

FMUN Sample Report

Committee Name: United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Subject of Document: Eco-Tourism and the Expansion of the UN WTO ST-EP Initiative

Document Code Number:

Sponsors: Bangladesh, Madagascar, Nepal, Senegal, Morocco, China, Cuba, Slovenia

Signatories: Malaysia, Mauritius, Mauritius, Turkey, Algeria, Senegal, DRC, South Africa, Mali, Tanzania,

Sierra Leone, Maldives, Guatemala, DPRK, Ghana, Thailand, Iraq, Armenia, Mozambique, Libyan Arab

Jamahiriyah, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Lithuania, Poland, Syria, Guinea Bissau,

Venezuela, Niger, Uganda, Sudan, Peru, Greece, Venezuela, Bahrain, Guinea, Yemen

Introduction

1. In recent years, tourism has been increasingly recognized for its economic potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in developing countries. Tourism is characterized by its current geographical expansion and labor-intensive nature. According to UNWTO statistics close to 2.5 billion people live under \$2 a day with over three quarters of this population living in rural or remote areas where the tourism industry could significantly contribute to economic and sustainable development. Although Less Developed Countries (LDCs) make up only 2.6% of the current world tourism market, growth in these areas with regard to international tourist arrivals (ITA) and international tourist receipts (ITR) have surpassed developed nations.

2. Sustainable tourism is rooted in the expansion of a dynamic and flourishing sector that is culturally appropriate and mutually beneficial to the environment and the economy. Ecotourism, often perceived as an alternative type of tourism, is a highly effective form of sustainable tourism. The UNWTO defines eco-tourism as environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature and accompanying cultural features both past and present that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact, and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people. Eco-tourism projects are a viable source of revenue and development for developing states. It must be noted that several developing countries are slowly but steadily acquiring an increased proportion of their revenue from tourism. The tourism industry in these countries can be channeled into sustainable eco-tourism that promises to boost employment, gender equality, environmental awareness and cultural preservation.

Mandate

1. Since the establishment of the ST-EP Foundation and ST-EP Trust Fund in 2004, project identification missions have been fielded to 21 developing countries. Participating countries have ranged from diverse areas within Africa, the Americas, and Central and Eastern Europe. The following criteria as previously established by the UNWTO, shall continue to guide development of future ST-EP projects:

a) *Organizational sustainability* -Implementing organizations should demonstrate experience in the project's field and also display a capacity to grow and continue their operations.

b) *Financial/Economic sustainability* -The project should demonstrate the potential to be self-sustainable in the medium to long-term.

c) *Environmental and socio-cultural sustainability* -The project should contribute to environmental and socio-cultural conservation or enhancement

d) *Tangibility*-The project's concept/design should produce tangible outcomes that are in line with the project's financial resources, team/organizational capability, and partnerships.

e) *Transferability*-ST-EP's philosophy is that outstanding development concepts should make a broader impact beyond the immediate area of the project. A project idea may be transferable to other situations and locations.

2. Provided that the ST-EP Initiative was conceived as a response to the increasing need for sustainable tourism practices and the promotion of eco-tourism as one of its primary goals since its genesis in 2002, we accept the Seven Recommended Mechanisms for poverty reduction through sustainable tourism as presented by Mr. Eugenio Yunis, Chief of Sustainable Development of Tourism, World Tourism Organization on May 10, 2004:

a) The employment of the poor in tourism enterprises

- b) Supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the poor or by enterprises employing the poor
- c) Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor
- d) Establishment and running of tourism-related enterprises by the poor, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) or community based enterprises
- e) Tax or levy on tourism income or profits with proceeds benefiting poverty reduction programs
- f) Voluntary giving by tourism enterprises and tourists
- g) Investment in infrastructure stimulated by tourism that seeks to benefit the poor in the locality directly or through support to other sectors

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. In the quest to promote eco-tourism, opportunities offered by the ST-EP Initiative should not be ignored. The ST-EP Initiative embraces a wide range of poverty reduction strategies to combat poverty as a multidimensional and complex problem. Thus ST-EP should focus on eco-tourism as a part of its strategy for employment creation and its contribution to the environment. The expansion of the ST-EP initiative should include the continuation and enhancement of existing capacity building and training activities in matters related to poverty alleviation as initiated by the Department of Sustainable Development of Tourism. These activities would be promoted in LDCs across the globe keeping as its focus; the application of practical tools to be used towards the implementation of the seven UNWTO recommended mechanisms.

2. Therefore, the UNWTO should expand the ST-EP program to encompass more member states particularly developing countries seeking to promote development via sustainable tourism with a special emphasis given to eco-tourism projects. Along with eco-tourism, it is essential to recognize Green Productivity (GP) initiatives that aim to mitigate negative environmental impacts as a result of increased tourist traffic. GP also provides a feasible and novel approach, to environmental protection, poverty alleviation, and sustainable integrated community development, as espoused in the MDGs. The adoption of appropriate technologies, with the enhancement of national, regional, global and integrated community partnerships will increase the living standards of local communities. Expansion of ST-EP program should remain cognizant of the philosophies and principles mandated by the GP concept and further recommend that GP be taken into consideration when future ST-EP projects are underway. It is inevitable that this should be accompanied by a necessity to expand the donor basis of the ST-EP Trust Fund. Donors should be derived from not only national governments, but also the private sector, international agencies, and NGOs.