

## Working Towards Earth Summit III

### NGOs Speak

#### Statement from the NGO Caucus on Tourism

23 February, 1999, United Nations, New York  
presented by Patricia Barnett, Tourism Concern U.K.

#### BASIS FOR ACTION

Mr. Chairman, we are indeed thankful for this opportunity to address this forum and we congratulate you on your appointment.

We are also encouraged by the work that the CSD has done and continues to do.

Mr. Chairman,

Tourism is a development issue, requiring appropriate structures to be developed that promote sustainability. Tourism has contributed to the economic development of some states, while at the same time degrading the physical, social, cultural and political environments. Therefore the feasibility of the current tourism development models must be urgently and comprehensively addressed. The tourism industry is said to be one of the fastest growing industries, but while a small section of the industry is profiting, many people's right to self determination and dignity is being threatened, and in some cases, lost. Sustainable tourism needs to meet acceptable and viable social, cultural, environmental and economic criteria. Legally binding guarantees for the traditional resource rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities must be honoured by governments and all stakeholders involved in tourism.

#### STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholders that must be involved in ALL aspects of tourism development and management are Government, Civil Society and the Private sector. The participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in the partnership is imperative. Civil Society actors include NGOs, CBOs, Trade Unions, Service organisation, Indigenous Peoples and several other entities from within Civil society at the local level.

#### KEY ISSUES

We must ensure that tourism development and environmental management are mutually supportive. To ensure sustainable tourism development we must integrate the planning and policy processes of all development sectors that impact on tourism. Key issues such as local community participation, maximum economic benefits for local economies, and human rights must be dealt with in a proactive manner with a consensus outcome.

Particular attention must also be paid to land tenure and land use, coastal zone management and waste management regulations and policies. The negative impacts of consumer behaviour and corporate action must be replaced with actions that promote social justice and equity. All environmental initiatives, must include a health component that takes into account the environmental-health precautionary approach.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We have a comprehensive list of recommendations in our background paper but would like to highlight some of the very urgent ones:

- 1 All Stakeholders should adopt, implement and promote a global code of ethics for tourism and be accountable for their actions.
- 2 A set of indicators must be developed and applied universally which incorporates economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts, which allows for objective evaluation and also a more accurate development picture of tourism. The current economic indicator is not adequate, nor appropriate.
- 3 National Councils or advisory boards comprised of representatives of Government, Civil Society and the private sector should be put in place. These councils would advise the decision making machinery (ministries, cabinet or otherwise) on the development model frameworks and tourism strategies that should be adopted as the National Strategic Plan.
- 4 Supportive instruments and mechanism to enable full democratic participation of all stakeholders in the decision making processes must be articulated and implemented, especially in the area of information flow and finance.
- 5 Local Agenda 21 processes should be initiated and established which enables local communities to identify priorities before and after adequate environmental, social, cultural and economic pre-feasibility and feasibility impacts studies. The process should also explore mechanisms for investments and

(Continued on page 4)

"THE VOICE OF THE NGO COMMUNITY AT THE U.N. CSD"

Published by Norwegian ForUM and UNED-UK  
Volume No. 4 Issue No. 3 24th February, 1999

The views expressed in Outreach are those of the authors,  
and not the organizations they represent

Editors: Felix Dodds

CSD NGO Steering Committee web site: [www.csdngo.org/csdngo](http://www.csdngo.org/csdngo)  
email: [northclear@csdngo.org](mailto:northclear@csdngo.org)



## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE LOCAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVE

**Thank you** for the opportunity of contributing to this important debate. It is important to us all but particularly to the local communities and neighbourhoods that experience at first hand the problems and the opportunities created by the tourism agenda. I speak today on behalf of the IULA, ICLEI and the worldwide LOCAL AGENDA 21 movement and Mr Chairman the following principles underpin our thinking:

The environment has an intrinsic value which outweighs its value as a tourism asset. Its enjoyment now should not prejudice use by future generations.

Tourism should be recognised as a positive activity with the potential to benefit the community and the place as well as the visitor.

Sustainable tourism demands a productive relationship between the environment and the tourist, the local community, its residents and the tourism industry.

Harmony must be sought between the needs of the visitor, the place and the local community.

Change is inevitable in a dynamic world and change can be beneficial if properly managed. Rapid change in the tourism industry should not override the principles of sustainable development.

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Even prior to the UNCED, but particularly since the adoption of AGENDA 21, many local authorities and their LGO's have focused on the unique challenges of governance for sustainable development. At the local level LOCAL AGENDA 21 has shown that sustainable development is achieved by steering local development opportunities to simultaneously achieve the triple bottom line of:

- Increased social welfare
- More equitably distributed economic wealth
- Enhanced integrity of local ecosystems.

All these are relevant to the tourism agenda.

Mr Chairman, local authorities are in the tourism business. Not only do they pro-

vide for the tourist they regulate the industry as well.

The roles of local authorities in tourism are many. They are responsible for many of the attractions of destinations – such as the coastline and the built and natural heritage. The wide range of services they provide all have some impact on tourism. These can include maintaining historic buildings, regenerating town centres, providing information for tourists and marketing their own tourism products in the arts leisure or museum fields. This is on top of providing the basic infrastructure which tourists need like clean air and water, roads, car parks, toilets, street lights and waste management which can be the subject of massive overload in times of peak tourist pressure.

Many local tourism strategies are now in place as local authorities respond positively to tourism challenges and many of these strategies have been prepared in a spirit of true partnership with other stakeholders like representatives of the tourist industry.

### SHARED VISIONS

So solutions to adverse tourism impacts are to be found in the SHARED interest and vision of local communities, tourism businesses and tourism consumers. But we need institutional mechanisms, relative to each destination, to articulate and develop this sense of shared interest. To secure the legitimacy of these mechanisms the participation of ALL interested local groups or interests must be guaranteed and dialogue should be open and transparent.

Within such frameworks a number of instruments are available to guide local tourist development on a more sustainable path. These include:

- Heritage preservation requirements for sites and buildings
- Guiding development rights from non-suitable to suitable development areas
- Providing private heritage and green space stewardship programmes
- Providing tax benefits to property owners who exercise sustainable development practices, and

- Using tourism taxes and fees to support construction and maintenance of required infrastructure

However, without true commitment to the sustainable tourism agenda, these local instruments are not themselves sufficient to prevent the steady erosion, by legally sanctioned private actions, of local natural wealth and social heritage. Therefore support from government and industry at the international, national, regional and local levels is essential to the success of this agenda.

### LOCAL AGENDA 21

The UN CSD has repeatedly recognised LOCAL AGENDA 21 as an effective partnership mechanism for implementing Agenda21 in cities and local communities. Experience with LA21 activities in hundreds of communities since 1990 has highlighted a number of principles for effective partnerships for sustainable development planning. These principles can also provide the basis for sustainable tourism planning and development in local tourist destination. For example where LA21 are underway a sustainable tourism working party could be established within the LA21 planning structures to facilitate planning and action.

So, in more than 2000 communities in nearly 64 countries LOCAL AGENDA 21 partnership forums already exist to serve as a mechanism for sustainable tourism dialogue. Where these forums are weak or have yet to address tourism issues, the tourist industry, local government organisations (LGO's) and NGO's can serve as a catalyst for dialogue.

A particular opportunity exists in those (20) countries where national LOCAL AGENDA 21 campaigns have started and are proving successful. In another 70 countries National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCS D's) can play a key role in providing national support to review local activity in this area. And alliances between LGO's and various tourist trade industry associations, trade unions and consumer organisations can support awareness raising and demonstration projects that may serve as models for other local commu-

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

nities on a country or regional basis.

Notwithstanding the primacy of local partnerships, the transnational nature of tourism requires transnational partnerships to support sustainable tourism planning at the local and national levels. A new mechanism exists for such transnational partnerships called the LOCAL AGENDA 21 CHARTERS INITIATIVE. Sponsored by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with IULA and ICLEI, it allows local communities to factor issues of global responsibility within their LA21 activities. Two authorities, typically on a North-South and East-West basis, establish a 'Charter' agreement that specifies areas of mutual support to jointly address relevant issues of global equity and sustainability. Currently 20 such Charters are underway and further opportunities exist to forge links on the tourism issue.

**THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Looking more particularly at solutions by the industry itself. These include voluntary initiatives and self regulation and many are already underway. However more comprehensive efforts are required. For example the establishment of formal EMS's in each business establishment provides a way for businesses to identify their adverse social and environmental impacts and to institute a programme to continuously reduce those impacts. EMS registration programmes such as EMAS and ISO 14001 offer extensive guidance to tourism businesses and deserve the active support of international tourism associations. Other businesses and many local authorities in many countries have valuable experiences to share in EMAS with the tourism industry.

Tourist businesses can make further voluntary contributions to resolving the social costs of tourism by:

- Providing local people with training opportunities eg in local and traditional trades and crafts
- Establishing purchasing guidelines that favour local goods and service procurement
- Making financial donations to local recreational facilities, parks, cultural facilities and security operations

- Establishing local profit sharing arrangements

If voluntary measures fail and there is no will to enter into LA21 dialogues, local governments can institute incentives and measures to reward best practices and prevent severe social impacts that need to be resolved at public expense. Ultimately in the face of the industry showing no commitment to the goals of sustainable tourism, local authorities need to use all powers available to protect the values that make an attractive tourist destination.

**NATIONAL PARKS**

A final word if I may Mr Chairman on National Parks. Tourism is currently mainly controlled in *originating* countries - many *destination* countries need a stronger institutional structure if they are to play a stronger role. This makes National Parks and similar protected areas important players. They are already centres of institutional strength and can act as a focus for tourism development, especially in rural areas. In many countries National Parks are run by local authorities and many take tourism very seriously – with at least 75% allowing for tourism in their management plans. But tourism will grow in importance as managers face pressure to reduce dependency on national taxation and provide local communities with a fair share of benefits derived from the natural resource.

Through tourism, Park managers can:

- Increase direct income – by higher fees and car park charges.
- Help create an environment in which local tourism can thrive.
- Offer local people new employment opportunities in the park.
- Still protect the intrinsic values of the Park which made it special.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion Mr Chairman, tourism is one of the many external forces influencing the direction and options for local development. The question therefore of whether tourism can be sustainable is answered by the contribution it makes to local sustainable development.

A truly legitimate and practical discussion must take place in and with the communities that are being influenced by tourist industry development. It must



— “What Rio did for the environment, Rio Grinds does for gossip.”

A concrete result of the consultation between NGOs/local government/industry with the European Union was realized on Tuesday. In order to minimise the consumption of white paper, ink, and long sentences it was agreed to refer to la21 rather than "the active participation of local indigenous communities, local administration, the private sector and NGOs."

For the forthcoming Commission on the Status of Women - men have been identified as a group that is ready for change, an emerging issue and a vulnerable group.

It is already known that the UK Deputy Prime Minister Rt Hon John Prescott MP is attending the CSD (with 2 other UK Ministers) - rumor has it that the German Presidency of the European Union are trying to persuade the German Vice Chancellor Lafontaine to attend as it will show similar "weight" to be given by the Presidency to the CSD.

The Vienna Café is not yet open. We understand it will be opening next week for the CSW. The word is that the cafe is being supplied with a first-class chef by the German Finance Ministry during the CSD.

Some people think that the agreement between the US telecommunication giants and UNEP has been created to ensure that people will be able to telephone UNEP in Nairobi.

create accountability of the tourism industry to locally defined development visions.

The true proof of sustainable tourism will be the sustainable development of local communities that serve as tourist destinations. It is time for the debate to focus on this challenge. Local authorities worldwide welcome the leadership of the UNCSO and the interest of the tourism industry to reduce tourism's negative impacts and to increase the positive contribution of tourism business and consumption activity to local sustainable development.

# Promoting Education in Support of Sustainable Development

**Education 21** - an initiative of UK NGOs and supported by the NGO Education Caucus offers a very distinctive approach to education for sustainable development, yet it stems from some quite basic ideas. The first of these (implicit in *Agenda 21* itself) states that policies for sustainable development will only succeed if supported by integrative education programmes as essential components. Although such programmes will tend to be locally based, a comprehensive *international* policy framework for education is necessary to facilitate action. The following related points are key:

- **Education 21** encompasses all the approaches to education for sustainable development incorporating environment and development education, as well as education for health and peace and bore besides.
- **Education 21** is as much about social and ethical aspects as the scientific and technological concerns of sustainable development. It provides a framework of values about the world that embraces justice, equity and human rights.
- **Education 21** embraces all forms of education; formal, non-formal and informal; part-time and full-time; school, further, higher, professional and adult; workforce training. It includes open and distance learning, and extends to education via the media and the internet.
- **Education 21** is about developing attitudes and skills, as well as knowledge and understanding.

A second starting point for **Education 21** arises when posing the question "Who is going to make the education programmes advocated by *Agenda 21* succeed?"

**Education 21** charges the **education community** with this responsibility; **Education 21** requires the

**education community** to seek an active share in both planning and implementing sustainable development programmes. Policy and action is what **Education 21** is about.

As a grouping, the **education community** is much broader than the school teaching profession. In the present context, it embraces representatives of all those individuals (and groups) with a commitment to education in support of sustainable development. It should be appreciated, then, that the *education community*:

- includes teachers, lecturers, curriculum developers, administrators, support staff, industrial trainers, countryside rangers and interpretative staff, environmental health and planning officers, education officers with NGOs (non-governmental organisations), community educators, youth leaders, parent association members, media people, representatives of learners in all contexts - and yet more.
- permeates all the sectors that are significant for sustainable development, for example industry, agriculture and health: it extends from government and local authorities to the private sector and NGOs. It represents a vital, integrating force.
- represents an enormously potent, but largely untapped human-resource for sustainable development. It possesses a reserve of knowledge and skills for sustainable development that can be invaluable in a range of contexts as well as education. It is vital that the **education community** is *at the heart* of all the processes that are working to achieve sustainable development.

The contribution of the **education community** towards sustainable development will be much more effective if made in equal partnership with other *major* groups in the planning and implementation of policies. Achieving *major group* status will enhance the international recognition of the *education community's* significance, and hence greatly extend its capacity for action.

Other key groupings such as *children and youth, women and farmers* are accorded a special status by *Agenda 21*, and are designated as **major groups**. This is an official label and these groups have special access to the UN system.

**Education 21** provides a means by which the excellent education policies of *Agenda 21* can be implemented. It supplies a common programme framework, an international rallying banner, an empowering mechanism for the *education community*, and offers a means for releasing latent resources, and harnessing them in support of sustainable development.

(Continued from page 1)

reinvestment of some of the revenues from tourism into those priorities.

- 6 Tourism developments' strategies need to articulate ways and means to minimise the leakages of revenues at all levels and establish closer linkage with the local communities.
- 7 All countries should at least have a policy on outbound tourism that sensitize tourists to the concepts, principles and practice of sustainable tourism, and ideally, should adopt a framework that reflects a single ministerial portfolio and responsibility for the tourism industry.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to the close cooperation of all partners here with us at the CSD in effecting these recommendations for sustainable tourism.