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THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – REFLECTIONS IN/FOR THE FUTURE

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Abstract: “Tourism is one of the world’s fastest growing industries and an important source of foreign exchange and employment for many developing countries. In reviewing the first five years’ implementation of Agenda 21 in 1997 at its [nineteenth Special Session](#), the General Assembly indicated the need to give further consideration to the importance of tourism in the context of Agenda 21. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg addressed sustainable tourism in Chapter IV, paragraph [43](#) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Tourism that focuses on natural environments is a large and growing part of the tourism industry. While it can contribute in a positive manner to socio-economic development and environmental protection, uncontrolled tourism growth can also cause environmental degradation, destruction of fragile ecosystems, and social and cultural conflict, undermining the basis of tourism.

The General Assembly in 1998 proclaimed 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism ([A/RES/53/200](#)), reaffirming Economic and Social Council [resolution 1998/40](#), of 30 July 1998. For further information on activities related to Ecotourism, please consult the web-site of the [World Tourism Organization](#).

As announced at the Johannesburg Summit, the World Tourism Organization, in collaboration with UNCTAD, launched the [Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty](#) (ST-EP) initiative to develop sustainable tourism as a force for poverty alleviation.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) last reviewed the issue of sustainable tourism in 2001, when it was acting as the Preparatory Committee for the Johannesburg Summit. In its current work programme, the CSD will next take up the issue of sustainable development in its fifth cycle, in 2012 and 2013.”*

Key words: sustainability, tourism, development, strategic planning, diversification, development

*Information regarding the site of United Nation Division for Sustainable Development: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/tourism/tourism.htm>

The Global Context of Tourism Development – Reflections in/for the Future

Due to the underestimation of the complex tourism character and its negative effects many of which have global dimensions, and due to tourist industry limited participation in forming ecological

policies, tourism initially is not an object participating in the conception for sustainable development (it is not mentioned in practice in Brundland’s report and is not treated independently in Agenda 21). Around the beginning of the 90s, however, it is one of the sectors, inside which are realized the most great number of initiatives and are carried on the most

intensive discussions, connected with the sustainable development, including the conception's essence for sustainable development, concerning one sector. The fast perception of the ideas for the tourism sustainable development is connected with the development of the close in ideas and intentions conceptions for tourist development and tourist policy, formed in mainly in the 80s: "quality tourism," "soft" tourism in its wide comprehension, intelligent tourism, tourism with limited influence, responsible tourism, and etc. (in literature are known round 20 close in high degree overlapping notions).

In the mid 90s the tourism sustainable development turns into official and result-oriented policy with serious practical dimensions. Authoritative figures determine the sustainable development as the "new paradigm of global tourism" already before the leaders' conference in Rio. A set of international organizations are engaged with the problems of tourism sustainable development, led by the understanding that "if it does not develop in sustainable way, the key goals of the global ecological policy won't be achieved" (Merkel, 1997, 3). It was accepted a Charter for stable tourism in UNESCO's conference that took place in Lansaporte in 1995. The World Tourism Organization, the World Trip and Tourist Council and the World Council worked out together "Agenda 21 for tourist industry" in 1997 that outlined a system, composed of practical steps that the governments and the private companies can undertake to reach the goals of sustainable development. The World Tourist Organization in collaboration with ICOMOS work out directions for tourist sustainable management of the places with historical heritage. From 1993 the World Trip and Tourist Council (organization of senior managers in tourist industry) creates a center for monitoring of the positive experience in the ecologic- conformity development and management of the hotel and tour operator activity, air companies, destinations, and ect., organized program for ecological management in tourism

Green Globe, and from 1995 with the help of EU general directorate XXIII put into practice the project ECoNET (global tourism and environment informational net, included in Internet). There is high activity of the European Commission part and from European Council part concerning the transformation of the tourist policy towards sustainable development (annual forums dedicated to the relation of tourism and the environmental protection, working out of European Charter of tourism sustainable development in the protected territories and others). Hundreds international and national non- governmental organizations stand up in one or another way for the development of ecologically and socially accepted tourism. Many of them work out special codes of behavior, in which base is implied the idea for sustainable development. The sustainable development and the consideration of the environment (as well as the proposing of such environment as a tourist product) become a central element of many companies and whole countries' marketing strategies. Widely spreads are big (including international) contests for environmental protection and sustainable development (for enterprises, destinations, non- governmental organizations). At the end of 80s and the beginning of the 90s begin to develop models of behavior of the tourist industry, the tourists, tourist administrations and non- governmental organizations, which are considered to be able to transform into norm in the next 10-15 years (Middleton, P. O'Keefe and S. Moyo 1993).

The wide acceptance of the ideas for tourism sustainable development, especially on behalf of commercial segment of the tourist industry, by no means can be considered only or exclusively for manifestation of increased ecological consciousness, abstract concern for the human destiny and so on. The problem gets out from the sphere of academic interest, social criticism, and the activity of non-governmental organizations, and turns into companies and administrations' real policy only when they realize (and even feel on

the bases of real examples) its economic and political dimensions and when they convince their selves that “the ecology is a long term economics,” that the solving and the prevention of ecological problems is an investment in the future, that the increase of the lucrativeness goes hand in hand with the conformity with the abilities of the environment development, and that the contrary, the non- conformity with the environmental protection means lost of market positions, tourists, incomes, and work places. Part of the tourist industry looks on the realized activities for sustainable development as measure of precaution, which excludes otherwise the inevitable and considered as more limited administrative and legislative directions, restrains, and bans. As far as the tourist enterprises, administrations, and organizations are the main agents of tourism development, the real application of the principles of tourism sustainable development becomes a fact only when it regarded as a business problem with distinct financial dimensions not only in the far future, but in a short term aspect.

Conceptual frame

The conception for the sustainable tourism in global aspect is extremely diverse, discussable, and fast changeable (Stankova, M., 2007). There can be outlined three main directions of the discussion:

1. The frequent use of the notion “stable” makes the attitude that this is a new tourism kind or form, respectively a development peculiar to a certain tourism kind or situation (development scale). In this case is available an opposition of the “good” (stable, alternative, “small”) or the “bad” (mass, traditional, “large”) tourism. This conception is criticized because of its exceeded simplification and mostly because of that the idea for the development of alternative, small in scale tourism forms does not solve the global problem for increase of the tourist travels (and of the

used resources) and for free access to tourist services and resources use. Furthermore, a set of propagandized alternative tourist forms, connected directly with the sustainable development (country tourism, eco- tourism), can have considerably more apparent and spatially wider negative influences in comparison with the mass tourism. The alternative viewpoint considers the “tourism sustainable development” in principle as a new full- scale approach or philosophy of the tourist development and tourist policy. It accepts the sustainability not as a possession of a certain tourist reproach, form, or a scale, but as a target that tourism should pursue. This reproach in practical plan presumes a change towards, first of all, to the mass tourism sustainability. Notwithstanding that the first conception does not have conceptual reasons, it is still pretty much widespread, including in Bulgaria as well, especially among the spheres that have the largest contribution for its realization (the tourist enterprises).

2. Especially highly criticized is the initial (and still dominating) conception for the tourist sustainable development, which is marked as a tourist- centric paradigm. In the center of attention is not placed the whole conception of sustainable development, but are put the tourism interests (tourists, tourist industry, and tourist resorts). The sustainability is understood as an environmental protection (resource base) for the future (long term) tourism development. The so called “contributory” paradigm is developed as an alternative of this “sector” understanding of the sustainability, according to which the tourism sustainable development has one particular principle- to help for the entire sustainable development (Table 1). This contributory paradigm is undeniably more grounded, but in the same time more difficult for operating and accepting from the subjects of the tourism development and realization.

Table 1. Narrow and broad paradigm of the tourist sustainable development

	Tourist-centric narrow paradigm	Contributory, broad paradigm
Common philosophy	A sustainable development because of tourism	Tourism contribution to the sustainable development
Range of the resources	Protection of the direct tourism resource bases, for providing the tourist destination development future	Reporting of tourism influence upon all resources, even when their use is not connected with the threat concerning tourism surviving
Geographical dimension	Geographic inequality Local reproach Preservation and improvement of the conditions concerning the destination, through shifting of the problems Localization of the advantage (the best advantages for the destination)	Geographic equality Regional reproach The tourist development in the centre contributes for the achievement of sustainable development on local, regional, national, and global level Geographic advantage maximization
Relationship with other sectors	Domination Mono structural economics Resources concurrence Conflict Non- coordinated, partial development	Equality Diversification Compatibility Coordination Synergy

3. The nature of tourism sustainable development is the entire (integral) approach, based on the comprehension for the tourist system and its interaction with the environment. Quite often, however, are the cases, when interpreting the tourism sustainable development, the emphasis is put either on the protection (ecological aspect) or on the development (more specifically economical aspect). A working model for sustainable development can be based on the classic triangle “nature-society- economics”, but only if are they examined in harmony as equal, without any dominating aspect or target. A specific factor for tourism is the need of reporting and the conformity with the tourists’ requirements that participate in “the production place.” The big change, connected with the sustained development,

realized to great extent ever since the conception for the soft tourism, is the movement of the centre of gravity from the search (tourists) towards the middle of tourism sustainable development. If in addition to the above said we put the time measurements (highly included in Bruntland’s definition) and the space, we’ll get the following model, based on the idea for the balance and the equality between the different aspects, spheres, and interests as a nuclear of one policy oriented towards the practical orientation of tourism sustainable development (Tab.2). This model can be used from one hand as a criterion for assessment of the challenges that confront tourism sustainable development in Bulgaria, and on the other hand- the achievement of the respective balance is itself the major challenge.

Table 2. Tourism sustainable development as a balance of interests

Tourism sustainable development		
Intergenerational equality (equality between the generations) Preservation and augmentation of the future generations' abilities Long term income Strategic planning		Intergenerational equality (equality between the generations) - social (fair distribution of the advantages and the expenses between the social groups) - Special (just contribution of the advantages and the expenses between different places and levels)
Balance between economical developments Ecological and social compatibility Economically vital, but socially and ecologically acceptable tourism Assessment of tourism social and ecological influences		Balance between the tourists/ tourist industry requirements and the environmental requirements Conformity with the environmental capacity (physical, ecological, social, economical) Social and ecological tourists and tourist industry responsible behaviour
Balance between tourism and total development Tourism integration in the entire development Avoidance of the tourist "monocultures" Comparative assessment between the advantages and the expenses for the development of different activities		Balance between the tourist industry and local economics requirements Fair payment of the expenses for the given tourist product Quality of the tourist product and tourist experience, in conformity with the prize

4. There are various publications, containing principles and directions for tourism sustainable development, which goal is to specify and operational the common conception for sustainable development, to serve as an orientation for the subjects, on whom is counted on to realize the sustainable development and to make easier its practical application. They are important, as well, for the understanding of the nature and the ways, with the help of which tourism sustainable development is interpreted.

Conclusion

The principles and priorities for tourism sustainable development as mentioned in Agenda 21 (concerning the tourist industry) disseminate a new conceptual framework.

The tourism industry is seen as universal propaganda mechanize for education of rising future generation. The tourism industry should:

- encourage people to lead a healthy and productive life in harmony with the nature;
- contribute for the planet ecosystem protection and recovery;
- be based on stable models of production and consumption;

Tourism and the environmental gentle development and protection are mutually dependent. Environmental preservation should be an integral part of the tourist development process and the problems of the tourist development should be treated in participation with the affected citizens, as

the plan decision should be adapted on local level. The nations should protect themselves mutually from natural calamities that can influence the tourists or the tourist resorts.

In the same time tourism industry should use its capacity to provide women and

unprivileged groups' employment. Its development should admit and encourage the identity, the culture, and the local people interests and take into consideration the international law, concerning the environmental preservation.

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