BALI DECLARATION
ON
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

PLAN OF ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, PHASE II (2006-2012) AND REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

ESCAP TOURISM REVIEW No. 26

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ESCAP WORKS TOWARDS REDUCING POVERTY
AND MANAGING GLOBALIZATION

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of globalization has led to phenomenal surges in international trade and investment. Globalization, which involves accelerated interactions and integration due to less costly, more frequent and faster transport; improved access to information; and freer movement of capital, goods and people, has also created enormous opportunities for the expansion of tourism.

In economic terms, international tourism has become a principal source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries. Tourism is also playing a vital role in the socio-economic development of many least developed countries, including Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and several Pacific island countries. The tourism industry is one of the few development options for these countries. It provides an opportunity to diversify economic structures and thereby play a significant role in raising the standard of living and lifting people above the poverty line.

Importantly, tourism can make a real contribution to spreading development to regions that may not have benefited from other types of economic development. Tourism offers labour intensive and small-scale business opportunities and employs a high proportion of women and youth contributing to social equity. The potential of tourism to create jobs is particularly important since unemployment is the principal social and economic challenges facing many developing countries.

Against this background, the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development was held in Bali, Indonesia, from 7 to 9 December 2005. The Meeting reviewed achievements resulting from the implementation of phase I (1999-2005) of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and Pacific Region. It also identified challenges that lay ahead for the region and considered strategies and approaches required for achieving sustainable development of tourism.

The Meeting adopted the Bali Declaration on Sustainable Tourism Development, including phase II (2006-2012) of the Plan of Action and its Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development. The Bali Declaration stresses the importance of taking specific actions both at the national and regional levels in line with the Plan of Action and the Regional Action Programme.

Within the overall framework of strengthening countries' capabilities in sustainable tourism development, the Plan of Action proposes various actions at the national level. In addition, the Regional Action Programme provides a framework for actions as a means of supporting efforts made at the national level.

The objective of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012) is to foster the sustainable development of tourism and to enhance its contribution to socio-economic development and poverty reduction. The effective implementation of the Plan will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially those relating to poverty reduction; gender equality and empowerment of women; environmental conservation; and global partnerships for development and the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The implementation of the Plan is expected to:

(a)   Enhance the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and poverty reduction by facilitating opportunities for poor communities to benefit from tourism;

(b)   Facilitate travel through the coordinated development of tourism-related infrastructure and improved procedures for the issuance of visas, border formalities and customs regulations;

(c)   Minimize the adverse sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism while enhancing its role in the conservation of the natural environment and the preservation of the cultural heritage;

(d)   Enhance the capability of managing crises and risks that affect tourism;

(e)   Increase the capability to develop the required human resources in the tourism sector.

The Plan of Action and Regional Action Programme are structured around five theme areas: (a) enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction; (b) facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure; (c) sociocultural and environmental management of tourism; (d) crisis and risk management in tourism; and (e) human resources development in the tourism sector.

The Plan of Action and the Regional Action Programme were launched in 2006 with the adoption of Commission resolution 62/3 of 12 April 2006 on the implementation of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012) and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development.

The current issue of the ESCAP Tourism Review contains (a) the Bali Declaration on Sustainable Tourism Development, (b) the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012) and (c) the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development (2006-2012).

2. BALI DECLARATION ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

We, the representatives of members and associate members of UNESCAP attending the High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development held at Bali, Indonesia on 7 to 9 December 2005,

Renewing our commitment to the implementation of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, in particular, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation 2002; the Brussels Declaration, including the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010; the Mauritius Declaration, including the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States 2005; the General Assembly Resolution 55/2 on United Nations Millennium Declaration; as well as the Millennium Development Goals; the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted at the 13th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization; the WTO Declaration on Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals; and the outcome of Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals held in Jakarta in August 2005 which recognized that poverty reduction is overarching objective for developmental cooperation and partnership in the Asia and Pacific,

Noting the enormous potential of sustainable tourism for socio-economic development and poverty eradication, and the significance of sustainability principles for environmental protection and preservation of culture and heritage,

Firmly believing that tourism development based on the principles of sustainable development is an important means to effectively manage environmental and cultural concerns while at the same time creating jobs, contributing to economic growth and promoting social development, and act as an effective entry point in the poverty reduction efforts and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, given its tremendous potential to generate more rapid economic development,

Recognizing the need for gender mainstreaming in sustainable tourism development,

Noting the lessons learnt during the first implementation phase of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and Pacific Region (1999-2005), and recognizing the need to address various issues arising from the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and the need to take specific actions at the national and regional levels,

Recognizing the value of local wisdom and local knowledge in many parts of the Asia Pacific region for sustainable tourism development,

Urge members and associate members of UNESCAP to:

1) Formulate national and local tourism policies and development strategies with a view to enhancing the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and poverty reduction,

2) Encourage the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, local communities, women, people with disabilities, older persons, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the formulation and implementation of tourism related policies and strategies,

3) Facilitate travel through the coordinated development of tourism-related infrastructure, improve procedures for the issuance of visas, border formalities and customs regulations, and harmonization of civil aviation policies.

4) Minimize the adverse socio cultural and environmental impacts of tourism while enhancing its role in the conservation of the natural environment, including the promotion of green tourism and preservation of the cultural heritage, by, among others, promoting adequate regulatory framework,

5) Promote the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and support further implementation of the code, including the creation of a climate that is conducive to private sector's compliance with the Code,

6) Enhance the identification and dissemination of best practices on sustainable tourism, including through the optimum use of information and communication technology and web-based framework,

7) Enhance capabilities to develop the required human resources and the capability to manage and prevent crisis affecting the tourism industry,

8) Embark on capacity building programs to facilitate participation of rural and local communities in the economic activities to increase household incomes and poverty eradication,

9) Support tourism-related local economic activities including the promotion of access to capital through micro financing and marketing schemes for micro and small enterprises,

10) Promote regional cooperation and support subregional initiatives in the tourism sector,

11) Encourage enhanced collaboration between UNESCAP and other UN agencies for sustainable tourism development, particularly the World Tourism Organization and its ST-EP Foundation,

12) Participate actively in regional networking arrangements, including the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT), and the development of standards of competency for tourism professionals,

13) Enhance national, regional and international cooperation to promote tourist safety, security and comfort,

Invite members and associate members of UNESCAP, donor countries, multilateral financing institutions, concerned agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and sub regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and, in particular,

the private sector to provide financial and technical support for the implementation of Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, Phase II (2006-2012);

Adopt the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, Phase II (2006-2012), including its regional action programme.

Bali, Indonesia, 9 December 2005

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3. PLAN OF ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, PHASE II (2006-2012)

Globalization, which involves accelerated interactions and integration due to less costly, more frequent and faster transport, improved access to information technologies, and freer movement of capital, goods and people, has created enormous opportunities for the expansion of tourism.

Tourism is now recognized as one of the world's largest industries, with enormous potential for further growth. In many countries in the region, including the least developed countries, it has become a major source of foreign exchange earnings. It is also an important means of expanding the economic base through its linkage with the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Consequently, tourism has assumed considerable socio-economic importance in many parts of the world and its role has become particularly significant in developing countries.

In a number of countries in the Asian and Pacific region, tourism can become one of the frontline sectors in the fight against poverty. The tourism industry can create a number of development synergies to help overcome poverty through job creation in various regions of countries, including remote rural areas. This is particularly important since the great majority of people in extreme poverty live in rural areas. Tourism offers labour-intensive and small-scale business opportunities and employs a high proportion of women and unskilled youth. The potential of tourism to create jobs is of paramount importance, since unemployment is the principal social and economic challenge facing many developing countries.

Tourism can also encourage greater awareness of the environment and cultural heritage since it is based on the quest by travellers to enjoy and appreciate local culture and the natural environment in all of its diversity. The tourism industry thus has a direct and powerful incentive to protect the heritage and the environment as both resources and assets. It is possible for tourism to generate financial resources to rehabilitate historic sites and buildings; conserve the natural environment; revitalize culture and encourage craftspeople and artists to maintain their traditional skills.

While tourism can be a catalyst for development, it is essential that countries pursue the sustainable development of tourism in a comprehensive way, giving due attention to its economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. In this respect, appropriate policies and strategies must be formulated by Governments to ensure that the benefits are widely shared and the adverse impacts minimized, and that the necessary support is provided to foster the sound and sustainable development of tourism.

The importance of tourism has been recognized by the Commission since its establishment. This is reflected in some of its early resolutions, for example, resolution E/CN.11/218 (V) of 27 October

1949 on travel, and resolution 32 (XVI) of 17 March 1960 on the development of tourism and international travel.

More recently, the Commission, at its annual sessions, has repeatedly stressed the important role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction and expressed strong support for the work of the secretariat in the area of tourism. Noting that the time frame of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and Pacific Region (1999-2005) would expire at the end of 2005, the Commission, at its sixty-first session, endorsed the proposal for a second phase of the Plan of Action (2006-2012). It also endorsed the convening of an intergovernmental meeting on sustainable tourism development in 2005 to review the accomplishments made under the Plan of Action (1999-2005) and consider the second phase.

This Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012), including its Regional Action Programme, was adopted by the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on Sustainable Tourism Development, held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2005.

A. Objective of the Plan

The objective of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012) is to foster the sound and sustainable development of tourism and enhance its contribution to socio-economic development and poverty reduction, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The concept of sustainability is broadly based on a definition that includes its economic, financial, social, cultural, ecological and environmental aspects. Consequently, sustainable tourism development should be environmentally sound and socioculturally acceptable and its long-term economic viability should be ensured.

B. Expected results

The effective implementation of the Plan will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially those relating to poverty reduction, gender equality and empowerment of women, environmental conservation, global partnerships for development and the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Implementation of the Plan is expected to bring the following results:

(a)   Enhance the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and poverty reduction through facilitating opportunities for poor communities to benefit from tourism;

(b)   Facilitate travel through the coordinated development of tourism-related infrastructure and improved procedures for the issuance of visas, border formalities and customs regulations;

(c)   Minimize the adverse sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism while enhancing its role in the conservation of the natural environment and preservation of the cultural heritage;

(d)   Enhance the capabilities to manage the crises and risks that affect tourism;

(e)   Increase the capabilities to develop the required human resources in the tourism sector.

C. Proposals for action

Within the overall framework of strengthening countries' capabilities in sustainable tourism development, the Plan proposes various actions at the national level. To support and complement the efforts exerted at that level, the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism Development (2006-2012) provides a framework for actions at the regional level. The Plan of Action and Regional Action Programme are structured around five theme areas; (a) enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction; (b) facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure; (c) the sociocultural and environmental management of tourism; (d) crisis and risk management in tourism; and (e) human resources development in the tourism sector. The actions proposed in each theme area are indicated below.

1. Enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction

Tourism is making a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of many countries in the region through its role in expanding their economic base, increasing foreign exchange earnings and providing employment opportunities. It is also contributing to poverty reduction by creating employment and expanding small-scale business opportunities.

While tourism will maintain and strengthen its contribution to socio-economic development, to fully harness the potential of tourism in poverty reduction, Governments need to continue to consider building a supportive policy and planning framework conducive to the development of tourism aimed at poverty reduction.   The Government, the private sector and other stakeholders are encouraged to take collaborative action to develop enterprise and employment opportunities for the poor. Such action would include working towards improvement in the quality of work and the capacity and skills of people who are poor.

Proposed actions

(1)   To enhance the understanding needed to give priority to tourism development in national development strategies, policies, regulations, plans and the allocation of resources:

(a)   Improve national tourism statistics and indicators, including indicators of the socio-economic, cultural and environmental impact;

(b)   Undertake analytical studies on the socio-economic impact of tourism;

(c)   Prepare tourism satellite accounts;

(d)   Undertake case studies on tourism initiatives aimed at socio-economic development and poverty reduction;

(e)   Undertake public relations programmes and media activities to enhance awareness about the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction;

(f)   Undertake pro-poor approaches to national policy and regulations.

(2)   To develop tourism in a comprehensive and sustainable manner with a view to expanding its contribution to socio-economic development and poverty reduction, the following measures should be taken:

(a)   Identify the potential contribution of tourism to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

(b)   Integrate tourism into national development plans with a clear definition of the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction;

(c)   Prepare tourism master plans which include effective strategies to spread the benefits of tourism to poor communities;

(d)   Incorporate tourism into poverty reduction strategies.

(3)   To facilitate the opportunities for poor communities to benefit from tourism, the following measures should be taken:

(a)   Foster and support micro, small and medium-sized tourism-related enterprises;

(b)   Organize collaborative actions by the Government, the private sector and stakeholders to develop entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for the poor;

(c)   Encourage the use of local resources and services in tourism-related operations;

(d)   Promote local arts and crafts as well as local entertainment to increase the income levels

of host communities and enhance the preservation of local culture;

(e)   Expand the role of mainstream tourism in poverty reduction;

(f)   Ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in the planning, development, management and promotion of tourism;

(g)   Monitor and assess the impact of tourism initiatives on the poor;

(h)   Improve the quality, capacity and skills of poor people through training and upgrading the skills related to tourism services;

(i)   Strengthen backward linkages to poor communities by developing the capacity of local business organizations and community associations to participate in local tourism development and operations;

(j)   Encourage private entities in remote areas to develop tourism infrastructure, not only for their own benefit but also for the benefit of local communities;

(k)   Facilitate tourism-related micro and small-scale enterprises with easier access to capital, including through microfinancing and marketing schemes.

2. Facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure

A number of factors can facilitate or impede the growth of international tourism. The most common set of impediments constraining tourism arrivals relates to the processing of visas, border formalities and customs regulations, and the civil aviation policies of member and associate member Governments. Facilitating travel by reducing impediments and making border formalities easier and more efficient is the sole responsibility of the Government, which may need to consider how to adjust the controls and requirements in such a manner that tourism development is facilitated while at the same time important national interests are protected.

In many countries, inadequate infrastructure is a significant constraint on tourism development. In particular, various modes of transport, by air, road and water, need to be improved in combination with upgraded tourism-related infrastructure to facilitate access to tourist sites. The Government should create an environment conducive to private sector investment and provide adequate incentives to facilitate the further development of tourism-related infrastructure. In addition, the infrastructure requirements for tourism development should be integrated within a country's infrastructure development and investment requirements.

Proposed actions

(1)   Encourage countries to establish an interministerial committee or council, including representatives of the tourism industry, to promote the coordinated development of tourism-related infrastructure and to facilitate travel through improvements in procedures for the issuance of visas, border formalities and customs regulations.

(2)   Each country should consider setting up a consultative council comprising the tourism and aviation industries to consider accessibility issues by harmonizing divergent interests.

(3)   Through the joint efforts of the Government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, specific measures should be taken to facilitate travel for people with disabilities.

(4)   Countries should conduct training programmes for immigration and customs officials to enable them to make the needed changes and take the required action to improve efficiency and courtesy.

(5)   Governments should indicate their clear commitment to private sector involvement in tourism infrastructure development, and this should form part of integrated plans or a master plan.

(6)   In order to attract private sector participation, Governments should address such issues as creating a conducive business environment, liberalizing rules and regulations, providing investment incentives, developing an adequate legislative framework and strengthening government capacity to negotiate with the private sector.

(7)   National workshops should be organized to build capabilities among government officials in the contractual and financial aspects of public-private partnership and negotiating techniques and in promoting partnership between the public and private sectors in order to develop tourism and the related infrastructure.

3.   Sociocultural and environmental management of tourism

Rapid growth and the increased numbers of tourists can have a combination of positive and negative impacts on the environment, society and culture. As tourism grows and expands to more locations, the negative impact can affect the long-term sustainability of tourism. Sustainable tourism development must be considered as the essence of tourism and applied fully in all countries, since tourism is based on the diversity of natural, social and cultural resources which attract tourists in the first place.

Broader, more substantive progress in applying the principles of sustainable tourism development can be achieved through a combination of voluntary initiatives, more effective enforcement of relevant laws and an active role for civil society. Collaborative approaches that include the public sector, the private sector and stakeholders when planning, coordinating and implementing tourism development programmes should be encouraged at the local level in order to preserve the cultural heritage, protect the environment and ensure more equitable distribution of economic benefits. Codes of ethics and conduct, such as the Global Code of Ethics on Tourism of the World Tourism Organization which applies to all stakeholders, are useful tools for promoting greater awareness and understanding about the environmental, economic and sociocultural effects of tourism on various groups of stakeholders, including poor people.

Proposed actions

(1)   Sociocultural and environmental considerations should be integrated into the planning, management and promotion of tourism.

(2)   The sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism should be monitored and assessed with the participation of all stakeholders.

(3)   Mechanisms should be established to ensure effective enforcement of laws and regulations concerning the conservation of the natural environment and biodiversity in relation to tourism development.

(4)   The potential for tourism to provide a "market" for public goods such as biodiversity, the environment, the natural and built heritage, and culture should be investigated and, where appropriate, developed.

(5)   Measures should be taken to encourage the tourism private sector and other related stakeholders to actively support the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of energy and water resources.

(6)   Mechanisms should be established to facilitate the channelling of part of the tourism revenues to support the conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage.

(7)   Countries should organize programmes to (a) enhance the awareness of the general public and international tourists about the importance of conserving and preserving the environment and cultural heritage in order to sustain tourism, (b) strengthen the capacity of local communities to manage natural resources in tourism destinations; and (c) promote green tourism by the business communities in tourism industries.

(8)   Countries should pay particular attention to the development and promotion of ecotourism and culture-based tourism.

4. Crisis and risk management in tourism

In recent years, tourism has been directly affected by a variety of unforeseen incidents that have affected the patterns of growth and development of the industry. In the Asian and Pacific region, the tourism industry and those employed directly and indirectly in the industry have faced greater uncertainty and vulnerability as a result of terrorist attacks, health crises and natural disasters. The risks, responses and lessons learned raise a number of important issues.

Specific issues in responding to crises and violent incidents involve disaster awareness and preparedness; the immediate response, including minimizing the physical and psychological impacts; dealing with speculation and misinformation; restoring the confidence of tourists and businesses; dealing with panic; and responding to reactions from other Governments. Response capabilities in terms of coordination and proactive measures concern more general issues that cover the well-being of all citizens, tourists and businesses. Consequently, there is a need to work closely with agencies, ministries and organizations in other sectors.

In view of the greater uncertainty and vulnerability of the tourism industry, it is recommended that all stakeholders give thorough attention to different types of crises and related risk management in the following four phases: awareness (risk reduction), planning (readiness), response and recovery.

While tourism can be developed as an entry point in the poverty reduction effort, recent disasters and crises have demonstrated that there are significant risks in relying upon tourism as the sole means of reducing poverty. Consequently, there is a need for agencies and ministries outside the tourism sector to assist in more broadly based poverty reduction programmes while linking with the tourism sector. This broad approach will minimize some of the employment and income generation risks linked to the tourism sector.

Proposed actions

(1)   Awareness (risk reduction) phase:

(a)   Tourism-related government agencies should evaluate existing crisis management and control programmes and hazards at particular destinations, and their infrastructure capacity, resources, policies and processes.

(b)   Tourism-related government agencies should improve capacity and strengthen preventive management techniques.

(2)   Planning (readiness) phase:

(a)   Tourism-related government agencies should evaluate their crisis exposure and develop strategic, tactical and communication plans;

(b)   Tourism-related government agencies should have a crisis management readiness programme with adequate budgetary provisions;

(c)   A network of national and regional tourism crisis management centres could be established in order to manage media relations, information flows and other communications during the response and recovery phases;

(d)   A communication tree should be established through the proposed crisis centres to link tourism stakeholders from both the public and the private sectors, national and regional associations and other relevant bodies to help ensure a consistent flow of information to consumers, the media and Governments and possibly serve as an early warning mechanism in the event of a crisis;

(e)   There should be established capability in the appropriate government agency to effectively counteract or clarify conditions related to negative travel advisories.

(3)   Responsiveness phase, especially the initial response during the event and in the immediate aftermath:

(a)   Tourism-related government agencies should make use of effective contingency plans to help control damage to lives and property as well as operating to inform and reassure stakeholders and the public;

(b)   The relevant tourism-related government agencies should establish a media centre which would be responsible for disseminating accurate information on the situation at a destination. Information could include the efforts made to restore tourism to normal with the time frame for recuperation. Within the centre, there should be a person skilled in public relations and media campaigns with the authority to make statements on behalf of the destination and the agencies involved. The centre should have the capability to evaluate public perceptions about the situation at a destination.

(4)   Phase involving long-term recovery:

(a)   The importance of the domestic tourism market should be recognized and included in recovery plans in order to minimize the impact of reduced demand by international tourists;

(b)   Through the joint efforts of tourism-related government agencies and the private sector, extensive media campaigns to demonstrate that tourism operations have returned to normal should be undertaken;

(c)   Tourism-related government agencies, in collaboration with the private sector, could develop recovery promotional programmes, including the organization of familiarization trips for journalists and tour operators;

(d)   The importance of promoting investment and public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in tourist areas affected by crisis and disasters should be recognized;

(e)   The tourism-related government agencies that are part of the crisis management system should be able to evaluate the system's effectiveness in terms of: (i) the speed at which a destination resumes or continues full tourism business operations; (ii) the degree to which business recovers to pre-crisis levels; and (iii) the amount of crisis-resistance that has been added since the crisis.

(5)   Countries should consider ways of minimizing the risks being faced by those employed directly and indirectly in the tourism industry, especially those relying upon tourism as a sole means of poverty reduction.

5. Human resources development in the tourism sector

The rapid growth rates in the industry have a direct impact on tourism employment and human resources development in terms of the demand for professionals, specific skills and related training and education facilities. The need to develop and train the required human resources in various segments of the tourism industry has been widely recognized in Asia and the Pacific. Some of the specific problems that need to be addressed include (a) the shortage of qualified human resources, (b) gaps in the availability of a tourism training infrastructure and qualified trainers and teachers, (c) lack of attention to the conditions of work in the tourism sector and (d) the ongoing need for long-term national strategies and policies covering human resources development in the tourism sector. The ongoing need to develop and train the human resources required to provide tourism services effectively and efficiently leads to the recommendation that partnerships and networking to support tourism education and training should be strengthened.

Proposed actions

(1)   Undertake a survey to assess present and future training requirements in the tourism sector.

(2)   Develop a national tourism training plan.

(3)   Each country should consider establishing a national tourism training committee, consisting of representatives of the Government, training institutes and the tourism industry.

(4)   Each country should consider participating actively in the activities of the ESCAP Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT).

(5)   Each country should consider establishing policies to promote standards for human resources competencies in the tourism industry.

D.   Implementation, time frame and monitoring

Coordination and cooperation are crucial factors for the effective implementation of policies, plans and programmes to promote sustainable tourism development at the national level.

Governments need to set explicit goals and develop implementation strategies at the national level in order to carry out the proposals contained in the Plan of Action. Encouraging the participation of the private sector in the implementation process will create opportunities to identify complementarities of experience, expertise and resources.

With regard to the time frame for implementation of the Plan of Action, it will start with the endorsement of the Plan by the Commission at its sixty-second session in April 2006 and continue up to 2012.

Detailed progress reports will be submitted to the Committee on Managing Globalization (Part I: International trade and investment, and transport infrastructure and facilitation and tourism) once every two years. When presenting progress reports, countries will be invited to inform the Committee about their progress with regard to national action. There will also be a consolidated report on the activities and outputs produced under the Regional Action Programme.

E.   Strategies for resource mobilization

Traditional and non-traditional resources must be mobilized to support the proposals for action at the national and regional levels. Many countries will have to try to mobilize domestic savings, and this effort will encourage support from potential donors, both domestic and international.

The tourism sector generates, or has the potential to generate, significant levels of revenue from the private sector through, for example, various expenditure, income and other taxes. Investigation of the extent to which these revenues could be reinvested in the sector could represent a significant source of funds.

The private sector can have a significant role in sharing expertise as well as providing financial resources, and should be encouraged in a wide range of projects. As mentioned in section 3 of the Plan, the development of markets for biodiversity, the environment, the natural and built heritage, and culture can provide resources for conservation and protection.

Extensive resources already exist in the Asian and Pacific region in terms of the expertise and experience which could be employed to strengthen national capacity in sustainable tourism development. Technical cooperation among developing countries could lead to the sharing of a great number of these resources. The expertise available in member institutes of APETIT can be fully utilized in the implementation of the Plan.

The tourism sector of many countries will require considerable assistance from national resources, public and private sector support and assistance from international, regional and subregional agencies as well as donor Governments. Among the countries that may require such assistance are those classified as least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and economies in transition.

Concerned donor agencies and countries need to give special attention to providing financial and technical assistance in order to implement the programmes and projects that are part of the Plan of Action.

4. REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (2006-2012)

The Regional Action Programme has been developed to provide support and to complement the efforts exerted at the national level within the framework of the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2006-2012). The Programme is structured around the five theme areas of the Plan, namely: (a) enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction; (b) facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure; (c) the sociocultural and environmental management of tourism; (d) crisis and risk management in tourism; and (e) human resources development in the tourism sector.

The Programme has been designed to be "results-oriented" and as such is broadly based upon a logical framework or "logframe". Within each subprogramme, the headings include the objective, expected accomplishments, actions and indicators of achievement. The "actions" relate to the specific actions, activities or outputs of the organizations supporting the implementation of the second phase of the Plan of Action. The "expected accomplishments" relate to the capacities built, knowledge imparted, skills improved and networks developed by, and within the "manageable interest" of, the organizations, and the "objectives" relate to what the principal stakeholders do with the increased capacities, knowledge, skills and networks. The "indicators of achievement" are those of the organizations.

All concerned United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations, development assistance agencies and non-governmental and other organizations involved in tourism are invited to contribute to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme. It is recognized that in order for the Programme to be effective, coordination and cooperation are necessary among these agencies and organizations. In this respect, they are encouraged to convene ad hoc inter-agency meetings in association with other tourism-related meetings to discuss regional concerns about issues relating to sustainable tourism development and to keep implementation of the Programme under review. Such inter-agency meetings would also provide the opportunity to refine the Regional Action Programme as required, so that planned activities and outputs remain relevant to the priority needs of the countries.

Theme 1. Enhancing the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction

Introduction

Tourism plays a significant role in socio-economic development, poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This role can be enhanced considerably through increased understanding of the linkages between tourism, development and poverty reduction, the

introduction or improvement of the policy environment for the sector, and the implementation of appropriate tourism programmes and projects.

Objective

To enhance the role of tourism in socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

Expected accomplishment

An increase in (a) understanding of the linkages between tourism development and poverty reduction, (b) the capacity to improve the policy environment for the sector, and (c) the capacity to implement appropriate tourism programmes and projects of policymakers and other stakeholders.

Actions

(1)   Analytical studies on linkages and transmission mechanisms between mainstream tourism and poverty reduction as well as targeted interventions and poverty reduction.

(2)   Identification of the contribution of tourism to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and its targets.

(3)   Development of indicators and guidelines on measuring the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction.

(4)   Documentation of case studies and good practices in utilizing tourism as an entry point to the poverty reduction process.

(5)   Dissemination of the principal outcomes of the above studies, indicators and guidelines through publications and the Internet, policy advocacy and dialogue, knowledge networking, and training and advisory services.

(6)   Facilitation of subregional initiatives in also promoting neighbouring countries as single tourism destinations.

(7)   Promotion of poverty-oriented tourism along major transport corridors, including the Asian Highway, and railway tourism, especially along the Trans-Asian Railway. These actions would be focused on providing a geographical spread of employment, especially to rural and remote areas located far from the main centres of economic activity where there may be limited alternatives for economic development, for example, highway service centres, community-based road stations, such as *dhabas* and *michi-no-eki* and highway oases.

(8)   Capacity-building activities, including forums in which to share experience and good practices in enhancing the contribution of tourism to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Indicator of achievement

Countries initiating tourism programmes and projects that can contribute effectively to overall socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

Theme 2. Facilitation of travel and development of transport and other tourism-related infrastructure

Introduction

The provision of safe, convenient and economical transport and other tourism-related infrastructure is a key factor for the success of tourism. For many countries in Asia and the Pacific, inadequate infrastructure is a significant constraint on tourism development. Infrastructure that does not cater adequately for the needs of people with disabilities, including infants and the elderly, excludes many destinations from this promising market. Procedures for the issuance of visas as well as other border-crossing issues also have a direct impact on the number of tourist arrivals. In order to further expand tourism, countries need to provide adequate infrastructure to support tourism development and make procedures for the issuance of visas and border formalities easier and more efficient.

Objectives

(1)   To improve procedures for the issuance of visas, border-crossing and customs and security formalities.

(2)   To enhance countries' capabilities to facilitate travel through the coordinated development of tourism-related infrastructure.

(3)   To improve access to tourism-related activities for people with disabilities.

(4)   To develop physical infrastructure for the joint benefit of tourists, travellers and local communities.

Expected accomplishment

An increased awareness of policymakers of the physical and non-physical barriers to travel and tourism and development of policies to remove such barriers; an increased capacity to develop tourism-related physical infrastructure; and improved physical infrastructure for local communities.

Actions

    (1)   Identification of areas of improvement for visa requirements and border-crossing formalities for tourists and travellers.

    (2)   Guidelines and documentation of good practices on the facilitation of the cross-border movements of tourists, including the application of information technologies.

    (3)   The identification of regional transport infrastructure and service improvements that could provide improved access for travellers and tourists.

    (4)   Guidelines and case studies on the development of physical infrastructure for the joint benefit of tourists, travellers and local communities.

    (5)   Promotion of barrier-free tourism for people with disabilities.

    (6)   Dissemination of the principal outcomes and capacity-building activities related to the above actions.

Indicators of achievement

    (1)   Countries initiating projects to develop tourism-related infrastructure.

    (2)   Countries initiating measures to improve facilities for barrier-free tourism for people with disabilities.

    (3)   Countries adopting simplified procedures for the issuance of visas, border formalities and customs regulations.

Theme 3. Sociocultural and environmental management of tourism

Introduction

    While tourism can be a useful tool for the conservation of the natural environment and the preservation of cultural heritage, if not managed properly it can have adverse sociocultural and environmental impacts. In this context, there is a crucial need to enhance the capabilities of countries to minimize the adverse impacts of tourism while expanding its positive role in development.

Objective

    To strengthen the capabilities of countries to manage the sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism and enhance its positive role in development.

Expected accomplishment

An increased capacity to implement programmes which can manage the adverse sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism effectively and enhance its positive role in development.

Actions

(1) Promotion of tourism as a means of creating "markets" for public goods such as biodiversity, the environment, the natural and built heritage, and culture.

(2) Investigation of means of financing environmental protection and the preservation of the cultural heritage in tourism destinations, including the channelling of government and private sector revenues from tourism to such protection and preservation.

(3) Promotion of sustainable and efficient use of energy and water resources in the tourism industry.

(4) Promotion of public-private partnerships in the sociocultural and environmental management of tourism.

(5) Promotion of corporate social responsibilities and codes of practice in the tourism sector.

(6) Dissemination of principal outcomes and capacity-building activities related to the above actions.

Indicator of achievement

Countries integrating sociocultural and environmental considerations into tourism planning and development and initiating programmes aimed at managing the adverse impacts of tourism on the natural environment, culture and civil society and enhancing its positive role.

Theme 4. Crisis and risk management in tourism

Introduction

In recent years, the tourism industry has been severely affected by violent incidents, health-related crises and natural disasters. These incidents have had an enormous impact on tourism, creating widespread fear and uncertainty among potential travellers. Many countries in Asia and the Pacific have suffered a sharp drop in tourist arrivals with the resultant loss of tourism-related jobs and a decline in foreign exchange earnings. There is an urgent need to strengthen the capability of countries to manage crises and risks that affect the tourism industry as well as those employed directly and indirectly in the industry.

Objective

To enhance the capability of countries to manage the crises and risks that affect the tourism industry and those employed directly and indirectly in the industry.

Expected accomplishment

An increased capacity to implement effective measures to manage the crises and risks that affect tourism and those employed directly and indirectly in the industry.

Actions

(1)   Review and refinement of guidelines and manuals on crisis and risk management in the tourism industry.

(2)   Documentation of case studies and good practices on crisis and risk management in the tourism industry.

(3)   Analytical and case studies on minimizing the employment and income generation risks to poorer sectors of the community that are associated with tourism.

(4)   Dissemination of principal outcomes and capacity-building activities related to the above actions.

(5)   Close cooperation, nationally, regionally and internationally, in managing crises and risks that affect the tourism industry.

Indicators of achievement

(1)   Government tourism agencies and tourism enterprises initiating systematic crisis management measures, including preparation of a crisis management plan, strengthening safety measures and training.

(2)   Countries taking specific action to assist in the management of risks faced by those employed directly or indirectly in the tourism industry.

**Theme 5. Human resources development in the tourism sector
through regional networking**

Introduction

The availability of skilled and trained manpower is a crucial element in the successful long-term development and sustainability of a tourism destination. The need to develop the required human resources in various segments of the tourism industry has become urgent as a consequence of the rapid growth in tourism. Some of the constraints and problems related to human resources development can be tackled more effectively through closer cooperation among the countries of the region, since individual countries possess certain strengths and expertise that can be usefully shared with other countries.

Objective

To promote regional cooperation in human resources development in the tourism sector.

Expected accomplishment

An increase in cooperation among countries in the region in human resources development in the tourism sector through APETIT.

Actions

(1)   Dissemination of information on tourism education and training through the APETIT website and newsletter and preparation of (a) a directory of APETIT expertise, (b) a directory of student and staff exchange, (c) an inventory of research priorities and (d) an inventory of scholarships offered by APETIT member institutes.

(2)   Training of (a) government tourism officials, (b) lecturers/trainers in tourism education/training institutes and (c) employees in the tourism industry and advisory services utilizing expertise available in APETIT member institutes.

(3)   Forums to consider specific issues related to human resources development in the tourism sector.

Indicators of achievement

(1)   Increased membership in APETIT.

(2)   Countries participating in the cooperation activities of APETIT.