



CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 1999

Delegates to the *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) met in regional and interest groups during the morning to prepare their comments on the Co-Chairs' summary of Tuesday's discussion and proposed elements for a draft CSD decision on tourism and sustainable development. They presented these comments during the afternoon.

ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT CSD DECISION ON TOURISM

The document with elements for a draft CSD decision contained three preambular paragraphs and eight operative paragraphs presented in the format of a UN draft decision. Delegates first offered general comments on the proposed elements. The G-77/CHINA said her group would work with the draft's style but said the style should not become a precedent and the AHWG should not deviate from agreed procedure in the future. The EU welcomed the new format for the AHWG draft text. She said the text focused excessively on work to be done by international organizations while it contained inadequate coverage of the role of the private sector and the overall role of the governments.

The US noted the World Tourism Organization's offer to undertake a survey of existing voluntary initiatives and said it would be useful to hear from UNCTAD, UNDP and others who did not speak at the AHWG. He also stressed the need for sustainable tourism indicators. MEXICO, on behalf of the Rio Group, noted the absence of linkages between the Co-Chairs' summary of discussion and the document containing elements for a draft decision. He said the proposed actions should not be limited to UN agencies but extend to generating action on the ground. CANADA called for references to carrying capacity, stakeholder dialogues, partnerships between government and the private sector, the social responsibility of the private sector, training, local employment and participation by SMEs and other stakeholders in tourism development. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION called for a stronger recognition of the economic and social role of tourism and supported comments on the necessity of clarifying the concept of eco-tourism.

AUSTRALIA suggested acknowledging the role of a range of UN bodies and the sponsors of Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism, the World Tourism Organization, World Travel and Tourism Council and Earth Council. She also suggested reorganizing the ideas into the following categories: compiling an inventory of existing tools, principles, guidelines and codes of conduct; disseminating and promoting

these materials; and promoting partnerships. CHINA stressed the need to clarify the concept of sustainable tourism and suggested adding text on responsible tourist behavior.

The Chair then invited delegates to comment on the document's format. The EU supported retaining it. The G-77/CHINA said it would treat the format as an exception and would work with it. INDIA and BRAZIL agreed, but said the format should not be used next week for oceans issues.

The INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES said that sustainable tourism requires planning and management that is unique to an area and has to reflect local initiatives and knowledge. The Pan-African Movement, on behalf of the NGO TOURISM CAUCUS AND TRADE GROUP, expressed concern that issues such as human rights violations, sex tourism, foreign direct investment and subsidies on environmentally degrading activities were not reflected in the draft elements. He stressed the need for a precautionary framework in combating such issues. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) presented the outcome of COP-4, which took place in May 1998. Parties were requested to submit information regarding tourism and its relation to biological diversity. This information is expected to initiate an exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practices. The topic will be discussed by the next meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and COP-5.

The INTERNATIONAL HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION said the internalization of energy and water costs should apply equitably to all and not only to the tourism sector. She also called for references to voluntary industry initiatives and endorsement by the CSD of the Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism. The INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, speaking in a support role for indigenous peoples, noted the important role of tourism in indigenous community economic development when it is controlled by local communities. She observed that in most cases, indigenous communities are involved on exploitative terms and disproportionately bear the costs of tourism through loss of access to land and resources, poverty and environmental degradation, and appropriation of indigenous cultural property by the industry. She cited particular concern about eco-tourism, noting the commoditization of indigenous cultures in the marketing process. She asked that governments include indigenous peoples in all critical analyses concerning tourism and eco-tourism; decision making under the CSD

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include indigenous representation; indigenous knowledge and technologies play a role in the re-definition of sustainable tourism; and governments, UN agencies and NGOs support indigenous innovation.

Co-Chair Hanif then invited delegates to offer specific comments on the text. The G-77/CHINA said the text should contain more on the development of a plan for action and said stakeholders need to be involved in those plans. The EU suggested referencing the specific UNGASS paragraphs requesting the CSD to develop a programme of work on sustainable tourism. The EU and US proposed changing "tourism" to "sustainable tourism" throughout the document. SWITZERLAND, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and others suggested combining the references to the International Years of Eco-tourism and Mountains in 2002.

To text identifying actions for governments, the EU proposed adding calls for governments to create an enabling framework to promote sustainable tourism and to integrate tourism into sustainable development strategies or plans, to involve all stakeholders in all aspects of sustainable tourism development, and to make use of economic instruments and develop and apply an appropriate mix of instruments. SWITZERLAND proposed adding references to ILO standards, sex tourism and the role of SMEs. NEW ZEALAND suggested calling for work with national tourism councils. TURKEY proposed a reference to Local Agendas 21.

To text calling for action by international bodies, the G-77/CHINA proposed adding reference to "other relevant organizations." The EU asked who in the UN system was to take the lead on the activities the UN system was invited to undertake. NEW ZEALAND welcomed more actor specificity and suggested adding text regarding the funding of the activities.

The G-77/CHINA called for references to: avoiding the destruction of the cultural integrity of host communities; support for education efforts; responsible behavior by inbound tourists including respect for law and tradition; and consultation on and assessment of a clearinghouse mechanism rather than the creation of such a mechanism. She sought the deletion of a reference to the development of indicators for sustainable tourism. The EU sought clarification on the possible creation of a clearinghouse mechanism including information on institutional implications. She also cautioned against a proposal to elaborate a set of guidelines for sustainable development and suggested manuals and handbooks instead. On the Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism, she specified further activities for the tourism industry including voluntary initiatives, education, the use of environmentally sound technologies and management systems, eco-efficiency, work with local economies on benefit sharing, and distancing the industry from sex tourism and tourism-related child exploitation.

JAPAN proposed adding specific mention of eco-tourism and elaborating on issues raised in this context in the general discussion leading to the development of eco-tourism guidelines. These guidelines could form a subset of guidelines on sustainable tourism. He also suggested that there be a global network for the exchange of information and best practices. NEW ZEALAND suggested that areas within the purview of the CBD could be left to the latter for their recommendations. SWITZERLAND suggested that the collection and assessment of information on best practices also include assessment of positive impacts of tourism. The US suggested that national efforts within developing countries and economies in transition towards sustainable tourism be made within existing resources. On text calling for various initiatives, he suggested clarifying which UN agencies would support these initiatives. He suggested retaining the recommendation to develop indicators for sustainable tourism in the context of the testing phase of indicators for sustainable development. AUSTRALIA suggested

amalgamating ideas that focused on the same issue area but were placed in different sub-sections. She also said references to governments must include references to regional and local governments.

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF TUESDAY'S DISCUSSION ON TOURISM

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS: The G-77/CHINA proposed additional text noting that tourism can make a significant contribution to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in developing countries. SWITZERLAND proposed adding text on mountain regions and identifying the possibility for linkages between the International Years of Eco-Tourism and Mountains in 2002. The US proposed adding references to the possibility of overwhelming "natural resources" in addition to "the local culture" and to the impacts on coastal community inhabitants' "livelihoods" resulting from environmental impacts of tourism. He also said the reference to air pollution should address all kinds of pollution, not just its global dimension. AUSTRALIA proposed noting that, with appropriate planning, the challenges for environmental management and coastal area development can be mitigated.

CHALLENGES: The G-77/CHINA proposed an additional challenge: the concentration of services and profits in the hands of large transnational corporations.

ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS: The US said private sector involvement in financing is broader than build-operate-transfer schemes as suggested by the text. He recalled that the US and others had mentioned the need to control tourism growth, in some cases, to preserve "natural resources."

ACTION BY PRIVATE SECTOR: The G-77/CHINA recalled that some delegations mentioned that eco-labeling is still under consideration by the WTO Committee on Trade and the Environment (CTE).

ACTION BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: The G-77/CHINA suggested a new paragraph highlighting the value of tourism to promote economic development in developing countries.

AUSTRALIA suggested that reference to the competitive sectors of tourism read "sustainable and competitive tourism." The US suggested that changes in reference to environmentally sustainable tourism be expanded to economically and socially sustainable tourism.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The formatting of the Co-Chairs' document containing elements for a draft CSD decision on tourism brought strains within the AHWG and the G-77/China to the surface during its deliberations on Thursday. Some found the new format less amenable to including the ideas they wanted to add. They feared that the departure in presentation style may become a precedent, and were particularly concerned that its perceived limitations would hamper the exchange on oceans next week. Others thought the format was useful, given the mandates for an action-oriented text and to deliver a work programme on tourism. Some observers believe that another concern within the G-77/China is a perception that the CSD-7 Chair and Secretariat are pushing a little too hard for a focused, "action-oriented" outcome and are in need of being reined in.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

REVISED DOCUMENTS: Revised versions of the Co-Chairs' summaries and elements for draft CSD decisions will be available at 10:00 am.

AHWG: The Working Group will meet in Conference Room 4 at 3:00 pm. CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton (New Zealand) is expected to address the meeting. Delegations will also deliver comments on the revised documentation.