism's potential benefit as both a tool for environmental protection and development. For ecotourism, it is particularly seen as a means to advance three basic goals of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity: To conserve biological diversity; 2. To promote sustainable use of biodiversity to generate income, jobs and business opportunities in ecotourism etc; 3. To share the benefits of ecotourism developments equitably with local communities & indigenous peoples). Other groups like the World Tourism Organisation do work to try and encourage good practice in the sector. For example the World Tourism Organisation has produced a

"Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in 1999 (an extension of the WTO "Manila Declaration on the Social Impacts of Tourism" 1997), as well as a "Compilation of good practices in sustainable tourism", and a practical guide for the development and application of indicators of sustainable tourism, "What Tourism Managers Need to Know".

### 4.2 Business activities and tourism

The Rio Earth Summit 1992 was a major turning point for the tourism industry. Environmental issues subsequently became an important part of the agenda for the industry. However, the approach has not yet generally been an integrating one. Instead the focus has been on minimising environmental impacts that the industry is directly responsible for. There is growing support by lead companies throughout the private sector to implement principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental Management and Auditing Systems (EMAS), "Triple Bottom Line" accounting procedures (Environment, Society and Economics) and Sustainability Reporting. Measures are predominately based on adopting a voluntary approach to tackling impacts rather than having regulations/legislation imposed on business by governments (see Box 2 for some examples).

The action plan for the industry, "Agenda 21 for the Travel & Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development" contains a number of priority areas for action and suggested steps to achieve them. The importance of partnerships between government, industry and NGOs is stressed, along with the enormous benefits that will be ob-

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*Box 1. UNEP and tourism*

- UNEP and Ecotourism Society have produced a guide *Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability*, highlighting ecotourism's successes and failures.
- UNEP Partnerships with hotel industry have been developed – *Sowing the Seeds of Change*, is an environmental training pack with good practice examples for hotels, published with the International Hotel and Restaurant Association and International Association of Hotel Schools.
- For tourists, UNEP (in partnership with McCann International and the French Government) has produced *It's My Choice – Coral or no Coral?*, a package of communication tools in 5 languages available free to any company or organisation willing to distribute them.
- UNEP with UNESCO World Heritage Centre and support from the United Nations Foundation is also implementing sustainable tourism components in 6 World Heritage Sites in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Indonesia.
- UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based activities (launched in 1995) was revitalized in 2001. A key aim is reducing untreated sewage discharges, often linked to coastal and tourism development.

UNEP has also produced a set of policy guidelines, including the *Principles for Implementation of Sustainable Tourism,* widely distributed to governments and local authorities and used as inputs to some of the multi-lateral environmental agreements. UNEP's Principles on Implementation of Sustainable Tourism (2000) include:

- *Legislative Framework*: Support implementation of sustainable tourism through an effective legislative framework that establishes standards for land use in tourism development, tourism facilities, management and investment in tourism.
- *Environmental Standards*: Protect the environment by setting clear ambient environmental quality standards, along with targets for reducing pollution from all sectors, including tourism, to achieve these standards, and by preventing development in areas where it would be inappropriate.
- *Regional Standards*: Ensure that tourism and the environment are mutually supportive at a regional level through cooperation and coordination between States, to establish common approaches to incentives, environmental policies, and integrated tourism development planning.

Source: http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/policy/principles.htm

tained by making the tourism industry more sustainable. The document warns the industry not to under-estimate the challenge which requires "fundamental reorientation". However it also makes it clear that the long-term costs of inaction will far outweigh those for starting to act now. Companies are encouraged to set up systems and procedures to incorporate sustainable development issues into core management functions and to identify actions needed to bring sustainable tourism into being. A long-term communications programme was initiated after the document launch to increase awareness and promote regional implementation (WTTC). The 10 priority areas for action are:

- Waste minimization, re-use and recycling
- Energy efficiency, conservation and management
- Management of freshwater resources
- Waste water treatment
- Hazardous substances
- Transport
- Land-use planning and management
- Involving staff, customers and communities in environmental issues
- Design for sustainability
- Partnerships for sustainability

Another major voluntary activity highlighted by many companies is the use of codes of conduct and certification (see Box 3). However, even the voluntary codes lag far behind activities for environmental performance in the area of social responsibility (UNED 1999). The World Tourism Organisation recently produced a study "Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism" examining 104 schemes worldwide and gives recommendations to improve the conditions for voluntary initiatives and achieve better effectiveness in the operation and support of voluntary initiatives. In addition it gives a checklist for the planning and assessing of your own voluntary initiatives and makes recommendations for eco-labelling. The report states that voluntary practice has not yet had a significant impact on the mass market. The report recognises that "their current impact has been minimal across the sector as a whole". It finds that 78% of tourism certificates focus on tourism within Europe and not further afield. However the report also says that "*they are revealing tremendous potential to move the industry towards sustainability, but not without careful nurturing and support from key industry partners*" (WTO 2000).

When it comes to building more mainstream corporate responsibility, the vast majority of tourist companies state that whilst they would like to do something they feel they are unable to do so because of being faced with 'cut throat' business competition. They argue that the costs involved in acting more responsibly would drive them out of the market, especially if they take unilateral action without wider industry support. Industry surveys have identified the need for establishing mandatory regulations, making it compulsory for everyone to meet the same standards and thereby incur similar costs. Legal and fiscal regulation of corporate sector includes market-based tools such as carbon trading, as supported through the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change. Also environmental standards legislated by governments on water quality and waste management, labelling standards, are growing but need to be more widely implemented and effectively enforced.

NGOs are increasingly engaging with the travel sector. They have been playing an active role in addressing problems such as financial leakages and in trying to encourage greater corporate responsibility. Key activities involve consumer education about the potential impacts of tourism and about how local communities might benefit more from the industry. They actively lobby policy-makers on associated issues of trade liberalisation, fair trade and globalisation. There has also been a concerted effort to set up common certification standards, independent of the industry, along the lines of Fair Trade certification or eco-labelling. Initiatives include the International Fair Trade in Tourism Network, established by Tourism Concern (London-based) in 1999 and a feasibility study for setting up a Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (see Box 4) being conducted by the Rainforest Alliance, New York.

### 4.4 Initiatives for assisting local communities to realise tourism opportunities

During the 1990's a number of initiatives emerged which aimed to help communities in destination countries make the most from opportunities provided by tourism. Many have been self initiated, locally and have continued to expand under their own steam, sometimes attracting external technical and/or financial assistance on their own terms. In others, external agents have acted as catalysts. The nature of the activities have been broad, ranging from small one-village initiatives for organising handicrafts production to building powerful networks of small accommodation providers and creating a marketing network for them. Over time, and by learning from experience and sharing knowledge, these initiatives have tended to become more complex and inclusive. Effective multi-stakeholder processes have evolved from the ground.

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*Box 2. Business Initiatives*

1. International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) – a charity programme developed by the international hotel industry whose aim is to promote the benefits of environmental management as an integral part of running a successful, efficient hotel business. http://www.ihei.org

2. Benchmarkhotel – An online bench marking tool to help hotels measure and improve their environmental performance (joint initiative of IHEI, WWF-UK and Biffa Award) http://www.benchmarkhotel.com

3. Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development - Tour operators are moving towards sustainable tourism by committing themselves to the concepts of sustainable development as the core of their business activity and to work together through common activities to promote and disseminate methods and practices compatible with sustainable development. The Initiative has been developed by tour operators for tour operators with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), who are also full members of the Initiative. http://www.toinitiative.org

Backed with success and experience at the ground level and on a significant scale, lessons learnt here have the potential for wide and rapid replication. This also requires support from the international community for creating space and resources to assist the players who have been the active leaders of these processes so far to take the lead in formulating a strategy.

*Local Authorities*

A World Tourism Organisation report on the role of local authorities noted that local authorities have a key role to play in many aspects of tourism development and operations. As countries becomes more decentralised, they are taking on more in this area and realising that the sector may assist local areas in achieving development. Community involvement is referred to as a key part of this process – ensuring participation in planning and development, therefore increasing the possibility of achieving more local benefits from tourism e.g. employment, income, establishing tourism related enterprises. The report notes that many local authorities lack in experience for planning, nurturing and developing tourism however. This can result in wasted resources and opportunities. The report states that proper planning, efficient implementation and effective management are all essential to optimise the benefits of tourism (WTO 1998).

The statement by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) during the seventh session of the CSD said that "*in addition to their direct roles in the development process, perhaps the most important role that local authorities can play in a global economy is that of facilitator among the diverse interests seeking to influence the direction of local development*". ICLEI also stated that "*solutions to adverse tourism impacts are to be found in the shared interest of local communities, tourism businesses, and tourism consumers to maintain the natural wealth and social heritage of the tourist destination*". Thus a major challenge for "sustainable tourism" will be the creation of tangible and working local partnerships. One way to approach this will be through the principles espoused in Local Agenda 21 [5]. These principles should be applied, through partnerships, to evaluate and improve efforts to address sensitive tourism development issues, including:

- Inequitable distribution of tourism revenues and "financial leakages"
- Displacement of pre-existing local settlements by tourism developments
- Equal access to local coastal and recreational resources
- Conflict over use and long-term protection of those areas
- Concerns related to lack of foreign tourist sensitivity to cultural traditions and sites

*Governments*

It is fairly disappointing to say that many Governments have been slow to take the lead in ensuring the progress of sustainable tourism and much more work could be done by them to engage more pro-actively with this sector than in the past. Further engagement includes action at all levels, from international forums and negotiations, down to development of tourism plans and policy, and the enforcement of key regulation at national and local levels. A study for the European Union made some useful recommendations for governments to take action in support of sustainable tourism (see Box 5). In addition, it recommends production of regional and national tourism strategies, as well as the development and exchange of knowledge through regional networks on sustainable tourism, engaging stakeholders as well as government ministries (European Parliament 2002).

*Box 3. Voluntary codes*

A. Pacific Asia Travel Association Traveller's Code: Sustaining Indigenous Cultures

"*Travel is a passage through other people's lives and other people's places*."

1. Be Flexible. Are you prepared to accept cultures and practices different from your own?
2. Choose Responsibly. Have you elected to support businesses that clearly and actively address the cultural and environmental concerns of the locale you are visiting?
3. Do Your Homework. Have you done any research about the people and places you plan to visit so you may avoid what may innocently offend them or harm their environment?
4. Be Aware. Are you informed of the holidays, holy days, and general religious and social customs of the places you visit?
5. Support Local Enterprise. Have you made a commitment to contribute to the local economy by using businesses that economically support the community you are visiting, eating in local restaurants and buying locally made artisan crafts as remembrances of your trip?
6. Be Respectful and Observant. Are you willing to respect local laws that may include restrictions of your usage of or access to places and things that may harm or otherwise erode the environment or alter or run counter to the places you visit? http://www.pata.org/frame3.cfm?pageid=55

B. GREEN GLOBE scheme, Standards and Certification

Pressure to incorporate social and cultural issues as well as environmental considerations within industry-backed initiatives has resulted in a number of initiatives. One example is found in the agenda of GREEN GLOBE 21, an institution created in 1994 specifically for developing capacity for environmental management and awareness within the travel & tourism industry and for maintaining a certification process. Issues such as training and employment of local people and local sourcing of goods and services are being incorporated, though in a very tentative manner. 'Where possible' is a key phrase in some of these requirements. The GREEN GLOBE 21 standard was originally designed for a number of institutions, mostly those directly related to the industry such as hotels, airports, cruise ships and car hire companies. Beaches and natural protected areas had also been included. But now certification for communities has been added, bringing in Cumbria (UK) Jersey (Channel Islands) and Vilamoura (Portugal). More than a dozen other destinations (in both developing and developed countries) are in the process of being certified, as well as two countries, Dominica and Sri Lanka. GREEN GLOBE is therefore a source of information on lessons learned from designing and implementing measures to lessen the detrimental impacts upon the environment and local communities.  http://www.greenglobe21.com/index_cn.html

*Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) strategies*

PPT [6] is an approach that gaining recognition by national governments and local authorities. Although PPT is still relatively new and has not been widely applied in practice, existing case studies reveal a number of lessons. These include:

- Diverse activities - beyond community tourism it includes product development, marketing, planning, policy, and investment.
- A lead advocate for PPT is useful, but involving other stakeholders is critical. PPT can be incorporated into the tourism development strategies of government or business.
- Location: PPT works best where the wider destination is developing well.
- PPT strategies often involve development of new products, particularly products linked to local culture. These products should be integrated with mainstream markets where possible.
- Ensuring commercial viability is a priority. This requires understanding demand, product quality, marketing, investment in business skills, and involving the private sector.
- Economic measures should expand both formal and casual earning opportunities.
- Non-financial benefits (e.g. increased community participation, access to assets) can reduce market vulnerability.
- PPT is a long-term investment. Expectations must be prudent and opportunities for short-term benefits investigated.
- External funding may be necessary to cover substantial transaction costs of establishing partnerships, developing skills, and revising policies (Ashley et al 2001).

*Box 4. The Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council*

The Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) is proposed as a global accreditation body for sustainable tourism and ecotourism certifiers. If this body is found feasible, it will set international standards for certification of tourism industry organizations that want to claim being sustainable or practicing ecotourism. The current project will investigate the viability of such body by consulting a wide range of stakeholders.

Why an accreditation body? The STSC will respond to the market demand to have international, comparable standards to identify and purchase sustainable holidays and to minimize false claims. There are over 100 certification schemes in tourism, many of them under-funded and generally not able to reach the international tourism market. Bringing certification schemes with high standards under one umbrella will give them competitive advantage in marketing, planning and managing their schemes; this in turn will benefit the companies they certify. Stewardship councils have been successfully implemented in industries such as forestry, organic farming, fishing and social accountability, acting as a catalyst for sustainable business to business and business to consumer purchasing.

Source: http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/sv/stsc.html

## 4.6 Opportunities for mutual gain and partnership

*Conserving and documenting biodiversity*

The scientific community has played a role in promoting conservation and research on biodiversity through tourism. One example is Earthwatch, an organisation that supports scientific research through volunteer tourists and funding. In the UK, Earthwatch has a programme which sponsors teachers to be volunteers, and as a result has encouraged greater environmental education in schools in the UK. Another example is the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve (MCFR) in Costa Rica, a unique case of what private initiative and a spirit of internationalism can do (Box 6).

*Community Based Wildlife Tourism*

In Africa, Community Based Wildlife Tourism (CBWT) has succeeded in conserving the environment as well as empowering communities. The principle behind CBWT is simple - the benefits to wildlife must exceed the costs. In reality this is not so straight forward. A number of the caveats and complexities necessary for success have been identified through experiences on the ground:

- The link between tourism resource and wildlife conservation is not always obvious. It has to be emphasised through education, dialogue and negotiations. Financial incentives will be ineffective in the absence of institutions and capacity for sustainable management. Hence, responsibility for wildlife management and institutional capacity should take precedence over the benefits.
- Equitable distribution of local earnings from tourism is critical and they should be widely shared within the community managing tourism resources.
- Even if tourism creates incentives for wildlife conservation, wider impacts on ecosystems or bio-diversity maintenance should also be considered (Ashley 1998).

*ICT and alternative technologies*

The growing use of Information Communication Technology has been cited as a way to cut down on "unnecessary travel", particularly for work-related travel e.g. through using video conferencing instead of travelling to meetings all the time (IIIEE 2002). However for recreational tourism, the main focus of this paper, the link is less obvious. There are, however, numerous examples of web-based guides and tools, aiming to support sustainable tourism, that are springing up all over the place, a few of which have been cited in this paper. A recent study, for the Global Information Society International Research Programme, identified a number of ways that ICT can support tourism as well as protection of biodiversity:

- Helping to establish global tourism/biodiversity databases to enable more effective planning and monitoring in an inter-related and comprehensive way,
- Encouraging global exchange of information and expertise among professionals and stakeholders,
- Allowing small operators and others to be included in discussion and to gain greater access to data,
- Encouraging direct dialogue, including that of marketing and promotion, between sites and tourists, and between tourist provid-

ers and tourists;
- Generally improving consumer and operator awareness of impacts and outcomes of tourism (Boniface 2000).

The study indicated that it is the immediacy of ICT, its capacity to retain and distribute information and its flexibility that are some of its strongest benefits. Another is that ICT can assist the creation of new connections and networks between practitioners, operators and tourists across the globe. Such groups are important to help learn and exchange good practice in sustainable tourism.

Alternative technologies are another important area. Organisations which combine alternative technology with "learning by living" holidays are growing in number. They include activities like agro-ecotourism, which link tourism, education and promoting traditional conservation and sustainable use practices. Tourists are taught new skills for sustainable living, such as organic farming, using alternative renewable energies, through visiting eco-villages, alternative technology centres and traditional communities (ITDG 2002).

### 4.7 Education, Capacity building and participation

Education is the key to changing tourist behaviour. Some examples, such as marketing and publicity campaigns by tour operators, have already been cited. Other opportunities also exist, such as learning about sustainability in tourism through job training. These activities should be a shared responsibility between government, private sector operators and trade associations, as well as local tourist organisations, formal training institutions, unions and representative bodies (ICFTU 1999).

## 5. THE WAY FORWARD – Responsible tourism

*Box 5. National Measures To Encourage Good Environmental Practice In Tourism Destinations.*

Support Local Agenda 21
- Design national and international investment, and development assistance programs for local authorities and support locally relevant mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress.
- National governments should ensure implementation of Local Agenda 21 Plans - through development of national action plans, and provision of resources and expertise. Establish Local Agenda 21 best practice networks - to facilitate knowledge transfer across countries.
- Use strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments. These assessments should be made public, for use by all stakeholders. Maintain the integrity of SEAs and EIAs through impartial and informed entities, such as research institutes and universities.
- Land use planning and development control - The precautionary and polluter pays principles should be applied at local and regional levels. Carrying capacity studies conducted in all tourist destinations prior to further expansion.
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management strategies - Resources should be allocated to programmes for fostering ICZM projects. The release of funds for coastal areas should be dependent up-holding the principles of ICZM.

Promote tourism in natural and cultural heritage sites
- Tourism in protected areas and heritage sites - Management plans for each specific area should be given full attention by national governments, and adequate resources and expertise made available to develop competent plans. Projects combining preservation and promotion of cultural heritage sites should be supported, provided that proposals are of a high quality and are based on a sound visitor management plan.
- Rural tourism - Measures should be taken to support development of rural tourism as a key component of sustainable development in rural areas. Rural destinations should be encouraged to adopt the principles of Integrated Quality Management, involving local communities in measures to manage and develop rural products in line with market needs, plus maximizing the proportion of income retained in the community. Loss of biodiversity and cultural heritage caused by tourism should be offset by resources at the regional level to mitigate habitat fragmentation and maintain and restore the regional landscape.
- Eco-tourism - Ecotourism should be encouraged and regulated through use of eco-labels and certification schemes, to guarantee better environmental performance and progress towards sustainable development. If an activity is to be conducted in a designated protected area, then an Environmental Impact Assessment should be undertaken in advance by the responsible agency, and plans amended according to the outcomes of the assessment.

Making tourism enterprises more sustainable
- Information, training and advice - stimulate and support development of information networks for sustainable tourism. Provide the technological capacity to manage the networks efficiently. Sustainable tourism internet training should be developed for specific industry players.
- Quality marks and labelling - Research the best ways for evolving product and service certification, through examination of which sectors to target, and of mandatory vs. voluntary certification. Use existing know-how and experience to achieve recognition and acceptance by the sector and consumers. High priority should be given to promoting the image of eco-labels, equating "environmentally friendly" with quality.
- Financial incentives - Set up a comprehensive enquiry into green taxes for the tourism industry, taking into account both the opportunity for punitive taxes via the polluter pays principle and tax breaks for certified good practice. Greater stakeholder consultation should be conducted to investigate how the industry can access suitable funding schemes. Monitoring of projects should focus on the sustainability criteria built into a project, and ensure compliance of commitment to sustainability.

Raising public awareness
- Stakeholder Participation - Reinforce current increasing environmental awareness with greater stakeholder access to information, though improvements in government educational programmes and the refinement of the availability and content of information services.

Source: Adapted from EU working paper http://www.europarl.eu.int/stoa/publi/pdf/stoa103_en.pdf

*Box 6. The Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve*

Located high up in the Tilarian Mountains of Costa Rica, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve is climatically influenced by both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The result is a unique bio-sphere with six major eco-zones or microclimates harbouring over 100 species of mammals, 400 bird and 120 reptile species and 2500 plant species. The primary forest cover was still extensive in the 1950s, but the area came under pressure expanding agricultural practices. Around this time a group of Quaker families emigrated from the US, in the search of an "alternative" lifestyle. They bought 1400 ha of land, setting aside 554 hectares as a watershed and dividing the rest amongst themselves for cultivation. A decade later, scientific studies began to attract tourists into the area, coinciding with a growth in the conservation movement. In 1972, a Costa Rican NGO - the Tropical Science Centre - acquired 328 hectares for a reserve in Monteverde. And in 1974 they reached an agreement with the Quakers to manage the watershed area. This was the beginning of the MCFR, which now covers a 100 sq. km area. Visitor numbers have reached 50, 000 a year and over 80 tourist-related businesses, several locally owned, have appeared (Baez 1996). http://www.monteverdeinfo.com/

"*Responsible tourism is the job of everyone involved – governments, local authorities, the tourist industry and tourists themselves*" (UNEP 2001)

Recognising the substantial impacts of tourism yet also its potential to help implementation of Sustainable Development, the CSD addressed sustainable tourism for the first time in 1999. Many of the issues raised are already considered within this paper but a direct result was the designation of 2002 as UN 2002 UN International Year of Ecotourism (IYE). IYE has not been without its critics (e.g. Third World Network, Rethinking Tourism) who expressed real concerns about assuming that Ecotourism was already a "success", when even the World Bank (who has been supporting ecotourism for over a decade) suggests that few projects have actually generated substantial income for local communities (Vivanco 2002). The Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism is expected to become a major point of reference for future discussion about eco-tourism but "much work remains to be done, notably in the fight against poverty" (WTO 2002). Promoting a broader and more inclusive approach towards seeking sustainable tourism development and capacity building will be key. According to UNEP some of the conditions for a successful transition towards sustainable tourism include:

- Involvement of stakeholders: Increase the long-term success of tourism projects by involving key stakeholders in the development and implementation of tourism plans (See table 2),
- Information exchange: Raise awareness of sustainable tourism and its implementation by promoting exchange of information, between governments and stakeholders, on best practice for sustainable tourism, and establishing networks for dialogue on implementation of Sustainable Tourism Principles,
- Promote understanding and awareness: to strengthen attitudes, values and actions compatible with sustainable development.
- Capacity Building: Ensure effective implementation of sustainable tourism, through capacity building programmes to develop and strengthen human resources and institutional capacities in government at national and local levels, and amongst local communities; and to integrate environmental and human ecological considerations at all levels.

## 5.1 Monitoring and measuring progress through indicators

The effectiveness of sustainable tourism initiatives requires effective monitoring of progress, through collecting data around key sustainability indicators for the tourism sector. During CSD 7 participants proposed that the CSD should encourage international agencies to develop indicators to measure the environmental, cultural and social impacts of coastal tourism. The World Tourism Organisation has also done some work in this area. Their Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry noted that indicators were a relatively new area for the industry although a number of National Tourism Authorities (including Argentina, Canada, France, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the USA) had participated in the World Tourism Organization ongoing programme to develop a key set of indicators for use by national and local authorities. Also UNESCO and UNEP's Tour Operators Initiative recently signed a Memo of Understanding with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to develop Sustainability Reporting Guidelines specially targeted at tour operators. Some examples are outlined in Table 3.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

As we've seen ecotourism is just one approach towards seeking sustainable tourism. Responsible and pro-poor tourism are emerging as new specialist approaches. And new initiatives which aim to push the mainstream tourism industry are building. One example is a new alliance between the World Tourism Organisation and UNCTAD aimed at "poverty alleviation through tourism". The initiative was announced in July 2002 and it will be presented at the Johannesburg Summit in an attempt to gain wider support. Model projects and successful multi-stakeholder initiatives, albeit on a small-scale, are also beginning to grow. Even these few examples perhaps prove that tourism has the potential to meet many of the objectives of sustainable development – to revitalize economies, support local communities, protect the environment and even generate cost savings and efficiency gains for tourism companies.

Promotion of sustainable tourism, through the development of policy tools, capacity building and awareness-raising programmes, local involvement, guidelines for good practice and actual implementation remain essential goals. Sustainable tourism should aim to directly support poverty eradication and sustainable production and consumption – in line with the general aims of Agenda 21. Making progress on a larger scale will be a fine balancing act and will require a massive "sea-change" in approach from the entire Travel and Tourism industry but it is an approach that is clearly worthy of support from all stakeholders interested and involved in the industry.

Table 2. Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

| | |
|---|---|
| **International Institutions** | • Assist host communities to manage visitation to their tourism attractions for their maximum financial benefit whilst ensuring the least negative impact on and risks for their traditions, culture and living environment. The World Tourism Organisation and other relevant agencies should facilitate the implementation in their Member States. Provide technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to support sustainable tourism business development and investment, tourism awareness programmes to improve domestic tourism, and to stimulate entrepreneurial development.<br>• Maintain productivity and biodiversity of important but vulnerable ecosystems through implementation of, and adherence to key Conventions and Agreements.<br>• Interagency Coordination and Cooperation: Enhance international co-operation, foreign direct investment and partnerships with both private and public sectors at all levels. Provide investment support for processes and infrastructure. Promote opportunities for planning for sustainable tourism development. Improve the management and development of tourism by ensuring coordination and cooperation between the different agencies, authorities and organisations concerned at all levels, and that their jurisdictions and responsibilities are clearly defined and complement each other. |
| **Government & local government** | • Ratify international agreements and implement legal mechanisms to protect habitats and communities. Undertake assessments of the existing regulatory, economic and voluntary framework to bring about sustainable tourism.<br>• National strategies: Ensure that tourism is balanced by economic, social and environmental objectives at national and local level by setting out a national tourism strategy based on environmental and biodiversity knowledge, and ensure it is integrated into national and regional sustainable development plans.<br>• Interagency coordination and cooperation: Improve management and development of tourism through coordination and cooperation between the different agencies, authorities and organisations, and ensure their responsibilities are clearly defined and complementary.<br>• Integrated management: Coordinate allocation of land uses, and regulate inappropriate activities that damage ecosystems, by strengthening or developing integrated policies and management covering all activities, e.g. Integrated Coastal Zone Management and adoption of an ecosystem approach. Nations should warn one another of natural disasters that may affect tourism.<br>• Tourism development issues should be handled with the participation of concerned citizens. Planning decisions should be taken at the local level. Local communities should be involved in tourism initiatives with aim of strengthening local economies. This will require training, education and public awareness programmes. As well as initiatives for measuring progress in achieving sustainable tourism development at the local level. Assist host communities to manage visitation to their tourism attractions for optimal financial benefit whilst minimising the negative impacts on and risks to traditions, culture and the living environment. Develop programmes that encourage people to participate in sustainable tourism and enhance stakeholder co-operation in tourism development and heritage preservation to improve the protection of the environment, natural resources and cultural heritage .<br>• Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): Anticipate environmental impacts by undertaking comprehensive EIAs for all tourism development programmes taking into account cumulative effects from multiple development activities of all types.<br>• Planning measures: Promote planning for sustainable tourism development, ensuring that tourism development remains within national and local plans for tourism and other types of activity, by implementing assessment of carrying capacity and planning controls.<br>• Facilitate exchange of information, skills and technology relating to sustainable tourism between developed and developing countries<br>• Create practical tools for implementing sustainable tourism, including action plans and strategies at local, national, regional and international levels utilising multi-stakeholder processes, with national governments taking the lead.<br>• Research gaps in knowledge e.g. livelihood impacts, gender, domestic, regional and cultural aspects. |
| **NGO** | • Policy formulation: NGO's & civil society must play a broader role in formulating policies.<br>• Monitoring role: (Tourism Concern/Rethinking Tourism etc), research and good practice: consumer engagement. Monitor/Support the participation of all sectors of society.<br>• Promote and support training, education and public awareness.<br>• Support the participation of all sectors of society, assist with public awareness and education work and encourage local capacity building, including for support southern NGO initiatives . |
| **Farming / Indigenous Peoples** | • Participation in national policy-making processes.<br>• Transfer of appropriate technologies.<br>• Transfer and protection of indigenous knowledge of land, resources and environmental management.<br>• Education and training: Includes independent information service, training . |
| **Trade Unions** | • Monitoring labour standards and principles.<br>• Enhancing corporate conduct and performance internally and externally, through labour consultation.<br>• Promote and support training, education and public awareness.<br>• Promote the protection and rights of workers who act as whistle-blowers on unsustainable practices by industry. |
| **Business** | • Industry initiatives: Ensure long-term commitments and improvements to develop and promote sustainable tourism, through partnerships and voluntary initiatives by all sectors and stakeholders, including initiatives to give local communities a share in the ownership and benefits of tourism.<br>• Monitoring: Ensure consistent monitoring and review of tourism activities to detect problems at an early stage and to enable action to prevent the possibility of more serious damage.<br>• Compliance Mechanisms: Ensure compliance with development plans, planning conditions, standards and targets for sustainable tourism by providing incentives, monitoring compliance, and enforcement activities where necessary. Respect international/national laws protecting the environment. When developing facilities in other countries, ensure that environmental standards are as high as those in the country of origin.<br>• Technology: Minimise resource use and the generation of pollution and wastes by using and promoting environmentally-sound technologies for tourism and associated infrastructure. Engage in assessment and good practice certification schemes. |

Table 2. Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities (continued)

| | |
|---|---|
| Business (SMEs and TNCs) | • Promote the diversification of the economic activities, including through the facilitation of access to markets and commercial information, and participation of emerging local enterprises, especially SME's<br>• Promote interaction between tourists and host communities. Involve local communities in tourism initiatives and development . Promote planning and engage in active partnerships for sustainable tourism development. Contribute to the economic development & improve the wellbeing of the local community e.g. provide economic outlets for local trades-people, use local materials an labour when constructing new facilities, offer training opportunities to other businesses in the locality. Develop programmes that encourage people to participate in eco-tourism and enhance stakeholder co-operation in tourism development and heritage preservation to improve the protection of the environment & natural resources. Tourism development should recognise and support the identity, culture and interests of indigenous peoples. Travel and Tourism should use its capacity to create employment for indigenous peoples and women<br>• Design for sustainability: establish company-wide policies on sustainable development, examine the potential environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of new products, make adequate preparations for natural disasters, employ technologies and materials appropriate to local conditions in new developments and refurbishments. Design new tourism products with sustainability at their core<br>• The link between tourism and health in the context of the spread of contagious diseases was discussed at 7th CSD meeting in1999. Participants attached much importance to the involvement of the tourism industry in efforts to address health issues associated with tourism, including HIV/AIDS. |

Sources: UNCSD 2002, ECOSOC 1999, UNEP 2000, WTTC & WTO 1996

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Table 3. Examples of tourism indicators

| | Issue | Indicator |
|---|---|---|
| **Economic** | Tourism demand | * Household consumption expenditure on recreation |
| | National / Domestic contribution | * % GDP, in current international dollars, derived by tourism sector and retained in domestic economy.<br>* % different products/activities supplied locally vs from out the country (e.g. historic-cultural tourism, sports-based, conference, explorative tourism, recreational opportunities)<br>* Percentage of reporting organization's business (by passenger carried) and market share in operating destinations.<br>* Measures to maximise economic benefits to destinations.<br>* Business establishments offering tourist services and owned by locals as a percentage of all business establishments,<br>* Income multiplier for the tourism sector as estimated in an input-output table,<br>* Revenues exported as a percentage of total revenues in the business establishments owned by foreigners |
| **Socio-economic** | Employment | * Number of people employed within host country for the tourism sector (per thousand persons or as a percentage of total employed in tourism sector)<br>* % Females employed in the tourism labour force<br>* Unemployment rates in the off-season periods<br>* Implementation of core ILO conventions - policies excluding child labour, programmes combating commercial sexual exploitation of children, recognition of independent trade unions and application of collective bargaining agreements |
| | Community / Stakeholder involvement | * Consultation with destination stakeholders prior to and during tourism developments to ensure sites are socially acceptable - evidence of consultation with destination stakeholders and suppliers.<br>* Existence of educational/informational programs for the public and tourists about local culture<br>* Existence of procedures and obligations for public and stakeholders involved to suggest changes in policies<br>* Means to invite customers' feedback on economic, environmental, and social issues related to the holiday product and actions taken to respond to feedback. % feedback related to economic, environmental and social issues.<br>* Measures taken to identify and offer commercial opportunities and assistance to non contracted suppliers that support community development. |
| | Health | * Number of samplings of swimming waters exceeding safe limits, as these are defined nationally or internationally<br>* Quality of water expressed as concentration of various pollutants<br>* Existence of functioning Health and Safety committees<br>* Policies and programmes to combat and mitigate the social impacts of HIV/AID |
| | Culture | * Policies and actions in place (by operator) to accommodate cultural customs, traditions and practices of staff throughout the organisation. |
| **Environment** | Biodiversity | * Number of special interest sites (natural, cultural) under protection Vs to those without any protection,<br>* Existence of legislation for species protection,<br>* Number of endangered/threatened species on the region,<br>* Monitoring of the number (e.g. ratio of species disappearance and/or Vs to the present numbers) and distribution of species |
| | Consumption | * Total quantity (tonnes or kg) of material used by type and environmental quality, for the production of promotion materials and customer documentation.<br>* Use of renewable resources (solar, wind, etc.) used in tourist accommodations as a percentage of total fuels used<br>% of materials which can be recycled and % which receive this kind of treatment,<br>* Water/energy consumption per tourist (or bed or night). Amount of water recycled as a percentage of total water consumed<br>Number of hotels, restaurants and other places offering tourist services which have enacted environmental sound systems for eliminating over-consumption of resources and waste generation as a percentage of all establishments,<br>Readily available information for tourists and the industry in general for the adoption of low-consumption patterns,<br>% generated solid waste treated with the landfill method,<br>% of wastewater receiving treatment |
| **Institutional** | Tourism strategies | * Completion of national strategy for sustainable tourism with regular up-dates on progress (e.g. annual / bi-annual)<br>* Development of regional tourism strategy to deal with trans-boundary tourism issues, including environmental pollution |
| | Monitoring and assessment | * Measures to control and monitor tour operators, tourism facilities, and tourists in any area<br>* Adoption of Sustainability Impact Assessments, Environmental and Social Audits, prior to and during tourism development and operations |
| | Regulation | * Introduce or enforcement of regulations for integrated coastal zone management; protection of habitats, both marine and land-based, and other environmental law; enforcement of ILO core labour standards. |
| | Customer relations | * Tools and measures used by reporting organization to: raise the awareness of consumers on suppliers'/ destinations environmental, social and economic performance; on sustainable holiday making.<br>* Number of complaints from destinations' stakeholders and holiday-makers regarding misleading and inaccurate representation of destinations. Actions taken to address these. |

Sources: Farsari 2000, Tour Operators Initiative 2002

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### Footnotes

[1]    The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people."

[2]    Financial leakages: where a foreign tourist operator derives financial revenue and profits from their tourism operations in a host country but this does not contribute to the local / domestic economy of the host country i.e. they do not employ local staff, buy local food stuffs, utilise local infrastructure, but rather they bring in most of their needs.

[3]    All-inclusive tours /trips - All services (e.g. transport, cleaning, health care), facilities (e.g. accomodation), necessities (e.g. food and water) and luxuries (e.g. swimming pools, gyms) are provided for by the tour operator.

[4]    Tourism in Agenda 21: Ch. 11 governments should 'promote and support the management of wildlife (land)…and ecotourism; Ch. 17 states that 'coastal states should explore the scope for expanding recreation and tourist activities based on marine living resources'; Ch. 36 calls countries to promote "environmentally sound leisure and tourism activities"

[5]    Local Agenda 21 planning principles: Participation and Transparency - involving local residents, and all major social groups, in Local Agenda 21 planning.  Making information about sustainable development easily available to the general public.      Partnerships - Build collective responsibility for planning, decision-making, problem solving, project implementation and evaluation.  Accountability - Holding all partners answerable for their actions. Systemic Approach - Addressing the underlying causes of social, economic and ecological problems in an integrated way, focusing on the entire systems that are affected, rather than only problem symptoms. Ecological Limits - Limits defined by Earth's carrying capacity and that frame the scope of development.

[6]    Pro-poor tourism (PPT) is tourism that generates net benefits for the poor. PPT overlaps with, but is different from, 'sustainable tourism' and other forms of alternative tourism. http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/what_is_ppt.html

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