



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## CSD-7 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 21 APRIL 1999

CSD-7 participants discussed "Coastal Impacts of Tourism" during the morning, concluding the Tourism Segment. The High-Level Segment commenced during the afternoon. Thirty government officials delivered statements on tourism and sustainable development, after which participants engaged in a dialogue.

### THE COASTAL IMPACT OF TOURISM

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** Terry De Lacy, Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, on behalf of Industry, proposed that the CSD: sponsor and seek funding for pilot projects that integrate Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism with Local Agenda 21s; facilitate funding by international agencies and governments for research on best practices for tourism in coastal regions; encourage international agencies to develop coastal zone indicators; and encourage international agencies, governments and industry organizations to support small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to implement environmental improvement. Jon Whitlow, International Transport Workers' Federation, on behalf of Trade Unions, called for comprehensive impact studies to be prepared for coastal development projects and application of the preventive and precautionary principles in planning and management. He said voluntary initiatives can only be complementary to regulatory requirements.

Jeremy Harris, Mayor of Honolulu, US, on behalf of Local Authorities, pointed to negative impacts of waterfront vacationing, such as inadequate wastewater treatment, over-fishing and depriving access by local communities to traditional fishing grounds and recreational areas. Possible solutions he mentioned included evaluating and classifying coastal areas according to ecological, social and cultural sensitivity and determining an area's level of tourist activity according to its carrying capacity. Atherton Martin, Dominican Conservation Society, on behalf of NGOs, highlighted the linkages between sustainable livelihoods and tourism development. He said tourism must be carefully planned according to compatible land uses and water and coastal zone management. He proposed integrated planning, public awareness and training, resource mobilization and coordination.

Richard Kenchington (Australia) stressed the need to devote attention to strategic planning and zoning. He supported calls to sponsor pilot projects to link Local Agendas 21 and the CSD's work on tourism, highlight examples of best practice and then apply lessons learned. Suphavit Piamphongsant (Thailand) highlighted the growth of tourism in Thailand, its negative impacts on coastal areas, and measures undertaken to

address these impacts. He supported a trade union recommendation that industry should undertake self-regulatory mechanisms to address problems caused by cruise ship activities.

**DIALOGUE:** Trade Unions highlighted negative consequences from failing to apply integrated coastal zone management and planning. Industry noted the importance of making tourism investors and land developers aware of sustainable development concerns and indicators. GERMANY underscored the detrimental effects of land-based sources of marine pollution. NGOs called for further support for multi-stakeholder projects that use integrated tools to support integrated coastal development. Trade Unions said that changing consumer behavior could have a positive impact on carrying capacity. Local Authorities said there are limits to growth. NGOs emphasized that carrying capacity differs for each place.

On infrastructure and subsidies, Local Authorities said tourism developers should bear the full cost of necessary infrastructure and pay for maintenance of tourist sites. Industry noted that some countries and institutions offer incentives to cover these expenses. NGOs said these funds amount to public subsidies. Local Authorities said they, not industry, should decide what share of expenses industry will assume. Industry supported a multi-stakeholder, transparent process at the local level to decide who bears these costs. On indicators, the World Tourism Organization has developed a guide that defines a core set of indicators as well as site-specific indicators that include environmental, social and economic aspects. Industry emphasized that destination indicators are only one element of indicators and must be developed with multi-stakeholder involvement. NGOs stressed that the indicator system must be holistic and reflect other aspects of projects and other industries. FRANCE emphasized that sustainable development of tourism must include environmental, social, economic and ethical considerations.

Participants underscored the impacts of cruise ships on coastal areas and discussed their use of flags of convenience, surmising that such flags should not be used to avoid international regulations on marine pollution and that the CSD should advise relevant international organizations to investigate enforcement of these regulations and address loopholes. On regulatory frameworks, NGOs said voluntary initiatives should be supplemental to regulatory frameworks and noted the importance of partnerships between industry, governments and stakeholders to implement regulations. Industry noted the importance of capacity-building for SMEs because many do not understand sustainable development concerns.

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In summary, all the major groups supported pilot projects on sustainable tourism in coastal areas. Industry said tourism is crucial for coastal zone development and should be accorded a high profile in the context of integrated coastal zone management, and highlighted the role of local authorities. Trade Unions supported comments on the multi-stakeholder approach, the role of local authorities and communities, and voluntary initiatives as being supplemental to regulatory frameworks. Local Authorities noted the usefulness of setting environmentally or culturally sensitive sites aside from tourism development and underscored that hotel and land developers should be responsible for their projects' infrastructure costs. NGOs noted that full recognition of the hidden costs was still lacking and said regulatory frameworks should be set at the local level.

### **HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT**

Louise Fréchette, UN Deputy Secretary-General, underscored that the tourism industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy and that its environmental impacts can be severe. She noted the relevance of tourism, oceans and consumption and production patterns to the review of the Barbados Programme of Action (POA) for SIDS, and called for continued support for SIDS.

THAILAND highlighted that its approach to tourism development enforces the polluter pays principle, focuses investment on pollution control, and targets community involvement using environmental awareness programmes. ECUADOR outlined strategies to preserve local cultures as a fundamental part of its national eco-tourism development plan. KENYA has established a specialized hotel and tourism college, funded through a tax on catering, food and drink expenditures. SRI LANKA described its regulatory measures to prevent erosion of tourism resources, including bans on building hotels within 200 meters from the natural vegetation line. UKRAINE highlighted its development of an integrated national information system on tourism. CYPRUS noted its requirement of planning permits prior to all development projects to control coastal development. MACEDONIA said ambitions to foster its tourism sector have been shattered due to the war in Kosovo.

The G-77/CHINA highlighted the value of tourism as an economic tool and noted the fragility of the resources on which it depends. TURKEY reiterated that tourism is an engine for development for many developing countries. TANZANIA underscored that tourism generates wastes and gives rise to social costs as well as benefits. PERU drew attention to socio-cultural monitoring as a means of identifying and encouraging the positive effects of tourism. KENYA requested UN assistance to undertake a study of tourism's social impacts. SLOVENIA suggested that, when setting frameworks for tourism development, carrying capacity be defined, instruments of spatial and land-use planning be applied, and environmental impact assessments (EIAs) be conducted. TURKEY underscored the importance of applying the user pays and polluter pays principles. The EU supported conducting a comprehensive survey and assessment of existing voluntary initiatives related to sustainable tourism and called on the tourism industry to work towards a global code of conduct for sustainable tourism. AUSTRIA said the key to sustainable tourism is to integrate environmental factors in all involved industries and highlighted the use of eco-labels to this end. INDONESIA highlighted the need for environments conducive to SMEs.

ZIMBABWE and INDONESIA stressed that local communities should benefit from tourism development. COSTA RICA highlighted the impacts of massive tourism inflows on local cultures. NAMIBIA extolled the benefits of community-based tourism. The EU said the tourism industry should make greater efforts to employ local workforces and use local products, services and skills. MOLDOVA emphasized the role of environmental awareness and education in promoting sustainable tourism, especially for countries with economies in transition. SPAIN highlighted the importance of both citizen awareness and international cooperation.

HUNGARY emphasized the need for integrated planning and international cooperation to promote sustainable tourism. MYANMAR welcomed technical assistance given without prejudice, especially in conservation of biodiversity and natural habitat and waste treatment and disposal. UKRAINE highlighted the potential for foreign direct investment to introduce leading tourist technologies and upgrade tourism industry workers' skills. GREECE urged international policy coordination to minimize impacts of international tourism on destinations with valuable cultural and natural heritage.

TUNISIA, on behalf of countries sharing French as a language, called for economic, legal, fiscal, health and safety conditions to attract investment and international guidelines for sustainable tourism. POLAND proposed that the CSD further emphasize: the role of non-governmental stakeholders; voluntary codes of conduct; and clarification of the term "sustainable tourism." SLOVAKIA recommended that the CSD promote: integrated development of ecological networks; the principles of integrated spatial nature conservation; and EIA of recreational resorts.

The G-77/CHINA and the EU also addressed the other CSD-7 agenda items. The G-77/CHINA called on developed countries to take the lead in changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns. She reiterated that Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 and UNCLOS are the frameworks with which to address oceans, and urged that the principles of the Barbados POA be fully honored. The EU said it is essential to make use of existing arrangements and mechanisms on oceans, and said governments should ensure coherence in their positions in different fora. He emphasized that trade and environment should be integrated in the WTO as a means of addressing consumption and production patterns. He also stressed the importance of addressing ODA trends.

**DIALOGUE:** CHINA advised against attempting to develop global criteria and indicators. MEXICO emphasized the importance of guidelines. The UK suggested recognizing links between poverty and tourism and low-income tourism. SPAIN said the education of professionals should involve more than employees of the tourism sector. SWITZERLAND called for a strong CSD statement against sexual exploitation of children. EGYPT suggested identifying means to measure success of the programme of action for tourism and not wasting time developing a definition of sustainable tourism.

Industry said Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism provides a process-oriented framework for action. Local Authorities suggested that local government, working with all stakeholders, should identify the carrying capacity for their community. Trade Unions recommended educating workers on how to organize their holidays. NGOs welcomed the Tourism Segment's proposal to establish a multi-stakeholder working group.

Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, said UNEP's efforts include working with the World Tourism Organization and tour operators and finalizing a publication entitled "Eco-tourism." GUYANA said some members of the G-77/CHINA would have problems with references to child labor and core labor standards.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Informal negotiations on a draft text on implementing the Barbados POA convened Wednesday evening. One observer expected substantial progress by the end of the week. Negotiators are considering a new draft prepared in the time between the ISWGs and CSD-7.

### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT:** The High-Level Segment will discuss Oceans and Seas during morning and afternoon sessions in Conference Room 1.

**SIDE EVENTS:** Check *CSD Today* for side events.