



CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 1999

Delegates to the *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) on Sustainable Consumption and Production and Tourism heard an introduction to the Secretary-General's report on Tourism and then discussed proposals for future action on the issue during morning and afternoon meetings. Delegates also received the draft Co-Chairs' summary of the discussion on consumption and production patterns and elements for a draft decision by the CSD. Co-Chair Hanif (Pakistan) introduced the documents, which he said would be discussed Wednesday. Revised versions will be presented on Friday.

OPENING STATEMENTS

JoAnne DiSano introduced the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.17/1995/5/Add.1-3). She said governments can facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders, especially indigenous and local communities, and undertake capacity-building to promote partnerships and harmonize tourism policies with other social and economic policies. The tourism industry can promote sustainability through self-regulation and voluntary initiatives. The international community through policy coordination and cooperation can address the environmental impacts of tourism, while emphasizing financial support and accelerating transfer of environmentally sound technology and exchange of information between developed and developing countries.

UNEP highlighted the main issues raised in the recent Governing Council pertaining to tourism. She cited the distribution of benefits as a major challenge and said a bottom-up participatory approach is the main requirement. She said governments and other partners should develop regulatory and other frameworks, and more dialogue is necessary.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The G-77/CHINA noted that, in a number of developing countries, tourism has emerged as a dominant economic contributor, providing infrastructure development, jobs, foreign exchange earnings, government tax revenue and other significant benefits for local communities. She said there are challenges associated with tourism and pointed to possible actions to address them, including promoting recognition by the international community of the value of tourism as an economic tool for development. She said the CSD should hold a discussion on the principles governing sustainable tourism.

The EU noted that sustainable tourism is connected to nearly every chapter of Agenda 21. He said that, while increasing tourism places greater pressure on social structures and the environment, it is a major driving force for economic development, particularly in developing countries and SIDS. He noted that tourism is the fastest growing sector worldwide and can help to combat poverty through employment and investment. He invited the CSD to take an action-oriented decision that would call on States to, among others, create the necessary legal, economic, financial, social, sanitary, environmental and security frameworks for sustainable development of tourism and develop systems for greater involvement of stakeholders. He also suggested actions on sustainable tourism to be taken by international organizations, agencies, conventions and the tourism industry.

TURKEY has identified the need to spread tourism flows throughout the country and expand the tourism season to include the entire calendar year. She said special attention is given to SMEs and noted the use of environmental impact assessment for the evaluation of tourism investment projects, improved voluntary industry initiatives, and review of Turkey's tourism activities by the OECD's Country Review for Environmental Performance. SAMOA, on behalf of AOSIS, said the carrying capacity of many small island States is reaching critical levels and indiscriminate tourism development can lead to devastating impacts. He called for: audits to assess the social and cultural implications of tourism; support for capacity building; use of modern technologies and communications; appropriate regulation at the international level; education materials; and a commitment to the protection of local value systems in global strategy.

JAPAN said impediments to new patterns of tourism include local communities' hesitation to replace conventional tourism, the reluctance to adopt codes of conduct and the difficulty of promoting ecotourism in areas unlikely to attract visitors. He noted the benefits of an international network to promote an exchange of information and views. SRI LANKA noted the importance of, *inter alia*: public awareness and education at grassroots levels, especially for youth; enforcement of regulations at national and local levels; new fiscal measures to combat environmental degradation; the protection of environmentally fragile areas; industry's adoption of effective codes of conduct; and continuous monitoring by all stakeholders.

CANADA urged the CSD to call on governments to integrate tourism policies with other policies, and government agencies to build capacity in human resource development. He drew attention to the need for tourism development planning to respect social and cultural



norms of isolated communities. SWITZERLAND underscored the promotion of core labor standards, reduction of administrative burdens for SMEs, and promotion of investments in public transportation. She said further efforts to reduce protectionist barriers to tourism must be reinforced and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) should be strengthened while phasing out foreign exchange controls for tourists.

The US said the meaning of the term "sustainable tourism" must be explored and indicated that eco-tourism, environmentally sustainable tourism and cultural heritage tourism were important elements to bear in mind for a definition. He called attention to the question of how to measure whether tourism is sustainable, noted that many guidelines have been created in support of best environmental practices, and underscored the need to educate stakeholders on them and to develop indicators to measure their successful implementation. CHINA said that while tourism is a fast growing industry that has strongly promoted the development of national economies, particularly in developing countries, irrational development of tourism could cause the destruction of the environment and adversely affect conservation of biological diversity and traditional cultures. Given the differences among countries, she indicated the need for countries to develop individual plans for sustainable development and tourism. She underscored that reasonable use and protection of resources should be accorded equal importance.

The PHILIPPINES called for international adoption of the 1997 Manila Declaration on the social impacts of tourism agreed at the World Tourism Leaders meeting. She called for: in-flight information on the cultural sensitivities of destination communities; CSD cooperation with UNICEF in implementing the Stockholm conference recommendations on the protection of children; a CSD role in implementing and monitoring guidelines for sustainable tourism development; and CSD participation in the preparation of the International Year of Eco-Tourism in 2002. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA proposed that national strategies for sustainable tourism development address: revitalizing local economies; the importance of environmental impact assessments; internalization of environmental costs; partnerships with local authorities, NGOs and business; and regional approaches to take account of the international nature of tourism.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said an important contribution would be to define the concept of eco-tourism. He also suggested studying linkages between the international years of eco-tourism and mountains. NEW ZEALAND suggested bringing together existing work on tourism in a clearinghouse mechanism. He also suggested that the CSD call on governments of developed countries to assist developing countries in the development of sustainable tourism and supported the US call to produce a single set of guidelines for sustainable tourism. He said the World Tourism Organization and UNEP might be best placed to take the lead on this task.

CHILE emphasized the need to improve horizontal cooperation mechanisms, the role of international organizations in facilitating information exchange on best practices, and the importance of preventing sexual exploitation of children and financial paradises for money laundering, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. AUSTRALIA emphasized constructive partnerships between all stakeholders and the need for close collaboration between organizations to avoid duplication and maximize the benefits of their research and capacity-building programs. FRANCE stressed that tourism often leads to the destruction of natural resources, including damage to coral reefs by divers, cruise ships and the movement of fishermen away from traditional zones. She called for the effective management of protected marine zones, the development of systems to evaluate good practices and training.

The NGO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CAUCUS called for: stakeholder adoption and implementation of a global code of ethics to ensure accountability; development of a set of indicators for universal application, taking account of environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts; establishment of national councils or advisory boards, with NGO and stakeholder participation, to develop model frameworks and strategies; financial and information support for full democratic participation; and local agendas to enable communities to identify their local priorities and look at local reinvestment; and the adoption of policies on outbound tourism. The WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (WTO) reported on related activities, including the elaboration of an Agenda 21 for the tourism industry and an October 1998 international conference on SIDS. The WTO will circulate a proposal for CSD-7 to undertake a review of the effectiveness of voluntary industry initiatives.

MEXICO, on behalf of the Rio Group, proposed categorizing the data in the Secretary-General's report into guidelines, operational elements, and preparations for and measures to be adopted for the international eco-tourism year. He emphasized building on existing matters and avoiding duplication of efforts. BRAZIL drew attention to the references to eco-labeling and stated that, since the issue is under consideration in the World Trade Organization (WTO), it would be premature to consider it in the context of sustainable tourism. SOUTH AFRICA indicated that, while developed countries emphasize planning and management strategies for tourism, developing countries emphasize sustainability. He stressed the importance of sustainability because many countries face budgetary constraints and other problems that affect long term environmental management and planning. He indicated the need to promote guidelines and to develop strategies to implement them. He concluded that a paradigm shift was needed at CSD-7 to produce guidelines that would serve the purposes of sustainable tourism.

The INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IULA) stated that the environment has an intrinsic value that outweighs its value as a tourism asset. He said its enjoyment now should not prejudice use by future generations. He underscored the role of local authorities in tourism, including attracting tourists to certain destinations and maintaining historic buildings and other tourist sites. He stressed the importance of Local Agendas 21 as an effective means to achieve sustainable tourism. The WORLD TRAVEL AND TOURISM COUNCIL AND INTERNATIONAL HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION invited the public, private and voluntary sectors to participate in the Agenda 21 action plan for travel and tourism established in 1992 with the Earth Council. He noted other industry initiatives including an Internet-based Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, Green Globe and education and training.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Many who remembered the nervousness with which an NGO proposal at CSD-6 was adopted to initiate a review of voluntary industry initiatives were pleased to see that this idea has become more widely accepted, as indicated by the World Tourism Organization's promise to circulate a similar proposal for the tourism industry's initiatives and others' signalling that they would support such a decision. Some NGO participants said the challenge this year will be to develop and launch the mechanisms for such a review.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT DOCUMENTS: The AHWG is expected to convene in Conference Room 4 at 11:30 am to discuss the Co-Chairs' summary of the discussion on consumption and production patterns and elements for a draft CSD decision. An afternoon meeting is also expected.