



Environment & Development Series **17**

The Politics of Tourism, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development

Anita Pleumarom

TWN
Third World Network

The Politics of Tourism, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development

Anita Pleumarom

TWN
Third World Network
Penang, Malaysia

**The Politics of Tourism, Poverty
Reduction and Sustainable Development**

is published by
Third World Network
131 Jalan Macalister
10400 Penang, Malaysia
Website: www.twinside.org.sg

© Third World Network 2012

Printed by Jutaprint
2 Solok Sungei Pinang 3, Sg. Pinang
11600 Penang, Malaysia

ISBN: 978-967-5412-71-4

CONTENTS

1. UPRISING OF THE POOR - A GRASSROOTS EXPERIENCE	1
2. GLOBAL ARMY OF 'PRO-POOR TOURISM' PROMOTERS	7
3. 'DISMAL SCIENCE' REVIEWED	15
4. ALLEVIATING OR AGGRAVATING POVERTY?	19
4.1 Economic progress?	19
4.2 Loss of resources and traditional livelihoods	23
4.3 Sustainable development or environmental impoverishment?	26
4.4 Threats related to climate change	28
4.5 Unlocking opportunities for women?	30
4.6 Medical tourism versus health care for locals	31
4.7 Lessons learned from 'pro-poor' ventures	32
4.8 "Regulation bad - growth good"	34
4.9 Exposing the poor to a high-risk industry?	35
5. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FUTURE IN A 'GREEN ECONOMY'?	37
6. 'BAREFOOT' APPROACH NEEDED	45
ENDNOTES	50
REFERENCES	57

Note

This paper is an extended version of a chapter entitled 'The politics of tourism and poverty reduction' for the book *Responsible Tourism: concepts, theory and practice*, edited by David Leslie and published by CABI, United Kingdom, 2012.

CHAPTER ONE

UPRISING OF THE POOR – A GRASSROOTS EXPERIENCE

ON 22 March 2008, something extraordinary happened in Kochi in the southern Indian State of Kerala: People from poor communities – fisher-folks, tribals, *Dalits*¹, women and youth – and their supporters from civil society organizations, the academia and intellectual circles held a street protest and then gathered at Achutha Menon Hall for a ‘Convention on Irresponsible Tourism in Kerala’ (KTW, 2008a). These actions were the response to the non-participatory nature of the International Conference on Responsible Tourism, held from 21 to 24 March 2008 at the Le Meridien Hotel in Kochi under the banner of Kerala’s and India’s tourism departments and the Indian section of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) (Kerala Tourism, 2008).

The public outcry against Kerala’s ‘responsible tourism’ initiative stunned many observers. What was behind this ‘uprising of the poor’? The controversy had actually begun two years earlier, when the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) announced the 12 finalists for the 2006 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, and Kerala was selected as one of the three finalists in the Destination category along with Crete’s Culinary Sanctuaries, Greece, and Sierra Gorda, Mexico. The nomination attracted widespread civil society criticism, maintaining that Kerala was not a model of ‘sustainable’ or ‘responsible tourism’ by any international standard. It was argued that tourism had in fact contributed little, if anything, to ensure “maximum positive benefit” to and “minimum negative impact” on local communities, which

were mentioned as key criteria for the award. The WTTC eventually dropped the nomination, dealing a temporary setback to the over-zealous ambitions of the state-sanctioned Kerala's 'responsible tourism' drive (KTW, 2006).

Following the announcement of the prestigious ICRT conference in 2008, contentious tourism issues flared up again in Kerala and deepened the divide between local communities affected by tourism and the state's tourism authorities. Disadvantaged and poor sections of society had lost confidence in the government's policies and practices as burning problems such as tourism's encroachment on shorelines and forests, displacement of poor villagers, environmental degradation and commercialization of culture remained unsolved. The failure to address irresponsible and unsustainable tourism appeared to prove the critics' argument right that the Kerala 'responsible tourism' initiative represented little more than a public relations exercise. Kerala Tourism Watch (KTW), a coalition of local grassroots activists and organizations, stated: "There is no paradigm shift in the way Kerala is developing its tourism sector. The current discussions are just a hype to change the fading images of Kerala tourism and portray it as a responsible destination in the international market." (cit. in tim-team, 2008)

KTW decided to organize an alternative event after repeated requests to the Indian conference organizers and Harold Goodwin, the ICRT founder, to give local people the opportunity to air their views in the official event were turned down (ibid). Participants of the 'Irresponsible Tourism' Convention claimed the discussions in the official conference were superficial and only served big tourism players. Their final statement said: The "International Conference on Responsible Tourism ... failed to coherently address the real social, environmental and ethical impacts of tourism and did not seriously consider the concerns and anxieties of the local communities such as traditional fishers and indigenous people in the destinations. The conference in its very structures and deliberations was non-inclusive

and remained inaccessible to the majority of the real stakeholders and civil society organizations in Kerala. We strongly condemn government participation in such unilateral processes which are aimed to sanctify corporate irresponsibility in empty rhetoric and are clearly stage-managed to keep out the real victims of irresponsible tourism from debates, discussions and policy formulations. We ask: 'To whom are the Government responsible and whose interests does the Government protect?'" (KTW, 2008b)

The angry protest was certainly an embarrassment for the 503 delegates from 29 countries who attended the official conference. After all, many of them professed to work for a benign form of tourism aimed to "create better places for people to live in and for people to visit" and to "involve local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances" (Kerala Tourism, 2008).

There was evidently a great contradiction in the way the conference was organized and what it promised. Taking a closer look at the conference outcome, the Kerala Declaration on Responsible Tourism, one gets the impression that it represents a serious effort to respond to the many tourism-induced problems affecting local communities.

For instance, it calls for people's 'empowerment': "Local communities need to be empowered to exercise control over the forms of tourism that they wish to see developed in their communities, and even to their right to say 'no' to tourism." (ibid)

It also reflects awareness about the crucial role of politics and power relationships in tourism. "...the issue of whose interests take priority is a political issue." There is recognition that "communities are not homogenous and that equity, power and gender issues need to be addressed" (ibid).

With respect to the economic benefits for the poor, the Declaration states: "Tourism needs to prove its link with poverty reduction rather than relying on the concept of trickle-down. Government and development agencies need to address the challenge of spreading the benefits of tourism geographically and to the poor." (ibid)

Social justice is also mentioned as an issue of concern: "In addition to ensuring that tourism does not cause problems to local communities, increasingly the tourism industry is called upon to respond to critical social problems and to act in the social interest contributing to social justice." (ibid)

Furthermore, the Declaration includes a call for partnerships based on transparency and mutual respect: "Responsible Tourism can only be achieved by government, local communities and businesses cooperating on practical initiatives in destinations through stable local level partnerships.... [It is vital to] build long term partnerships with clear, fair and realistic expectations on all sides. *Patience and persistence are required, proceed with wisdom and hope.*" (emphasis by the author) (ibid)

Last but not least, there is also the call for honesty and integrity: "Aware that there is a danger that Responsible Tourism will be undermined by businesses, communities or governments which use the rhetoric but cannot substantiate the claims, we call upon those committed to the aspirations of Responsible Tourism to challenge those who pay only lip service to the cause..." (ibid)

If the conference organizers had provided an open forum for the 'expert' conference delegates and people from the grassroots to meet and exchange information and views, it would have been a unique opportunity not only to gain new knowledge but also to demonstrate that the 'responsible tourism' advocates actually meant what they said about participation and partnership building. But by excluding very

important local actors from the discussions, the conference lost much credibility and an important chance to put democratic principles into practice was missed.

Discourses on tourism as sustainable development and a strategy for poverty reduction in particular are fraught with ideology due to the diverging backgrounds, values, perceptions and interests of tourism players. As Hall pointed out, there is no objective or value-free approach to tourism. "Decisions affecting tourism policy, the nature of government involvement in tourism, the structure of tourism organizations, and the nature of tourism development emerge from a political process. This process involves the values of actors (individuals, interest groups and public and private organizations) in a struggle for power." (Hall, 1996: 3)

Based on a political economy approach, a number of tourism researchers in the 1970s questioned that tourism is a 'passport to development' (de Kadt, 1979). Many attempts have been made since then to improve the socio-economic and environmental performance of this industry through 'responsible', 'eco-', 'sustainable', 'community-based' and 'pro-poor' tourism. Key questions that will be explored in this paper are: How useful have these initiatives been particularly in terms of poverty reduction and environmental performance? Have they helped to change the economic fundamentals to transform international tourism into a 'passport' to poverty alleviation and sustainable development? If sustainable pro-poor tourism is underway and progressing, why is there still so much discontent among people in Kerala and other tourist destinations?

The following section will give an overview of the work that has been done in the field of tourism, sustainable development and poverty reduction and the major policy statements of agencies promoting 'responsible', 'sustainable' and 'pro-poor tourism'. Then there will be a brief outline of the historical controversy of tourism as development

before a critical look will be taken at various aspects that play a crucial role in the tourism debate with a focus on poverty: economic performance, livelihoods, land and natural resources, food security, environmental sustainability, climate change, the role of women, etc. Another question that will be explored is as to how tourism will be dealt with in the context of the “Green Economy” – a theme that will be a centrepiece of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20.

The key message of this paper is that all discourses and initiatives on sustainable pro-poor tourism are of little value unless the realities on the ground and the voices of local people are fully taken into account. It is also vital to make tourism part of a wider political debate on how to effectively tackle the root causes of poverty, inequality and problems of environmental degradation and climate change in the context of globalization.

CHAPTER TWO

GLOBAL ARMY OF 'PRO-POOR TOURISM' PROMOTERS

OVER the last decade, international, government, non-governmental and private sector organizations have given increasing attention to the argument that tourism can be made a viable tool to alleviate poverty. It is generally assumed that the international tourism industry can generate economic and other benefits for poor people and communities in the context of responsible and sustainable tourism development and can thus serve as an instrument to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - an agreed set of eight goals adopted by world leaders in 2000 that aims to tackle the world's major development challenges by 2015 (UNDP, 2011a). The UNWTO (UN World Tourism Organization) has stated, for example: "Tourism, one of the world's top job creators and a lead export sector, especially for developing countries, can play a significant role in the achievement of MDG1 - eradication of poverty, MDG3 - gender equality, MDG7 - environmental sustainability and MDG8 - global partnerships for development. Responsible and sustainable tourism allows destinations and companies to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing its economic and social benefits." (UNWTO, 2010:3)

Other agencies including UN-ESCAP believe that the tourism industry will contribute to the fulfillment of all eight MDGs. Proponents have reasoned that poor communities, for example, are likely to benefit from the infrastructure created and services provided to tourists, e.g. roads, communication facilities, health and sanitation services. This way, it is

argued, governments would be able to achieve MDG2 that deals with primary education, MDG4, 5 and 6 that deal with the reduction of child mortality, improved maternal health care and combating HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases (UN-ESCAP, 2007: 76).

Linking tourism to poverty reduction and the MDG agenda has led to the emergence of the 'pro-poor tourism' concept (Ashley *et al.*, 2001). This concept has been particularly spearheaded by the UK-based Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) Partnership, a collaborative research initiative between the ICRT, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (PPT Partnership, 2011). Meanwhile, there is a long list of organizations, including UN agencies such as the UNWTO, UNDP (UN Development Programme), UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) and UNEP (UN Environment Programme), the European Union as well as a number of bilateral development agencies that actively support poverty-focused tourism projects. Even private sector organizations such as the WTTC have adjusted their strategic frameworks to fit into the 'new tourism' paradigm.²

A plethora of pro-poor programmes and projects have been designed and implemented by individual organizations or in partnerships. For instance, the UNWTO launched in 2003 a programme for 'Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty', or in short: ST-EP, to contribute to the fulfilment of the UN's MDGs. From 2006 to 2010, ST-EP supported 44 projects in 31 countries (UNWTO-STEP website). Meanwhile, the UNDP initiated in 2004 the 'Endogenous Tourism Project for Rural Livelihoods', which includes poverty reduction as a major component and has been implemented in rural areas across India in cooperation with the Indian Ministry of Tourism and Culture and with the involvement of 30 NGOs (Equations, 2008a). Another example is the Tourism-led Poverty Reduction Programme (TPRP) conducted by the International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint agency of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the UN. It aims to create links between

local producers and the tourism markets thus enabling poor rural communities to export their products, first on local national markets through the channel of tourism, and then on international markets (ITC, 2009).

“Development economists and policy makers use the language of pro-poor to differentiate between economic development in general and forms of economic development which impact positively on the lives of the poor and which enable them to rise out of poverty. PPT is used to refer to interventions that specifically focus on addressing poverty – which move beyond the ‘trickledown’ theory and generate net benefits for the poor. [It] is not a specific tourism product or sector, it is an *overall approach designed to unlock opportunities for the poor.*” (Jamieson et al., 2004: 3)

It is assumed that poverty can be reduced when tourism creates employment and diversified livelihood opportunities, which provides additional income. Moreover, tourism can contribute to direct taxation and by generating taxable economic growth, since taxes can then be used to alleviate poverty through education, health and infrastructure development (UN-ESCAP, 2007: 74).

Special attention has been paid to tourism’s extensive links with other sectors. For instance, the tourism sector requires support to build and operate tourism facilities through backwards linkages with basic infrastructure services such as energy, telecommunications and environmental services, as well as agricultural, manufacturing and construction services. Moreover, it has a wide range of forward linkages with sectors supplying services to tourists, including financial, retail, recreational, cultural, hospitality and health services. “Strong linkages catalyze a multiplier effect that generates broad-based economic benefits at the national level as well as *in situ* employment opportunities and poverty reduction at the local level. Without strong tourism linkages, such benefits do not materialize.” (UNCTAD, 2010a:7)

Therefore, one of the main objectives of poverty-focused projects is to enhance the linkages between tourism businesses and poor people at the community level. "Links with many different types of 'the poor' need to be considered: staff, neighbouring communities, land-holders, producers of food, fuel and other suppliers, operators of micro tourism businesses, craft-makers, other users of tourism infrastructure (roads) and resources (water) etc. There are many types of pro-poor tourism strategies, ranging from increasing local employment to building mechanisms for consultation." (PPT Partnership, 2011)³

According to UN-ESCAP, sustainable pro-poor tourism interventions require the development of approaches that reduce the negative impacts or costs of tourism development, while enhancing the positive tourism impacts on local communities and for the national economy as a whole. "Several conditions need to be met for a successful pro-poor tourism approach. *First*, strategies must be supported by national level plans. *Second*, these strategies must be adapted to local conditions, target markets and interests of the poor. *Third*, involvement of stakeholders must be based on the recognition of poor people as legitimate stakeholders. *Fourth*, holistic development and poverty reduction efforts should be adopted. *Fifth*, pro-poor tourism product development must be linked with mainstream tourism products." (UN-ESCAP, 2005: 9)

A number of pro-poor tourism advocates stress that poverty reduction through tourism requires a radical shift from conventional tourism strategies and practices with a substantial reorientation in favour of the poor. As there have been serious concerns over poor employment conditions for workers in the tourism sector, the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasizes the importance of 'decent work' in the context of poverty alleviation strategies (Bolwell and Weinz, 2008: 2). It has also stressed to transform pro-poor tourism from a niche market into mainstream tourism for development. "PPT should be on a big scale rather than a piecemeal micro-enterprise approach. All forms of

decent work should be considered in assessing value chain benefits to the poor.” (ibid: 19)

Considerable work is also devoted to elaborating the role of poor women in tourism. At the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) tourism fair in Berlin in March 2011, the UNWTO and UN Women presented the jointly produced ‘Global Report on Women in Tourism’ - the first survey to show that “tourism, one of the world’s largest generators of wealth and employment, provides a wide range of income-generation opportunities for women, particularly in developing regions” (UNWTO and UN Women, 2011). Acknowledging that “women in tourism are still underpaid, under-utilized, under-educated and under-represented”, the report claims “tourism offers pathways to success” (ibid: ii). The report’s goal is “to promote women’s empowerment and to protect women’s rights through better tourism work”.

So far, few governments of developing countries are looking beyond tourism as a driver for economic growth and consider poverty alleviation in their national tourism development plans. UNCTAD notes, however: “Many [developing countries] have successfully advanced the development of the tourism sector by mainstreaming tourism into national development and economic policy-making through comprehensive national tourism strategies. This involves creating effective sectoral policies for infrastructure, employment, trade, investment, education, quality standards, and cultural and environmental protection, with a view to achieving mutually supportive sectoral policies, sustainable development and pro-poor results.” (UNCTAD, 2010a: 18)

In preparation for the 4th UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV) in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011, UNCTAD directed its efforts to supporting and assisting LDCs and other countries with limited economic diversification, e.g. Small Island Developing States, which aim to maximize pro-poor gains through tourism. Apart from

measures such as building tourism supply capacities, stimulating entrepreneurship and attracting investment, UNCTAD stresses the importance of dealing with anti-competitive practices and the high levels of revenue leakages – both problems that result in a significant decrease of net economic benefits derived from tourism in developing countries (ibid: 9).

During the LDC-IV conference, a Tourism Special Event for sustainable development and poverty reduction was organized by the UN Steering Committee on Tourism for Development (SCTD)⁴. The meeting, which was attended by 15 tourism ministers, various UN agencies and donor countries, can be regarded as an important milestone as the UN system for the first time expressed a clear commitment to making tourism work as a tool for poverty reduction and development. A UNCTAD press release said: “The Committee outlined the support and technical cooperation that can be provided to LDCs by the UN agencies and programmes on an individual and joint basis. The Services are built around four pillars: building good governance and sustainability in tourism development; promoting investment in the tourism economy; fostering the poverty reduction impact of tourism; and encouraging human resources development, and will contribute to the preservation and safeguarding of natural and cultural assets that form the basis of tourism in LDCs.” (UNCTAD, 2011)

Meanwhile, UNEP has coordinated a major initiative for the establishment of a Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GPST) that aims to unite all sectors of the tourism industry and to mainstream sustainability into all aspects of tourism policies, development, and operation.⁵ ‘Tourism as a mechanism for poverty alleviation’ is a major theme of the projects taken on by the GPST, besides initiatives on climate change, cultural and natural heritage, environment and biodiversity, policy frameworks, business sector and its supply chain, and finance and investment in sustainable tourism and the sustainable development economy (UNEP, 2010: 4). UNEP puts much hope in

the GPST, whose secretariat will be housed with UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) in Paris, France, saying it "has the potential to transform the way tourism is done worldwide, at all scales, by consumers, by enterprises, and by the governments that plan and regulate destinations" (ibid: 3).

UNEP also released in April 2011 a report, entitled 'Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication', suggesting that investing in sustainable tourism can play a key role in creating a global 'green economy', reducing poverty, boosting job creation and addressing major environmental challenges (UNEP, 2011). The report, which was developed in partnership with the UNWTO, has one key message that states: "Tourism development can be designed to support the local economy and poverty reduction. It is assumed the development of a green economy could increase the involvement of local communities, especially the poor, in the tourism value chain and contribute to the development of local economy and poverty reduction." (ibid: 414)⁶

Despite all the efforts over the last decade to boost tourism's image as a key driver for development, some trade experts and tourism leaders believe that the tourism sector is still lacking political and economic recognition in developing countries. A WTO working paper raises the question as to why tourism has been 'neglected' in the Doha Development Agenda (Honeck, 2008)⁷. Noting that very few developing countries and none of the LDCs have made commitments under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)⁸, it recommends among other things that the services negotiations should highlight the linkages between GATS infrastructure commitments and poverty alleviation as well as the role of GATS commitments in promoting sustainable tourism development to ensure that the importance of tourism for LDCs is acknowledged and acted upon (ibid: 29)⁹.

In another major offensive to make tourism a priority on the global agenda, UNWTO and WTTC jointly launched a 'Global Leaders for Tourism Campaign' in early 2011 and presented an Open Letter to heads of state and government around the world. It is hoped that with this initiative political leaders will fully acknowledge that tourism is "one of the most effective solutions to today's global challenges" and will therefore give the sector especially high priority in national policies (UNWTO, 2011a)¹⁰. Some heads of state have replied positively, with Mozambique's President Armando Guebuza declaring: "We support tourism as an area of importance in our agenda to fight poverty." (ibid)

CHAPTER THREE

‘DISMAL SCIENCE’ REVIEWED

THE pro-poor argument in tourism is by no means new and has been subjected to a vigorous and highly polarized debate ever since tourism was first promoted in the developing world almost half a century ago. While international agencies and industry leaders have touted tourism as a panacea for poor nations and people, critics have rebutted their glaringly positive descriptions and assumptions, pointing out the adverse effects and raising challenging questions, such as: Who actually benefits from tourism? (Equations *et al.*, 2004; Hall, 2007; Pleumarom, 2007)

As early as 1970, a group of Tanzanian students presented a groundbreaking study that exploded major myths about the socio-economic benefits of Third World tourism (Lea 1988; Crick 1989)¹¹. Issa Shivji, one of the leading Tanzanian academics involved in the debate at that time, concluded: “The justification for tourism in terms of it being ‘economically good’ ... completely fails to appreciate the integrated nature of the system of underdevelopment.” (ibid: 36)

Turner and Ash called tourism a ‘dismal science’, arguing “the economics of tourism are totally deceptive” (1975: 113). They warned that the industry could harm traditional economies and ways of life, describing how local peasant communities were disrupted and displaced by tourism development, living costs skyrocketed and property values soared beyond the reach of local citizens. “The locals build the resorts and serve in them which, if fully controlled by

foreigners, will contain few really worthwhile jobs. In the meantime, the fields return to weeds; the locals lose their traditional skills; they lose their ability to produce anything of direct practical use to themselves. While they've been building the resorts, they haven't been building the schools, the irrigation systems or the textile factories which would educate, feed or clothe them.... For the sake of this industry, they can lose their land, their jobs and their way of life – for what?" (ibid: 123)

One of the main reasons tourism was objected to was the uneven and unjust relations tourism creates: the 'rich' tourists who demand and who are served, and the 'poor' locals who supply and serve. It was also denounced as wrong and unethical that tourism in poor countries "inject the behaviour of a wasteful society into the midst of a society of want, but the profits go to the elites – those already wealthy, and those with political influence" (Crick, 1989: 317).

In 1976, after more than a decade of financing large-scale tourism projects, the World Bank in cooperation with UNESCO funded an epoch-making international seminar on tourism and development. Researchers raised serious questions about international tourism as 'a passport to development', arguing that the industry was perpetuating the structures of domination inherited from colonialism and adding to already apparent asymmetries and inequalities between developed and developing nations. There was also the concern that tourism was creating a new kind of dependency for poor nations, as international debt politics and tourism development were tightly knotted together. Moreover, tourism's fickle nature was highlighted because of uncontrolled growth and overexploitation of natural and cultural resources (de Kadt, 1979; Hawkins and Mann, 2007).

In the wake of these criticisms, the Bank management decided to close down its tourism projects department, reasoning that tourism projects were "not a good fit with development policies" and that with the

markets and the private sector being the most appropriate growth engines, lending would not be necessary (Hawkins and Mann, 2007: 355). This is remarkable because tourism, along with nuclear energy, belongs to the few industries that the World Bank decided to halt, although the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – a sister unit of the World Bank – as well as regional development banks – including the African, Asian and Inter-American Development Banks – continued to engage in tourism-related development activities.

Under the pressure to address the problems of conventional tourism, a great number of ‘new tourisms’ were introduced in the 1980s and 90s – ecotourism, sustainable, community-based, fair-traded, responsible and others (Mowforth and Munt, 2003: 95). The concept of an environmentally and socially acceptable tourism provided an opportunity for a comeback of the World Bank. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) – a partnership between the Bank and the UNDP formed in 1991 – funded many conservation projects that included tourism as a major component (Hawkins and Mann, 2007). In 2007, a team of Bank experts discussing a tourism strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean (LCR) presented a discussion paper, with the rationale that the Bank should take advantage of the growing country demand for innovative approaches to the tourism sector to develop “a new line of business – a *non-traditional tourism* that reduces poverty by combining infrastructure, environmental and cultural sustainability, and local economic development” (Chavez, 2007: 4). The new term, ‘non-traditional tourism’, was probably chosen to clearly distinguish it from ‘traditional tourism’ that the Bank had dropped from its agenda.

Many projects developed as alternatives to the much-criticized conventional tourism focused on environmental and social sustainability and stressed the need to improve people’s participation. The results however were generally disappointing because the new, ostensibly benign forms of tourism often owed more to labelling and

marketing than to any profound change in the organization, basic values or power patterns of tourism (Pleumarom, 1990; 1994; Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

Importantly, the strong global forces for economic deregulation and privatization in fact increased the global reach of international tourism corporations (TNCs), thus undermining efforts to transform tourism into a more responsible and sustainable industry. Under new bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements like the GATS, governments were called to liberalize trade and investment in services so there was actually little space left for industry regulation or the implementation of measures aimed at environmental improvement and more benefit-sharing of tourism income (Pleumarom, 1999; 2003).

As the prevailing structures of power and increasing inequalities resulting from globalization and liberalization remained unchallenged, it is not surprising that the new emphasis on poverty reduction was met with great scepticism. As Mowforth et al. noted, the new strategy “ran aground on the spin of the politicians who described it as the way forward for their national industries but who at the same time gave incentives only to the large-scale, transnational tourism enterprises. The activities of the latter were aimed at reducing to the minimum the economic benefits that might be left within the local community in order, of course, to maximize the profits to be repatriated to head offices and shareholders in the rich countries” (2008: 94).

CHAPTER FOUR

ALLEVIATING OR AGGRAVATING POVERTY?

VIABLE poverty-focused policies and programmes would require a thorough and holistic understanding of poverty. But in the pro-poor tourism debate, very important questions remain unexplored; for example: How is 'poverty' defined¹²? People living in tourism destinations are 'poor' in what sense? Which are the root causes of poverty? What tourism impacts can aggravate poverty? Are there other options than tourism to confront the problem of poverty?

While tourism's negative impacts are widely acknowledged, there is still the tendency to hide the inconvenient truth about tourism as an industry and to emphatically point out the positive impacts. The euphemistic rhetoric prevails, and the emphasis is on what pro-poor tourism 'can' do, what its 'potential' is, what 'opportunities' it provides, to conclude that tourism is definitely the right answer. This kind of discourse can be confusing because instead of talking about what is, the focus is on what *should be*. It is a method to gloss over the harsh realities and to give the impression that pro-poor tourism is in practice doing well.

4.1 *Economic progress?*

What is the reason for this unbridled optimism that poor countries and people will economically progress through tourism development? As it shows, even advanced tourism economies can get into deep trouble. Hawaii, for example, was paraded as a tourism success story

for decades, but has been facing bankruptcy for several years. The state budget deficit has been ballooning up to about US\$1 billion for 2011-2013 and the islands' two economic pillars – tourism and military industry – have almost crashed with little hope for a recovery in the foreseeable future (Kalani, 2011).

Apparently, tourism has also not resulted in economic prosperity and stability in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy; these countries now belong to the most debt-stricken euro-zone states and have subsequently been forced into drastic austerity programmes that further depress the economies and severely affect the majority of the population. Tunisia and Egypt, that were until recently hailed as Africa's most successful tourist destinations, were shaken by mass uprisings in the beginning of 2011 because of economic impoverishment – including high unemployment, retreating wages and skyrocketing costs of living, which led to an overthrow of governments in both countries. Discussions about the role of tourism in all these economic and political woes are however generally avoided.

Unfortunately, the data and analyses relating to economic impacts are extremely inadequate¹³. Tourism is said to be one of the world's biggest and fastest growing industries, with 940 million international tourist arrivals generating tourism receipts of US\$919 billion in 2010, according to the UNWTO. It is assumed that "all countries at all levels of development can potentially benefit from this multi-billion dollar business" (UNCTAD, 2010a: 2)¹⁴. There are no systematic studies, however, on where the tourists' expenditure actually ends up, how much 'leaks' away, how much remains in the national economy and how much 'trickles down' to ordinary citizens. Although the relevance of 'leakages', occurring due to repatriation of profits by foreign-owned companies, expatriate salaries and imports, has been repeatedly stressed by economists and agencies like UNCTAD, it is conspicuous as to how little research is available on this important issue.¹⁵

In the world of business, an enterprise that only calculates profits and ignores the direct and indirect costs would hardly be called viable. So it appears unreasonable that governments responsible for economic development and stability in their countries are not producing proper balance-sheets for a significant industry such as tourism. While income and jobs created by tourism are counted, the losses that occur in other economic sectors or in public services as a result of tourism development never appear in the calculations.

An appropriate cost-benefit analysis would among other things include the opportunity costs. For example, it would state how many farmers, fisher-folks, and non-tourism workers and entrepreneurs would have to give up their economic activities as a result of tourism development, and how much income would be lost from non-tourism activities. As such surveys are virtually non-existent, we can only speculate about figures. Given the sheer scale of tourism, the economic losses in other sectors are likely to be huge. The costs that governments usually have to bear to back up the tourism industry – e.g. for the development of infrastructure, maintenance of tourist sites, promotional campaigns, as well as for security, disaster preparedness and environmental services – also need to be included in the calculations. Another very important issue that needs to be taken into account is tourism's high sensitivity to economic boom-and-bust cycles which has significant impacts on income and employment. Some business associations provide information on tourism-related enterprises going out of business, workers being laid off, the decline of hotel occupancy and the loss of income, when there are setbacks. Often, governments are called to bail out ailing businesses and give additional incentives to the private sector to keep the industry going. But systematic and reliable studies are also lacking in this field.

It is assumed that continued growth of the tourism industry plus targeted interventions – such as boosting linkages between tourism and the rest of the economy – will lead to the generation of more net benefits

for the poor. According to Jamieson *et al.*, however, the methodological shortcomings to measure tourism development impacts on poverty are hard to come by as there are no means “of determining the scale of the impact on the poor or even the trends which result from overall growth or decline on the poor” (2004: 2).

Recent experiences suggest that while local communities lost their existing income sources, very little has been achieved to bring about more balanced development and equitable distribution of income secured from tourism. A very clear example is Cambodia, where the IFC and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ, now GIZ) in cooperation with the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism launched in 2007 the “Stay Another Day” campaign to promote tourism that benefits poor Cambodian communities, protects the environment and safeguards Cambodian culture (Kim and Campbell, 2009). Siem Reap, where the Angkor temples are located and which is designated as a World Heritage Site, has been a major focus of the initiative. But after running the IFC/GTZ campaign for three years, Siem Reap is still one of the poorest parts of Cambodia, despite the annual flood of international tourists and the millions of dollars they bring each year (Doherty, 2010). More than half of all families in the Siem Reap district live below the poverty line, surviving on less than US\$1.25 a day. Four villages in 10 have no access to safe drinking water and 53% of all children are malnourished. Literacy rates are some of the lowest in the country, at 64%, and only 10% of children finish high school (*ibid*). The case of Siem Reap confirms that most tourist dollars are being spent on foreign-owned hotels, tour companies and restaurants. The anomaly of such out-of-town wealth surrounded by so much local poverty even seems to grow starker every tourist season. Local residents reported that package tourists spend a week in Siem Reap without even once visiting a local business or using public transport as their tours are managed by tour operators who control every minute of their itinerary and herd them to particular spots for dining and shopping (*ibid*).

One of the significant obstacles in Siem Reap relates to the way the entry to the Angkor temples is managed by the government and local authorities. The temple complex is operated by a large petroleum company called Sokimex, which has close links to high-ranked government officials. The company controls the ticket sales from the temple complex worth about US\$30 million a year, and the revenue is split between government coffers in Phnom Penh and Sokimex. Nothing of the money is spent on community projects (ibid). Economic experts confirmed that due to the dominance of foreign ownership in Cambodia's tourism industry the inflow of tourist dollars into the national economy is very limited. Whatever tourists spend on their trips mostly goes to the companies in the tourist-sending countries, such as airfare, tour bus tickets, and restaurant and hotel bills (Peou and Lipes, 2010). According to UNDP, Cambodia's leakage is also high because of lacking linkages between tourism and the agricultural and food sector (2011b: 32).

Apparently the IFC/GTZ initiative failed to take into account some of the key issues, e.g. the prevailing structures of ownership and power, and thus failed to bring about positive change. Without drawing lessons from such experiences, one should not be surprised when expanding portfolios for planning and implementing pro-poor projects are wasted.

4.2 Loss of resources and traditional livelihoods

Poverty is not just a factor of jobs and wages. It is necessary to note that while many rural and indigenous communities appear to live in poor economic and social conditions, they do not consider themselves as poor if they can preserve their culture, living close to the natural environment and utilizing land water and biological resources for their livelihood. According to Johnston, "The 'pro-poor' argument is particularly disturbing in light of [the tourism] industry's penchant for Indigenous territories. Indigenous Peoples who exercise their

ancestral title are *not* poor. It is only when they are stripped of their lands, relocated and/or corralled into a colonial reserve that they live in the severest of poverty. Even then, they are not 'poor', if poverty is understood spiritually (2007a).

Kamuaro, a Masai from Kenya, related as to how his people lost their homes and livelihood, often without any compensation, when protected areas were established for the sake of 'ecotourism'. "They have been pushed onto marginal lands with harsh climatic conditions, poor soils, lack of water resources, and infested with human and livestock diseases, making survival impossible... The designation of ecotourism sites tends to disentitle the poor by depriving them of their traditional use of land and natural resources. Despite local resistance, property rights have often been reallocated by influential figures in order to allow investors to make profits. With such an approach, local communities face exploitation and abuse, including the loss of cultural and social identity." (Kamuaro, 1996)

Undoubtedly, rapid and uncontrolled tourism development across the world is still aggravating poverty on a massive scale. Available documentation shows that in many parts of the world, small-scale farmers continue to be driven from their land and fisher-folks are denied access to beaches, mangrove forests and marine resources because of tourism. In tourism areas, frequent land conflicts constitute a fundamental issue, as developers use all legal and not-so-legal methods to appropriate land for tourism purposes. The property market becomes a highly volatile affair due to speculation and skyrocketing prices, seriously impacting traditional livelihoods. For the ordinary people, there is not much point in continuing careful productive cultivation because land as a commodity divorced from production has got unprecedented monetary value.

If pro-poor tourism advocates believe that tourism can easily be linked to the agricultural sector so that poor farming communities can capture

a share from the tourism income by providing their products to hotels and restaurants, experiences indicate the contrary. The significant land use changes, increasing land alienation and landlessness among farmers have rendered many new tourism areas dependent on import of food from other places. For example, “Kerala has now become a net importer of its staple food rice and depends heavily on neighbouring states for the everyday supplies of vegetables, meat, egg and milk” (KTW, 2008b). While the communities confront food shortage, one cannot expect them to provide locally produced food to tourists and earn an income.¹⁶

The subject of ‘land grabs’ by large corporations for mega-tourism projects is a particular issue of concern. Are these land acquisitions likely to provide a reasonable substitute and socio-economic opportunities to local communities who are displaced from the land? Most likely not. Community representatives participating in the global tourism forum during the 2009 World Social Forum in Belém of Pará in the Brazilian Amazon region, denounced the rapidly increasing land grabs for mega-tourism complexes that include hotels, residential housing, golf courses, marinas, shopping centres and other facilities as a reflection of ‘predatory’ and ‘hegemonic’ tourism policies (tim-team, 2009). As an outcome of the Belém Forum, a coalition of civic groups and activists concerned with tourism, social justice and environment issues launched an international campaign calling for a moratorium on mega-resorts. Their campaign statement said: “Contrary to the claims of industry and government leaders that tourism brings progress and prosperity to poor regions, in most poor and developing countries the lure of investment, unregulated nature of tourism and support of global neo-liberal economic forces has resulted in the State withdrawing from economic activities that lead to overall growth and development... Efforts to battle hunger and poverty, in these countries, are being undermined by the massive land use change from food-producing land and marine areas to tourism zones.” (ibid)

In 2008, when worrisome reports surfaced about worsening food shortage crises that even led to food riots in several countries, the Bangkok-based Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team (tim-team) in cooperation with Biothai, a network of Thai civic groups concerned with biodiversity protection and sustainable agriculture, calculated how much rice could have been produced on the land that was actually converted into golf resorts in Thailand (Pleumarom, 2008). The results showed that tens of thousands of tons of rice were annually lost, which could have fed poor people living in the area, with possibly surplus made available to others, too. When Thailand experienced a resort and golf course boom in the early 1990s, thousands of Thai farmers who gave their land to developers lost their livelihoods. In interviews documented, farmers asked how they could survive in times of food insecurity, saying “we can’t eat grass” of the golf courses (Pleumarom, 1995: 34).

4.3 Sustainable development or environmental impoverishment?

‘Sustainable tourism’ is offered as an answer to both poverty and environmental concerns. But as with ‘ecotourism’, sustainable tourism means different things to different people, with the industry often misusing the term to cultivate a positive and ‘green’ image for themselves. Mowforth and Munt argue that the concept of sustainability has emerged in a hegemonic discourse. In many areas of the developing world there is “a grassroots groundswell to take control of, and exploit, tourist opportunities at the community level. Currently, this tendency seems to assume automatically that ‘sustainability’ is their prerogative, and use of the term is as loose as it is in other tendencies.” (2003: 113)

A Statement of civil society organizations presented to the 7th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004 said: “Most tourism as practiced

today is a pronounced form of consumerism which knows no limits and gets by on the fantasy of doing good. The official process of the [United Nations] 'International Year of Ecotourism' (IYE 2002) has confused rather than clarified what is actually 'sustainable' tourism... Ecotourism and new programmes linking tourism and poverty... are actually promoting industrial tourism models oriented to economic growth. These forms of so-called 'sustainable' tourism are known to be exploitative of both people and land. They dangerously distort the relationship between tourism and biological diversity." (ISCST, 2004)

The lack of safeguards for environmental and cultural sustainability in tourism policies and programmes poses threats particularly to areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, whose cultural landscapes and even their traditional knowledge, ceremonies and sacred sites are being exploited for tourism purposes, often without their consent. At the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and many other UN events, Indigenous leaders stressed that all processes on sustainable tourism under the CSD, CBD and IYE were not representative of Indigenous Peoples (McLaren, 2003; Johnston, 2007a).

Most sustainable tourism advocates are aware of the fact that tourism competes with local activities for the use of limited natural resources. But to make tourism ventures successful, they suggest that 'trade-offs' are inevitable. Tourism as 'sustainable development' proves to be a myth when 'trade-offs' are made in the narrow interests of the industry, while local residents draw the short straw and end up making sacrifices in quality of life. The effects can be experienced the world over: Ecosystems are still being destroyed and biodiversity lost on a massive scale to build more hotels and resorts; small communities turn into polluted and ugly urban areas increasingly plagued by congestion, infrastructure bottlenecks and social problems (Pleumarom 2007; 2009a).

A particularly serious problem is the degradation and depletion of scarce fresh water resources in major tourist destinations. According to the 2006 United Nations Human Development Report, the aggravating global water crisis is closely related to poverty. For instance, some 1.8 million children in the developing world die each year as a result of diarrhoea, and millions of women spend several hours a day fetching water. The report further notes that the costs associated with health spending, productivity losses and labour diversions are greatest in some of the poorest countries (cit. in Shah, 2010). Considering these alarming facts, it is easy to conclude that the excessive use of water in tourism facilities – luxury hotels, golf courses, pool villas, spa businesses, etc. – is not only irresponsible but morally despicable. The US-based action-research group World Watch presented some mind-boggling data on water consumption in golf courses: It would take 2.5 billion gallons of water per day to support 4.7 billion people at the UN daily minimum rate; the same amount of water – 2.5 billion gallons – is used, per day, to irrigate the world's golf courses. Or another example: The amount of water used by 60,000 villagers in Thailand is on average, per day, 6,500 cubic metres; the same amount – 6,500 cubic metres – is used by one golf course in Thailand, on average, per day (cit. in Pleumarom, 2010). Pointing out that access to water is one of the most fundamental of human rights, Tourism Concern UK initiated a research programme and campaign on Water Equity in Tourism (WET) that aims to promote and protect the right to water of local communities in the face of increasing competition from the tourism industry (Tourism Concern, 2011).

4.4 Threats related to climate change

The increasingly felt climate change and extreme weather events around the world just add to the burden of communities, with the poor being most severely affected. Despite grave concerns about unsustainable tourism development aggravating the climate crisis, tourism agencies and the industry have not changed fundamentally.

Travel and tourism belongs to the few industries that have not yet made any clear quantifiable commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the UN climate change negotiations, with their leaders sticking to the mantra that continued unrestricted tourism growth is necessary to meet pro-poor targets. The UNWTO insists its climate change policy is consistent with its poverty elimination initiative and the MDGs (Pleumarom, 2009b).

However, experts presented calculations that tourism under 'business-as-usual' conditions could become one of the 'biggest climate killers' – due to emissions from transportation, particularly aviation and shipping; tourist accommodation and activities; as well as tourism-related land use change. In response, the UNWTO and the industry have championed terms like 'sustainable' growth (UNWTO, 2011b), 'green' growth (Lipman, 2011) and 'smart growth' (UNWTO, 2009), without presenting any convincing strategies and plans on how to actually improve tourism's problematic climate record.

Whereas climate change has become one of the most pressing issues for the tourism industry, decision-makers appear to mainly engage in bragging and surface manoeuvring to hide the basic emptiness of their activities. In the meantime, the world's most disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups are facing immeasurable adverse threats on their human and environmental health, food and water security, livelihoods, and their very survival as a result of climate change. As current and future threats have been identified: sea level and temperature rises; flooding and drought; landslides; storm surges; wild fires; biodiversity loss and ecosystem changes; water scarcity and impact on food security; negative impact on health and spread of diseases; damage to infrastructure and impaired tourist attractions. Recent studies suggest that continued indiscriminate growth of tourism leading to additional environmental damage and decay will inevitably deepen the crisis in many destinations (Pleumarom, 2009b; Jones and Phillips, 2011).

4.5 *Unlocking opportunities for women?*

When the UNWTO chose for World Tourism Day 2007 the theme “Tourism opens doors for women” in appraisal of the second MDG on gender equality, the UNWTO’s then Secretary General Francesco Frangialli asserted: “Tourism is a sector of the economy that not only employs significant numbers of women, but provides enormous opportunities for their advancement.” Whereas the decision to pay attention to the issues of tourism and women was welcomed, Frangialli’s statement in its almost comical simplicity was rebuked by civil society organizations and networks. They charged that the UNWTO’s optimism was unreasonable, given the well-documented sexual exploitation of both women and children and the deplorable working conditions for women in the tourism industry (tim-team, 2007). The Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) countered with the slogan “Tourism closes doors for women” and stated: “A tourism that is propped up by images of women and the lure of sexual pleasures is not one that liberates women.” (cit. in *ibid*) The Philippine Tourism Action Group expressed the view that the unprecedented growth of the tourism-related sex industry is the result of a failed development model that has deepened the poverty of the rural population and of women in particular, thus forcing girls and women to enter the sex trade (*ibid*).

The ‘Global Report on Women in Tourism’ published in 2011 by UNWTO and UNWOMEN states: “The capacity of tourism to empower women socially, politically and economically is particularly relevant in developing regions where women may face the greatest hardships and inequalities.” (UNWTO and UN Women, 2011: vii) Without an examination of the underlying structural problems, however, the UNWTO feeds delusions of easy solutions. Promises are made without any elaboration on how these will be accomplished. For instance, the report mentions the most contentious and troublesome issue of sex tourism, but does not provide any ideas or a path on how to curb this

still-growing multi-billion-dollar sex industry that enslaves women and children. A common excuse for doing nothing is to say there is a lack of information. The report states: "Although information is still missing, the results of the initial survey suggest that tourism is worth investing in." (ibid: ii) In other words, as long as there are knowledge gaps, there cannot be any doubt that tourism is beneficial.

4.6 Medical tourism versus health care for locals

Some governments and international agencies including UNCTAD believe medical tourism is a new product suitable for developing countries because it strengthens linkages in the national economy and increases foreign exchange earnings (UNCTAD, 2010a: 12). The privatization and commercialization of health care has created this new industry where people from rich countries travel to poor countries such as India, Thailand and the Philippines to obtain medical care and at the same time enjoy a tour programme, all at a relatively cheap price. But critics maintain that there is something fundamentally wrong when a government offers health care to rich foreigners when it cannot even guarantee basic health services for its citizens. It is a strange logic indeed when cash-strapped governments subsidize or help finance the corporate medical tourism sector on the basis that such efforts will generate revenue that can be used for eradicating poverty. Instead of investing in expensive and extravagant medical and healthcare facilities, would the taxpayers' money not be better used to directly build hospitals and other basic facilities for the poor? Critics point out that ultimately, it is not the rich medical tourists that contribute to poverty alleviation, but quite the contrary, poor tax payers in developing countries subsidize the rich foreign patients (Vijay, 2007: 39).

In Thailand, health experts and economists alike have argued that the government's 'medical hub' strategy aimed at turning the country into a world-class health treatment destination is a disgrace because it

deprives ordinary citizens of already-limited health service resources. In 2010, the Department of Medical Services Support in Thailand presented a five-year strategic plan which would spend US\$100 million of taxpayer money to promote the 'medical hub' initiative, and it was estimated that once it was implemented medical tourism could earn the country about US\$13 billion annually. But Ammar Siamwalla, a highly respected Thai economist, warned that the national health system could go bankrupt if the plan goes ahead. "The medical hub project is the worst policy the government is going to implement. It draws doctors out of the system and sabotages public healthcare services struggling to make ends meet for the sake of paying medical professionals." (Treerutkuarkul, 2010) As so often in the world of tourism, the potential tourist dollars are being counted, while the losses are not. Questions remain as to what financial and human resources would be needed to rebuild a functional national health system for the benefit of all.

4.7 Lessons learned from 'pro-poor' ventures

Evaluations of pro-poor tourism projects that take a holistic and grassroots-oriented approach are very rare. One such review was conducted in 2008 by Equations on the Endogenous Tourism Project-Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP-RTS). The ETP has been a collaborative effort of the Indian government's Ministry of Tourism and UNDP and implemented at 36 sites in 20 states across India (Equations, 2008a). In a way, it shows a radical shift from conventional governmental tourism schemes because it extends beyond the fulfilment of mere economic objectives and focuses on sustainable livelihoods and community involvement. Even though the sites reviewed by Equations were found to have a potential of increased economic opportunities for locals due to the initiation of the project, concrete conclusions on an increase of employment and income could not be provided at the time of the evaluation (ibid).

Equations pointed out that in the ETP programme, community development is not a side-agenda but a co-agenda in order to 'add value' to the tourism process. Nevertheless, it found that a wide range of issues needed to be addressed and tackled. It was doubted, for example, if the beneficiaries of the projects were really the poorest and most marginalized people. "It is not uncommon in rural tourism projects to see funds and institutional arrangements, designed to benefit the poor being passed on to the not so poor." (Equations, 2008b: 5) A major problem mentioned was that poor communities are usually regarded as homogenous. In fact, "there are some people in each community who barely manage to break even with consumption and production. For them, to have a choice of livelihood options, the opportunities are few. Those who are the current gainers of the existing tourism, or those powerful ones, who aspire for gaining out of the project, often try to dominate" (ibid).

Equations warned that in the drive to implement projects "one can easily slip into project-based mode, products and results get privileged and timelines collapsed. Thus, important development goals of equity, gender, empowerment and social transformation, all of which require time and effort, get sidelined and the tourism product part of the project gets privileged" (ibid: 4). It was also observed that the expectations of the project are often too high, and lack of success or setbacks lead to demoralization of villagers. The review team concluded that "tourism cannot and will not be the solution to the rural crisis – and the introduction of tourism must not be seen as a substitute for more stable and sustainable livelihood actions" (ibid: 6).

In the meantime, the UNDP team made a first attempt to assess tourism and poverty reduction strategies in LDCs by analyzing 30 Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) (UNDP, 2011b). The DTIS represent an innovative approach to provide information on LDCs, combining macro-economic and sectoral analysis with 'stakeholder' consultations and a participatory validation process. The results left much to be

desired, however. In conclusion, most of the examined DTIS with tourism sections showed major shortcomings, and it was suggested that governments' tourism-related work has so far not really been satisfactory in terms of addressing pro-poor concerns, gender issues, sustainability considerations and community participation (ibid: 35). The report ended with the advice that in the preparation for the next round of DTIS under the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), "it will be important to highlight pro-poor measures that have a positive impact on human development" (ibid: 37)

4.8 *"Regulation bad – growth good"*

Many pro-poor tourism advocates agree that coherent policy frameworks and efficient institutions must be in place to ensure that policies translate into action – e.g. in terms of reducing leakages, re-distributing tourism income in favour of the poor, and fostering meaningful participation of communities (UNDP, 2011b). That means government regulation and policies are indispensable to achieve social, developmental and environmental objectives. This, however, is in stark contradiction to the neoliberal agenda of the tourism industry that operates along the line "regulation is always bad – growth is good".

The UNWTO along with the WTTC follows the strategy of 'tourism liberalization with a Human Face' that only commits to voluntary industry initiatives such as 'best practices', code of ethics and corporate social responsibility to ensure unrestricted tourism growth (Pleumarom, 2003). Therefore, even when well-organized pro-poor micro-projects may be beneficial in local terms, it is highly questionable whether poverty reduction programmes can be mainstreamed in a way that they challenge the dominant global tourism system.

In a study that integrates tourism in a continuum of poverty alleviation strategies within the antipodes of neoliberalism and protectionism, Schilcher observed that the most influential international organizations,

as well as governments worldwide, follow a largely “neoliberal laissez-faire approach” to poverty alleviation coupled with “market-friendly pro-poor supplements” (2007). Given the political economic realities, she argued, only tourism strategies that are largely in line with the prevalent neoliberal ideology will have a chance to be implemented on a large-scale basis. More progressive approaches such as poverty-focused regulation and distribution – the equity side of the continuum – “are bound to remain predominantly rhetoric of some United Nations organizations” (ibid).

4.9 Exposing the poor to a high-risk industry?

Tourism is well known to be highly vulnerable to unpredictable events, including economic downturns, social and political turmoil, extreme weather events and natural disasters and health threats. Dangerous crises abound: 2010 was one of the most disastrous and costliest year for tourism ever, with earthquakes, volcano eruptions, floods, super-typhoons, heat waves, droughts, landslides and blizzards wreaking havoc and causing unprecedented business interruptions around the world. Experts also warned that the global economic crisis that began in 2008 is far from over. More tumultuous events in 2011 and beyond are likely to go well beyond monetary problems, increasingly involving rising wealth disparities, exploding food prices, geopolitical volatility and other factors (Pesek, 2011).

The corporate industry has responded by establishing ‘risk management’ committees and plans. For tourism operators, risks are primarily undesirable economic setbacks, loss of revenue and loss of consumer confidence. But for the poor eking out a living from tourism, the risks are much more existential as their livelihoods are at stake temporarily or even permanently. One lesson learned from the increasing waves of natural and human-made disasters is that if tourism-related risk management plans exist, they have so far done little to help the poor and weaker sections in the tourism industry.

Tourism in Thailand, already badly tattered by political and economic woes for several years, was dealt more serious blows in 2011 due to the impacts of natural disasters at home and the tsunami and nuclear twin disasters in Japan, from where substantial numbers of tourists travel to Thailand. Outlining measures that the industry usually takes in times of crisis, a representative of the Tourism Council of Thailand admitted that operators who do not have enough funds or lack good risk management plans run a high risk of being thrown out of business. This is especially the case for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which account for 80% of Thailand's tourism businesses (Chinmaneevong, 2011). Given tourism's unstable and volatile nature, policies that try to involve the poor and disadvantaged in the 'tourism value chain' and make them dependent on this high-risk industry can hardly be called sound and responsible.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FUTURE IN A 'GREEN ECONOMY'?

'GREEN economy' is a new euphemistic term that has been widely used in the corporate world of tourism. But so far, there is no agreed definition or an international consensus on what green economy means, and it remains unclear how people and nations, particularly in the developing world, can benefit from it. The idea, which was first introduced by UNEP in late 2008, is to develop a system of green economic activities "that result in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UNEP 2011). Discussions on the green economy concept and related policies have gained much in importance as one of the two key themes at the UN Rio+20 conference in 2012 is: 'Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction' (UNWTO, 2011c).

Under immense pressure to respond to the challenges posed by the 2008 economic recession, poverty, environmental degradation and climate change, the UNWTO and the European Travel Commission (ETC) jointly organized in September 2009 the 'Gothenburg Symposium on Tourism and Travel in the Green Economy' with considerable input from the private sector, e.g. the WTTC, the World Economic Forum and the aviation industry (ETC, 2009: 4). Basically, the purpose of the Symposium was to justify the contemporary tourism model by promoting the vision of profound change towards "a sustainable tourism marketplace in a global green economy" (ibid: 6)¹⁷. The conference statement, known as the 'Gothenburg

Symposium Conclusions', was primarily aimed at lobbying climate change negotiators at the 2009 UN Conference of Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen to 'seal a deal' that protects the economic, environmental and social base of the tourism industry and to allow its unrestricted growth. The statement said the tourism sector should be considered "as a key contributor to a green economy approach that promotes economic recovery and also assists poor countries in reaching the MDGs and greening their economies. By participating in the green economy, tourism can play a positive catalytic cross-cultural role to improve the sustainability of several related sectors such as agriculture, energy, transport and construction, as well as contributing to its own sustainable sectoral development" (UNWTO, 2009: 3).

In February 2011, UNEP published a 600-page Green Economy Report (GER) that covers 10 key economic sectors, including a 40-page chapter on tourism developed in cooperation with the UNWTO (UNEP, 2011). The GER, a comprehensive study conducted as part of the UNEP-led 'Green Economy Initiative' (GEI), uses economic analyses and modelling approaches to demonstrate that investment in greening a range of sectors – natural sectors: agriculture, fisheries, forests, water; and built capital sectors: energy, manufacturing, waste, construction, transportation, tourism – can drive economic growth, while at the same time it addresses social and environmental challenges.

As for tourism, the GER assumes that an investment of 0.2% of global GDP – or US\$135 billion at current levels of GDP – per year between 2011 and 2050 would allow the sector to continue to grow steadily while enhancing its sustainability and ensuring significant environmental benefits such as reductions in water consumption by 18%, energy use by 44% and CO₂ emissions by 52%, compared with a 'business-as-usual' scenario (ibid: 438).

Surely, few would object to a green economy – an economy that is environmentally-friendly, sensitive to the need to conserve natural

resources, minimize pollution and emissions during the production process and promotes environmentally-friendly lifestyles and consumption patterns. But serious concerns have been raised by developing countries' delegates, civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations that the green economy concept is prone to abuse and could give rise to harmful developments that particularly affect poor countries and people. Participants of a side event held during a UNCSD meeting in New York asked 'whose green economy' is this and why did the topic of green economy suddenly emerge in all kinds of dialogue mechanisms after 2008 (UNCSD, 2011).

The fact that UNEP's GEI has been spearheaded by Pavan Sukhdev, an investment banker on sabbatical from Deutsche Bank and chairman of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Biodiversity, added to the suspicion that the green economy idea was brought up to push big business interests and to dominate the global agenda in the run-up to Rio+20. As Thomas comments, "the most vocal cheerleaders are the Davos crowd of Fortune 500 companies and G8 diplomats. Most alarmingly, some of these voices are positioning the 'green economy' as an upgrade or replacement to the 'outmoded' concept of 'sustainable development' that was agreed on 20 years ago. They seem content to throw out Rio's 'baby' of sustainable development for new green bathwater just as the baby reaches the age of maturity" (2011).

Discussing the role of the green economy in the context of sustainable development, poverty and equity, Khor warned that the green economy will be defined or operationalized in a one-dimensional manner, taken out of the context of UNCED's sustainable development framework, the Rio Declaration principles and Agenda 21. The focus may be narrowed to environmental management issues, without fully considering the development and equity aspects as well as international dimensions. "In such a situation, if the green economy concept gains prominence, while the sustainable development concept recedes, there may be a loss of the use of the holistic sustainable development

approach, with imbalances between the three pillars [environmental protection, economic development and social development]." (Khor, 2011: 72) Khor also stressed the importance of adhering to the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility', arguing that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the green economy that treats all countries in the same manner was bound to fail. "The levels and stages of development of countries must be fully considered, and the priorities and conditions of developing countries taken into account." (ibid)

Quintos pointed out the danger of the "green growth" agenda, saying that while giving monetary incentives to generate 'green behaviour', 'greed behaviour' will continue to thrive because the green economy is premised on the accelerated commodification of nature and ecosystem services and allows continued exploitation for profit-making. The treatment of natural resources as tradable assets will just exacerbate "private expropriation, appropriation and accumulation in the hands of the few" (Quintos, 2011: 12). Quintos strongly criticized carbon trading and off-setting – market-based mechanisms on which particularly the travel and tourism industry rely to reduce their carbon footprint. These activities "merely allow the large polluting countries and corporations to continue business-as-usual as long as they can afford to pay for the offsets and profit from trading carbon emission permits, which is becoming a subject of speculative activities as well for financial investors who are responsible for the global financial crisis" (ibid).

The focus on 'green technologies' is also regarded as problematic. As it is mainly big companies from developed countries that have the resources and technological know-how to promote the green economy, critics call to carefully examine whether the people on the ground really benefit. Developing countries may be disadvantaged because they may not have the capacity to develop new green technologies themselves and become dependent on importing these more expensive technologies from more advanced industrial countries to comply with

international standards. There is also the danger that the new imported technologies are not appropriate or sustainable in the local context.

There are also concerns that big hydroelectric dams, nuclear power plants, and other highly controversial and risky energy technologies will find approval as 'clean and green'. "If RIO+20 is not to become a handy loophole for every technological wolf to assume green clothing (and funds), governments are going to need to get specific about what is and what isn't a 'green and just' technology and to resurrect the precautionary principle first agreed at Rio 20 years ago," warns Thomas (2011).

UNEP's GER also promotes biofuels, even though it has been well documented that the rapid expansion of oil palm, sugar cane and jatropha monoculture plantations for the production of biofuels leads to land grabs, environmental degradation, less land available for food crops, destruction of small-scale farming and skyrocketing food prices (Pleumarom, 2009b: 21).

The director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Tony Tyler, confirmed at the September 2011 'Greener Skies' conference in Hong Kong that the global aviation industry's objective to slash air travel's carbon emissions by half until 2050 primarily depends on new biofuel technologies (Forsythe, 2011).

Policies and programmes that promise 'low carbon' or 'carbon-neutral' travel and tourism need to be closely scrutinized and monitored as many of them offer 'false solutions' that are unhelpful and may obstruct pathways and innovations towards a genuinely non-polluting and sustainable future (Pleumarom, 2009b: 14). In a World Bank publication, for example, Fernandes and Romo hail Costa Rica, a renowned 'ecotourism' destination, for launching a 'National Strategy for Climate Change' that aims at achieving carbon neutrality

by 2021 (2009: 2). The authors suggest that Costa Rica's policies make good business sense and motivate a number of tourism enterprises to participate in the country's greening efforts as part of their GHG emissions offsetting programmes. Costa Rica's Nature Air, which claims to be the world's first carbon-neutral airline and represents the travel sector in UNEP's task force to devise regulations for aviation, is portrayed as a success story for balancing profitability and corporate social responsibility, even though Nature Air heavily relies on controversial carbon offset mechanisms and the use of biofuels to improve its emissions record (ibid). Moreover, Fernandes and Romo see new trends toward renewable energy in 'non-traditional' or 'niche' tourism, describing the activities of the company 'Blue Energy' that has begun to develop energy solutions based on hydro, wind and solar sources in partnership with some small eco-lodges along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua. In the conclusion, however, the authors admit that positive green measures such as alternative energy production are like drops in the ocean because conventional grid-connected tourist accommodation catering to mass and luxury tourists still "typically operate with few energy supply concerns and end-use restrictions" (ibid: 3) .

Evidently, not much progress has been made in changing unsustainable consumption patterns – an important issue that has been sidelined in tourism and green economy discourses. Yet, one has to bear in mind that much of tourism and related goods and services produced are luxuries that only affluent people can afford, while the vast majority of the world's population is struggling hard to fulfil their basic needs. In addition, the globalization of the tourist lifestyle has resulted in excessive demands and promoted wasteful and unsustainable consumption, which poses enormous stress on the environment and climate. There is also exploitation involved, the victims being urban middle and upper-class people who are unswervingly enticed by industry and the media to spend their surplus on dreams and illusions. "There is a danger throughout the global economy, and not least

tourism, of locking in a self-defeating spiral of over-consumption by those who are already wealthy, justified against achieving marginal increases in wealth among poorest members of society.” (NEF and WDM, 2008: 28) ‘Green consumerism’ does nothing to solve the problem. As Paul Hawken, an American author and environmental activist, once commented in the *New York Times*, “Green consumerism is an oxymoronic phrase” that distracts from other more serious issues. “We turn toward the consumption part because that’s where the money is. We tend not to look at the ‘less’ part.” (cit. in Williams, 2007)

As it stands, the slogan ‘the consumer – the only person who matters’, coined by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in 1977, remains valid in the green economy. The tourism chapter of UNEP’s GER considers ‘customer expectations’, ‘customer satisfaction’ and ‘tourist preferences’, but cuts short on the development needs, expectations and preferences from the perspective of local communities in tourist destinations.

Will people’s voices and rights be heeded in the green economy as they should be? Deeply concerned about the substance of and processes related to the green economy, Indigenous Peoples have called on the United Nations to reaffirm the ecosystem and human-rights-based approach to development. “We cannot separate development from the protection and respect of our rights to self-determination, to our lands, territories and resources, our cultural rights, rights, right to free, prior and informed consent and our traditional knowledge, among others. These rights are contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If States and the UN promote and respect this Declaration, sustainable development can become a reality.” (UNCSD, 2010) At the Manaus global preparatory meeting on Rio+20 in August 2011, Indigenous Peoples representatives agreed to create adequate opportunities to critique the concepts of the green economy and institutional framework for sustainable development. “We continue to challenge this development model which promotes

domination of nature, incessant economic growth, limitless resource extraction, profit-seeking, unsustainable consumption and production and the unregulated commodity and financial markets.” (Forest Peoples, 2011)

A growing number of NGOs and people’s organizations understand that it is hardly possible to safeguard people’s rights and work for economic, social and environmental justice in a green economic system that will be financed and dominated by corporate powers-that-be. At the 64th Annual UN Department of Public Information/ NGO Conference, held in Bonn, Germany in September 2011 as part of the preparation process towards Rio+20, NGO delegates called for a replacement of the current unsustainable, inequitable and unjust economic model and for placing people and the environment above profit. Their Declaration states among other things: “We propose that where the current economy aids inequity, destruction and greed, it should be replaced by an economy that cares for the human-earth community.” (UN DPI, 2011: 4)

CHAPTER SIX

‘BAREFOOT’ APPROACH NEEDED

TO reiterate, the Kerala Declaration, the outcome of the ill-fated ICRT conference in Kochi, stated: *“Patience and persistence are required, proceed with wisdom and hope”* to bring about ‘responsible tourism’ (Kerala Tourism, 2008). But why should the poor, who have been marginalized by tourism development for so long, still have trust in tourism experts and politicians and patiently and persistently wait for a benign tourism that is unlikely to ever arrive? Apparently, the conference delegates that gathered in India were not properly informed about the alarming proportions of local people’s hardship and the great urgency to solve the tourism-induced problems.

Despite all the promising discourses of tourism as a strategy for poverty alleviation and sustainable development, local communities in many parts of the world have given lukewarm or negative responses to tourism development. The high out-migration of locals from tourist centres is also an indication that ordinary people are not experiencing an improvement of their lives and livelihoods through tourism. Everywhere, locals are being replaced in tourism by migrant workers who provide the cheapest labour and endure the harshest working and living conditions (Pleumarom, 2007: 12).

Kerala’s people’s organization and movements that challenged the international and national responsible tourism promoters have gained strength since the 2008 protests and are now operating under the banner “rhetoric of responsible tourism; irresponsible practices?”

(KTW website). This serves as a wake-up call to decision-makers: Don't just talk, but act responsibly!

Many communities and particularly Indigenous Peoples are speaking out against tourism that they consider harmful and is beyond their control, even if projects are labelled 'responsible', 'sustainable' or 'pro-poor'.¹⁹ Some of them have resisted tourism altogether - from the Masai in Africa, Aborigines in Australia, Native people in the United States to Mayans in Chiapas, Mexico (McLaren 2003; Johnston, 2007a). In March 2011, Nazareth, a small community of about 800 residents in the Colombian Amazon region, hit the international news as village elders had decided to say "No" to tourism that is not beneficial to the community and threatens their culture. Tourists wanting to visit the place, where Ticuna Indians - one of the most endangered ethnic groups in the world - make up 80% of the population, are now received by guards armed with their traditional sticks, ready to deter uninvited visitors (Muse, 2011). One of the Indigenous guards was quoted as saying: "What we earn here is very little. Tourists come here, they buy a few things, a few artisan goods, and they go. It is the travel agencies that make the good money." Some community members felt dismayed by tourists' intrusive behaviour. One villager said: "Tourists come and shove a camera in our faces. Imagine if you were sitting in your home and strangers came in and started taking photos of you. You wouldn't like it." (ibid)

Whether or not tourism benefits the majority of people or leads to impoverishment and disruption of communities is a question that ultimately needs to be settled by actual, concrete investigation of people's life experiences. Unfortunately, rarely are the voices of the poor and underprivileged really being heard in the world of tourism and development, despite the rhetoric of 'inclusiveness', 'participation' and 'empowerment'. The tourism critique that has been spearheaded by progressive civic groups, scholars and media people has been pushed into the domain of the 'underdogs' and is often rejected as

unqualified, unscholarly, polemic or 'anti-development'. A debate on the political economy of tourism that would contextualize local people's struggles for equity and social justice is almost non-existent²⁰. Tourism is all about politics, but as Hall aptly observed: "If one agrees with [Max] Weber's dictum that 'the essence of politics is struggle', then it can be safely stated that the vast majority of researchers in tourism have failed to detect it or have deliberately chosen to ignore it." (1996: 7)

Grassroots people have experienced ignorance and arrogance of power in abundance. The following example may illustrate this. At the regional meeting on community-based ecotourism in South-East Asia, an official event of the UN International Year of Ecotourism 2002, a young woman from the Indigenous community of Banaue in the Philippines read a Statement on behalf of participating local community representatives. Among other things, she said: "We are thankful to the researchers and scholars who did a very good research about us so that we finally found ourselves in the slides and on the screens for presentation. We would have been more grateful, however, if we were the ones given the chance and opportunity to talk and present our situations and experiences. The dynamics in this conference as we have witnessed is, to us, a concrete example of globalization in its microcosm. We were invited to participate. You told us we are equal partners and that you encourage community participation, and so we travelled from far-away places to talk with you, only to find out that conclusions ready to be imposed upon us have already been ironed out even before we arrived to this conference." (cit. in tim-team, 2008)

There should be something learned from Chilean economist, Manfred Max-Neef, the winner of the 1983 Right Livelihood Award and founder of 'Barefoot Economics', who shared his experience on poverty-related work: "Economists study and analyze poverty in their nice offices, have all the statistics, make all the models, and are convinced that they know everything that you can know about poverty. But they

don't understand poverty. And that's the big problem. And that's why poverty is still there." (Democracy Now! 2010) Being an economist from Berkeley University in the United States and teaching in Berkeley, Max-Neef realized when he was facing extreme poverty in Latin America that he had nothing coherent to say to the poor man. "My whole language as an economist... was absolutely useless. Should I tell him that he should be happy because the GDP had grown five per cent or something? Everything was absurd. So I discovered that I had no language in that environment and that we had to invent a new language." He eventually arrived at the conclusion that a completely new concept of economics was needed. This was the origin of 'barefoot economics' that Max-Neef defines as "the economics that an economist who dares to step into the mud must practise", an economics that is not just about free markets, capitalist growth and profitability, but also entails the notions of compassion and solidarity of people (ibid) – human qualities that are hardly found in the upper echelons of the tourism and development community.

Politicians and development experts, including those at the United Nations and the World Bank, know well that tourism – both conventional and new forms of tourism – is not a 'passport' to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Yet, no serious efforts are made to conduct a fundamental and systematic review of tourism development and in-depth studies on the critical issues, which is needed to develop credible, savvy, forward-looking, poverty-focused and environmentally sound policies. Instead, the movement advocating 'new tourism' – responsible, sustainable, pro-poor – creates a speculative reality that distracts and diverts attention from the real issues and initiates a great number of programmes and projects based on illusions.

As Max-Neef notes: "We are simply, dramatically stupid. We act systematically against the evidences we have. We know everything that should not be done. There's nobody that doesn't know that. Particularly

the big politicians know exactly what should not be done. Yet they do it" (Democracy Now! 2010).

Though it seems to be quite an impossible undertaking, the tourism debate must first be freed from speculative reality, duplicity and falsehood and brought down to the realities on the ground – the realities of the majority of people who live with and are affected by the tourism industry, before it can deliver something reasonable and responsible.

Clearly, international agencies, governments and all kinds of tourism interest groups that believe in and collectively work for continued global tourism growth under neoliberal regimes, despite the manifest evidence that such policies can only bring about tourism forms that perpetuate the prevalent structures of injustice and inequality, are not acting responsibly to the social whole. What is needed is not cosmetic change, but profound change.

Given the wide range of problems that need to be confronted in the context of globalization, tourism policies must be made part of a wider political debate on how to reform and improve the global economic frameworks and processes in a way that developing countries can effectively tackle their problems and bring about socially and environmentally sustainable development. A 'barefoot' and rights-based approach to development is particularly important; whether this will include tourism development or not needs to be decided according to local conditions and aspirations. In view of the many looming social and environmental crises, governments need to prioritize people's basic needs while ensuring their rights to work, to food, to clean water, health and sanitation and respect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, rather than spending scarce financial and human resources on an unstable and volatile industry such as tourism.

Endnotes

¹ *Dalit* is a self-designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as 'Untouchables'. *Dalits* are a mixed population of numerous lower caste groups all over South Asia. Most *Dalits* live in extreme poverty, do not own land and have no opportunities for better employment or education.

² Albeit reflecting the industry's typical growth-oriented approach, the WTTC in its 2003 policy statement 'Blueprint for New Tourism' emphasizes its commitment to "building New Tourism, helping to bring new benefits to a wider world" (2003: 2). To ensure "that travel and tourism works for everyone in the future", the WTTC calls on all tourism players to "cooperate in identifying opportunities for growth; focus on building Travel & Tourism that opens prospects for people – from employment to development; work together to remove impediments to growth – from infrastructure to pollution, and from outdated legislation to unmet health and security concerns" (ibid: 11).

³ An important tool in pro-poor tourism development is the value chain analysis (VCA). The typical value chain in tourism destinations is the combination of services that contribute to the delivery of the tourism product and experience – e.g. tour operators, accommodation, catering, entertainment and special interest activities and transport – which includes local operations at the formal and informal level. VCA allows taking a deeper look into economic flows within a tourism destination, and helps to identify shortcomings and pinpoint how the participation of poor and marginalized people can be improved. For example, local fruit and vegetable farmers can be linked to an international hotel chain, and handicraft producers can improve their design and market share (SNV, 2011).

4 Besides the UNWTO, the SCTD is currently composed of seven other agencies – the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Trade Centre (ITC), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO) (UNWTO 2011b).

5 According to UNEP's proposal, it was intended to register the GPST as a Type II UN Partnership on Sustainable Development and to make it a key element of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production to be developed and formally launched in the course of the 18th and 19th sessions of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) (UNEP 2010: 3).

6 The report also notes that a 'green investment scenario' will allow the tourism sector to significantly undercut the 'business-as-usual' scenario in terms of water consumption, energy use and carbon dioxide emissions. "This will result in potential avoided costs that can be reinvested in socially and environmentally local activities... increasing the indirect and induced effects of tourism expenditure on local development." (ibid: 438)

7 The reasons mentioned are the "lack of awareness of tourism as an export sector, the fragmented nature of the industry and low political influence, exaggerated concerns over 'leakages', misunderstandings over poverty alleviation and tourism, and the 'poker-playing' characteristic of trade negotiations" (Honeck, 2008: 2).

8 GATS is a multilateral agreement under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

⁹ Furthermore, the WTO report stresses that making GATS commitments does not necessarily mean total deregulation of countries' tourism industry. "Contrary to some commonly-held views, making GATS commitments does not require governments to surrender all policy choices, or to fully liberalize." (ibid: 27) In the context of the Doha Development Agenda, it is argued, LDCs will benefit as they "can request greater access to trading partners' markets in exchange, as well as gain valuable international attention and publicity" (ibid: 2).

¹⁰ The Open Letter states: "Through the creation of sustainable enterprises and decent jobs, Travel & Tourism provides the necessary security and stability for millions of people worldwide to build better lives. As a fast entry point into the workforce for young people and women, it provides crucial opportunities for fair income, social protection, gender equality, personal development and social inclusion." (ibid)

¹¹ Firstly, in contrast to the argument that tourism boosts revenue for the public sector through taxes and duties, the figures for Tanzania showed that for each tourist dollar, 40 cents went on imports, 40 cents to private hotels and businesses, and merely 20 cents were collected by the government in the form of taxes; there was little evidence that this public money was spent to improve social services for the poor such as health, sanitation or housing, according to the study. Secondly, the value of tourism as a job generator was put into question. Comparing an investment in tourism with an equivalent in a labour-intensive textile factory, it was found that around 20 times the number of new jobs would be created by investment in textiles rather than tourism (Lea, 1988).

¹² A Columbia University study entitled 'How not to count the poor' has found that the poverty-line set by the World Bank, which defines 'extreme poverty' as living on less than US\$1.25 per day, and 'moderate poverty' as less than US\$2 a day, is ill-defined and has led to "a large understatement of the extent of global income poverty and to an incorrect inference that it has declined" (cit. in Anup Shah, *Poverty Around The World*, 2.1.2011). According to the presently used measurement, 1.40 billion people or 20 per cent of the world population lived in extreme poverty in 2005, and there were 2.60 billion people or 40 per cent of the world population moderately poor. However, if the United States' poverty threshold of about US\$10 a day - instead of US\$1.25 - is used as a standard, the figures are much more alarming: the number of people living below the poverty line would be around 80 per cent of humanity, and 95 per cent of the people living in developing countries (ibid).

¹³ The UNWTO and the WTTC are using Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) - a system that has been developed to determine tourism's contribution to national economies by extending its role in all the industries involved in the production of goods and services demanded by visitors. There are concerns, however, that the faulty use of TSAs has led to a great exaggeration of the economic importance of tourism. TSAs need to be subjected to critical analysis as they are likely to serve as a tool to boost tourism's legitimacy and credibility in the minds of decision-makers, rather than help to fill knowledge gaps on the industry's real economic performance (Lew, 2008).

¹⁴ A 2008 report jointly produced by the UK-based New Economics Foundation (NEF) and the World Development Movement (WDM) questions the effectiveness of economic growth as a means to achieve poverty reduction. Among other things, it reveals that between 1990 and 2001, "for every US\$100 worth of growth in the world's income per person, merely 60 cents found its target and contributed to reducing poverty below the US\$1-a-day line. To achieve every single dollar

of poverty reduction therefore requires US\$166 of additional global production and consumption, with all its associated environmental impacts.” (NEF and WDM, 2008: 28)

¹⁵ For most countries, there are no data on ‘leakages’ available at all. The World Bank estimates an average leakage level of 55% for developing countries. According to UNCTAD and UNEP reports, leakages can in some LDCs and remote small island states amount to more than 80% (Pleumarom 2009b). Under the banner of pro-poor tourism, however, Mitchell and Ashley suggested in an Overseas Development Institute (ODI) opinion paper that tourism critics emphasizing the issue of ‘leakages’ used “muddled thinking and poor arithmetic” (2007). They claimed that these “distorted ‘leakage’ figures were likely to panic decision makers into thinking that tourism is a worse alternative than other, less good, options”. They suggested the leakages were “not such a nightmare after all” as the host economy may not be “entitled to all of the revenue of the global value chain between source and destination market and claimed discussions on leakages can be unhelpful to policy makers trying to improve the impact of tourism on the poor” (ibid).

¹⁶ Already in the 1970s, Turner and Ash observed: “In general, tourism kills agriculture stone dead. It does this by luring away the labour force and by turning farmers into property speculators.” (1975: 122)

¹⁷ Geoffrey Lipman, Director greenearth.travel and Adviser to the UNWTO Secretary General, declared at the Gothenburg Symposium that “the Green Economy is the global strategic response to economic recession; the war on poverty and above all climate change” and that tourism had a ‘key role to play in this ‘dramatic, long-term transformation’ of the world’s economy (Lipman, 2009). He summarized the ‘solutions’ as follows: “reduce dependence on dirty energy from hell – coal & oil: replace it by clean energy from heaven – wind: sun:

good bio-fuel; tidal and nuclear: link info-tech and eco-tech to support the zillions of daily green actions, spur innovation and manage the change: significantly support the poor developing and emerging countries/ communities with technology transfer and finance needed to keep them in the game and build a base of biodiversity conservation, which is fundamental for a healthy planet" (ibid.). Acknowledging that the travel and tourism industry is a major climate polluter and a key component, namely air transport, a magnet for criticism, Lipman said: "We [the industry] are inevitably going to double in size every decade. So we have to fix our carbon habit. That means big change - clean low carbon transport: climate proofed accommodation, efficient energy, waste and water: green ground services, millions of redefined and trained green jobs: radically changing consumer habits: multimedia focus and support and incentives/penalties." (ibid)

¹⁸ According to Fernandes and Romo, energy consumption levels are clearly linked to level of luxury: e.g. a one-star Accor hotel consumes 157kWh per m² per year; a two-star hotel shows an increase of 46%, and four-star hotels rise to 380 kWh per m² per year – or an increase of 142% over a one-star facility (2009: 3).

¹⁹ On tourism-related grassroots struggles, see for example the websites of the following civil society organizations and networks: the Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team, Thailand <http://www.twinside.org.sg/tour.htm>, India-based Equations <http://www.equitabletourism.org/>, the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism <http://www.ecotonline.org/>, Tourism Concern, UK <http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/>

²⁰ It is important to note that consumers are usually also very poorly informed about the realities and struggles surrounding tourism. A prime concern of the industry is to ensure consumer confidence and to keep people in the belief that tourism can only be benign and desirable. In the context of the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, Pam

Muckosy of the ODI's tourism programme appeared in a video clip and enthusiastically answered the Davos Question on how to make the world a better place: "Fight poverty by going on a holiday in a developing country...ODI research in Africa and Asia shows that in best cases the poor capture between a fifth and one third of total tourism turnover in a destination...tour operators, hoteliers, governments and tourists can take some very simple and practical steps to enhance the pro-poor tourism impacts of a destination without having to cut back on the fun" (Muckosy, 2008). To appeal to potential tourists, the notion of "travellers' power" is invoked. According to Fuchs of the German church-based Tourism Watch group, to be a responsible tourist does not "necessarily mean less comfort – to the contrary: concern and respect for a foreign culture enhances travel experiences. What ultimately matters is the attitude of the individual traveller" (Fuchs, 2010: 281). But can consumers behave and act in a sophisticated and responsible way if they are mainly given fragmented, distorted and simplistic information about the nature of the tourism industry and its impacts? And how can they make an informed decision, for example, whether new forms of tourism on offer – such as pro-poor tourism, charity tourism and voluntourism – are really responsible and ethical options or simply represent attempts to commodify poverty and misery in developing countries for profit purposes? (Hutnik, 1996; Selinger and Outtersen, 2009).

References

- Ashley, C., Bennet, O. and Roe, D. (1999) *Sustainable tourism and poverty elimination study*. A report for the Department for International Development. http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/dfid_report.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Ashley, C., Roe, D. and Goodwin, H. (2001) *Pro-poor tourism strategies: Making tourism work for the poor. A review of experience*. Pro-Poor Tourism Report No.1, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and Centre for Responsible Tourism (CRT), http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/ppt_report.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Bolwell, D. and Weinz W. (2008) Reducing poverty through tourism. Working paper. International Labour Organization, Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/tourism/wp266.pdf> (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Chavez, R. (2007) *Non-traditional sustainable tourism and poverty reduction*. World Bank discussion paper. 19 March. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLACREGTOPSUSTOU/Resources/StrategyPaperSustainabletourism507.pdf> (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- Chinmaneevong, C (2011) Anything that can go wrong... *Bangkok Post Mid-year Economic Review*, 1 July.
- Crick, M. (1989) Representations of international tourism in the social sciences: Sun, sex, sights, savings, and servility. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, No.18, pp. 307-344.

De Kadt, E. (ed.) (1979) *Tourism: passport to development? Perspectives on the social and cultural effects of tourism in developing countries*. Published for the World Bank and UNESCO, Oxford University Press, New York.

Democracy Now! (2010) Chilean Economist Manfred Max-Neef on Barefoot Economics, Poverty and Why The US is Becoming an 'Underdeveloping Nation'. Transcript of an interview with Manfred Max-Neef on 26 November. http://www.democracynow.org/2010/11/26/chilean_economist_manfred_max_neef_on (Accessed 1 July 2011).

Doherty, B. (2010) Angkor butterfly hunters tell of poverty amid tourist wealth, *The Guardian*, 27 September.

Equations, Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism, EED-Tourism Watch, Arbeitskreis Tourismus und Entwicklung (2004) *Who really benefits from tourism?* Statement of Concern of the Tourism Interventions Group at the 4th World Social Forum in Mumbai, India, 16-21 January 2004.

Equations (2008a) *Sustainability in tourism – a rural tourism model. A review report*. UNDP India and Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (MoT-GoI), New Delhi, India. http://www.equitabletourism.org/stage/files/fileDocuments913_uid15.pdf (Accessed 20 June 2011).

Equations (2008b) Community-based rural tourism in developing countries: Insights and lessons from the Endogenous Tourism Project in India. In: UNDP India and MoT-GoI, *Redefining tourism – Experiences and insights from rural tourism projects in India*, New Delhi, India, pp. 2-15.

- ETC (European Travel Commission) (2009) *Gothenburg Symposium on Tourism in the Green Economy*. Final Report, September. http://www.etc-corporate.org/resources/uploads/20091030_Symposium_FinalReport.pdf (Accessed 20 September 2011).
- Fernandes, E. and Romo, Z. (2009) Innovative approaches for tourism's energy challenge. *En Breve*, World Bank Responsible Tourism Series, No.147, August.
- Forest Peoples (2011) *Manaus Declaration: Indigenous Peoples en route to the Rio + 20 conference*, Global Preparatory Meeting of Indigenous Peoples on Rio + 20 and Karioca 2, Manaus, Brazil, 22-24 August 2011 <http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/environmental-governance/publication/2011/manaus-declaration-indigenous-peoples-route-rio-20-> (Accessed 20 September 2011).
- Forsythe, K. (2011) IATA director general challenges EU ETS, *Air Cargo World*, 27 September. <http://www.aircargoworld.com/Air-Cargo-News/2011/09/iata-director-general-challenges-eu-ets/272281> (Accessed 20 September 2011).
- Fuchs, H. (2010) Corporate Social Responsibility - Responsible tourism. *Development and Cooperation (D+C)*, No. 7-8, pp. 278 – 281.
- Hall, C.M. (1996) *Tourism and politics: Policy, power and place*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, West Sussex, 2nd edition.
- Hall, C.M. (ed.) (2007) *Pro-poor tourism: Who benefits? Perspectives on tourism and poverty reduction*, Channel View Publications, Bristol.

- Hawkins, D.E. and Mann, S. (2007). The World Bank's role in tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 348-363.
- Honeck, D. (2008) *LDC poverty alleviation agenda and the Doha development agenda: Is tourism being neglected?* World Trade Organization (WTO) Staff Working Paper ERSD-2008-03, Geneva, Switzerland. http://www.mdg-trade.org/ersd200803_e.pdf (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- Hutnik, J. (1996) *The rumour of Calcutta: Tourism, charity and the poverty of representation*. Zed, London.
- IFC (International Finance Corporation) *Tourism: Enhancing economic growth in emerging markets*. http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/gms.nsf/content/Tourism_Overview (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- ISCST (International Support Centre for Sustainable Tourism) (2004) Joint NGOs Statement on Tourism to the CBD COP7, Working Group 1, Agenda Item 19.7, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 17 February.
- ITC (International Trade Centre) (2009) *Tourism-led Poverty Reduction Programme (TPRP) Programme proposal*. Geneva, <http://www.intracen.org/exporters/tourism/> (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- Jamieson, W., Goodwin, H. and Edmunds, C. (2004) *Contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation – pro-poor tourism and the challenge of measuring impacts*. Prepared for the Transport Policy and Tourism Section of UN-ESCAP. November. <http://haroldgoodwin.info/resources/povertyalleviation.pdf> (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Johnston, A.M. (2007a) *Is the sacred for sale? Tourism and Indigenous Peoples*. Earthscan, London, UK, 2nd edition.

- Johnston, A.M. (2007b) Tourism, biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples: New invitations for social change. *Third World Resurgence*, No. 207-208, December, pp. 34-36.
- Jones, A. and Phillips, M. (eds.) (2011) *Disappearing destinations: Climate change and future challenges for coastal tourism*. CABI, Walingford/Oxfordshire, UK.
- Kalani, N. (2011) Hawaii house speaker tired of 'band-aid approach' to fixing deficit. Honolulu Civil Beat, 15 March.
- Kamuaro, Ole (1996) Ecotourism: Suicide or Development? Voices from Africa, Sustainable Development, Issue No. 6, pp. 59-65. <http://www.unsystem.org/ngls/documents/publications.en/voices.africa/number6/vfa6.12.htm> (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- Kerala Tourism (2008) Kerala Declaration on Responsible Tourism, 24 March. <http://www.responsibletourism2008.org/keraladeclaration.php> (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Kim, N. and Campbell, S. (2009) *Stay another day – Cambodia 2009-2010: Promoting sustainable tourism*, Economics Today in cooperation with the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Khor, M. (2011) Challenges of the green economy concept and policies in the context of sustainable development, poverty and equity. In: UN-DESA (Division for Sustainable Development), UNEP and UNCTAD. *Report by Panel of Experts on the transition to a green economy: benefits, challenges and risks from a sustainable development perspective*. http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Green%20Economy_full%20report%20final%20for%20posting%20clean.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).

KTW (Kerala Tourism Watch) (2006) Against WTTC Destination Award <http://www.keralatourismwatch.org/taxonomy/term/4> (Accessed 1 July 2011).

KTW (2008a) Media Release on 'Irresponsible Tourism Convention', Kochi, India, 22 March. <http://www.keralatourismwatch.org/node/45> (Accessed 1 July 2011).

KTW (2008b) Kerala Declaration on Irresponsible Tourism, Kochi, India, 22 March. <http://www.keralatourismwatch.org/node/51> (Accessed 1 July 2011).

Lea, J. (1988) *Tourism and development in the Third World*. Routledge, London/ New York.

Lew, A.A. (2008) On the use and abuse of Tourism Satellite Accounts. 5 May. <http://tourismplace.blogspot.com/2008/05/on-use-and-abuse-of-tourism-satellite.html> (Accessed 15 July 2011).

Lipman, G. (2009) Travel & Tourism in the Green Economy, Gothenberg 14 September 2009 <http://www.greenearth.travel/green-economy/item/3-travel-tourism-in-the-green-economy.html> (Accessed 20 September 2011).

Lipman, G. (2011) Call to rethink travel and tourism education for the green growth era, eTurbo News, 23 February. <http://www.eturbonews.com/21337/call-rethink-travel-and-tourism-education-green-growth-era> (Accessed 10 July 2011).

McLaren, D. (2003) *Rethinking tourism and ecotravel*. Kumarin Press, Bloomfield, USA, 2nd edition.

- Mitchell, J. and Ashley, C. (2007) '*Leakage*' claims: muddled thinking and bad for policy? Overseas Development Institute (ODI), June. <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/85.pdf> (Accessed 15 July 2011).
- Mowforth, M. and Munt, I. (2003) *Tourism and sustainability: Development and new tourism in the Third World*. Routledge, London and New York, 2nd edition.
- Mowforth, M., Charlton, C. and Munt, I. (2008) *Tourism and responsibility: Perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean*. Routledge, London and New York.
- Muckosy, P. (2008) The Davos question: Fight poverty by going on holiday in a developing country. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TiOO78iT0w> (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Muse, T. (2011) Amazon town bans tourists. *The Guardian*, 25 March.
- NEF (New Economics Foundation) and WDM (World Development Movement) (2008) *Plane truths: do the economic arguments for aviation growth really fly?* London. http://files.uniteddiversity.com/Climate_Change/Plane_Truths.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Peou, K. and Lipes, J. (2010) Little profit despite tourism growth. *Radio Free Asia*, 14 November.
- Pesek, W. (2011) Bubbles galore will make 2011 year to remember. *Bloomberg News*, 5 January.
- Pleumarom, A. (1990) Alternative tourism: a viable solution? *Contours*, Vol. 4, No. 8, December, pp. 12-15.

- Pleumarom, A. (1994) The political economy of tourism. *The Ecologist*, Vol. 24, No. 4, August, pp. 142-148.
- Pleumarom, A. (1995) Sport versus environment: A case study on golf in Thailand. *World Leisure & Recreation*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 32-37.
- Pleumarom, A. (1999) Tourism, globalization and sustainable development. *Third World Resurgence*, No. 103, March, pp. 4-7.
- Pleumarom, A. (2003) *Our world is not for sale! The disturbing implications of privatization in the tourism trade*. Paper presented at the International Seminar on 'Tourism: Unfair Practices – Equitable Options', 8-9 December 2003, Hannover, Germany, hosted by DANTE/ the Network for Sustainable Tourism Development.
- Pleumarom, A. (2007) Does tourism benefit the Third World? *Third World Resurgence*, No. 207-208, December, pp. 10-12.
- Pleumarom, A. (2008) Golf courses and food production in Thailand, *TWN-Features #3361*, Third World Network, Penang, Malaysia, December.
- Pleumarom, A. (2009a) Asian tourism: Green and responsible? In: Leslie, D. (ed.) *Tourism Enterprises and Sustainable Development – International Perspectives on Responses to the Sustainability Agenda*, Routledge, New York, London: pp. 36-54.
- Pleumarom, A. (2009b) *Change tourism, not climate!* TWN Climate Change Series No.3, Third World Network, Penang, Malaysia.
- Pleumarom, A. (2010) Tourism industry threatens the world's water. *tim-team Clearinghouse*, 22 November.

PPT (Pro-Poor Tourism) Partnership (2004) *Tourism and poverty reduction – making the links*. Sheet No. 3. http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/info_sheets/3%20info%20sheet.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).

PPT Partnership (2011) <http://www.propoortourism.org.uk/> (Accessed 15 May 2011).

Quintos, P. (2011) Green economy: A critical CSO perspective. In: Asia-Pacific Research Network (APRN), Reality of Aid Asia-Pacific (ROA-AP) and Ibon International. *Promoting a transformative agenda for sustainable development – A regional conference on development models and CSO strategizing session on Rio+20*. Proceedings and outcomes of the conference, held in Bangkok/ Thailand, 15-17 August 2011, pp.11-13.

Schilcher, D. (2007) Growth versus equity: the continuum of pro-poor tourism and neoliberal governance. In: Hall, C.M. (ed.) *Pro-poor tourism: who benefits? Perspectives on tourism and poverty reduction*, Channel View Publications, Bristol, pp. 56-83.

Selinger, E. and Outtersson, K. (2009) *The ethics of poverty tourism*. Boston University School of Law Working Paper No. 09-29, 2 June. <http://www.bu.edu/law/faculty/scholarship/workingpapers/documents/SelingerEOutterssonK06-02-09.pdf> (Accessed 15 May 2011).

Shah, A. (2010) Water and development, 6 June. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/601/water-and-development> (Accessed 15 May 2011).

Shah, A. (2011) Poverty around the world, 2 January. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/4/poverty-around-the-world> (Accessed 15 May 2011).

- SNV (Netherlands Development Organization) (2011) Improving lives with responsible tourism. <http://www.snvworld.org/en/ourwork/Pages/tourism.aspx> (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- Thomas, J. (2011) RIO+20: Toward a new green economy – or a green-washed old economy? <http://www.grist.org/climate-policy/2011-03-24-rio-20-toward-a-new-green-economy-or-a-green-washed-old-economy> (Accessed 1 October 2011).
- tim-team (Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team) (2002) Campaign on the International Year of Ecotourism. <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/iye.htm> (Accessed 15 July 2011).
- tim-team (2007) 2007 World Tourism Day theme under debate, *tim-team Clearinghouse*, 27 September.
- tim-team (2008) Convention on ‘Irresponsible Tourism’ in Kerala, *tim-team Clearinghouse*, 22 March.
- tim-team (2009) Change is needed in tourism! *tim-team Clearinghouse*, 16 February.
- Tourism Concern (2011) Water equity in tourism. <http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk/index.php?page=water-equity> (Accessed 15 July 2011).
- Treerutkuarkul, A. (2010) Medical hub strategy ‘will hurt hospitals’, *Bangkok Post*, 31 October.
- Turner, L. and Ash, J. (1975) The golden hordes: *International tourism and the pleasure periphery*. Constable, London, UK.

UNCSD (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development) (2010) Statement of Indigenous Peoples, 18 May 2010, 1st Preparatory Committee Meeting of the UNCSD on 'A Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development' http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Indigenous_peoples.pdf (Accessed 1 October 2011).

UNCSD (2011) Highlights of side events. 2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting of the UNCSD, New York, 7-8 March. <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Prepcom2-Side-Events-Highlights.pdf> (Accessed 1 October 2011).

UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) (2010a) *Contribution of tourism to trade and development*. Note by the UNCTAD Secretariat, Geneva. http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/cid8_en.pdf (Accessed 1 July 2011).

UNCTAD (2010b) *Meeting report prepared for the international high-level meeting of experts on sustainable tourism for development in the least developed countries, Caen, France, 12-14 October 2010*. UNCTAD Event in the context of the preparatory process of UNLDC-IV, UNCTAD/ALDC/2010/3, Geneva. http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/aldc20103_en.pdf (Accessed 1 July 2011).

UNCTAD (2011) *UN Agencies commit to make tourism work for development*. Press Release UNCTAD/Press/PR/2011/019, Istanbul, 12 May. <http://www.unctad.org/templates/webflyer.asp?docid=14945&intlItemID=1634&lang=1> (Accessed 1 July 2011).

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2011a) The Millennium Development Goals - Eight Goals for 2015. <http://www.beta.undp.org/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html> (Accessed 15 May 2011).

UNDP (2011b) *Tourism and poverty reduction strategies in the integrated framework for least developed countries*. Discussion paper, Geneva, April.

UN DPI (United Nations Department of Public Information) (2011) *Sustainable societies: Responsive citizens*. Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/ NGO Conference, Chair's Text, Bonn, Germany, 3-5 September 2011. <http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/ngoconference/shared/Documents/Final%20Declaration/Chair%27s%20Text.pdf> (Accessed 7 October 2011).

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) (2010) *Project Concept: The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism - "Transforming tourism worldwide"*. http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/activities/partnership/Documents/2010mrc19-UN-partnership-on-sustainable%20tourism_concept-paper.pdf (Accessed 10 June 2011).

UNEP (2011) *UNEP towards a green economy: Pathways to sustainable development and poverty eradication*. See particularly Chapter 10, prepared in partnership with the UNWTO: 'Tourism: Investing in energy and resource efficiency', pp. 410-447. www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/.../ger/GER_11_Tourism.pdf (Accessed 10 June 2011).

UN-ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) (2005) *The contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation*. ESCAP Tourism Review No. 25, Bangkok, Thailand. http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/Publications/TPTS_pubs/Toreview_No25_2380/Toreview_No25_2380_fulltext.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).

- UN-ESCAP (2007) *Tourism and the Millennium Development Goals*. In: UN-ESCAP, *Study on the role of tourism in socio-economic development*. Bangkok, Thailand, pp. 74-83. http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/Publications/TPTS_pubs/pub_2478/pub_2478_ch6.pdf (Accessed 15 May 2011).
- UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) (2009) *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June.
- UNWTO (2010) *Tourism and the Millennium Development Goals*. Madrid, Spain <http://www.unwto.org/tourism&mdgsezine/> (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- UNWTO (2011a) UNWTO/WTTC Leaders for Tourism Campaign. <http://leadersfortourism.unwto.org/en> (Accessed 1 July 2011).
- UNWTO (2011b), Joint Tourism Special Event: Promoting tourism for sustainable development and poverty reduction, 4th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), Istanbul, 10 May. <http://unwto.org/en/event/promoting-tourism-sustainable-development-and-poverty-reduction#SCTD> (Accessed 10 July 2011).
- UNWTO (2011c) Journey to Rio+20 – tourism for growth & development. <http://relations.unwto.org/en/content/journey-rio20-tourism-growth-development> (Accessed 20 September 2011).
- UNWTO, ETC and Visit Sweden (2009) *Travel and Tourism in the Green Economy Symposium Conclusions*, Gothenburg, Sweden, 14-15 September. http://destinet.eu/topics/climate-change/etcunwto-symposium-tourism-travel-green-economy/Gothenburg_Symposium_Conclusions_FINAL.pdf (Accessed 20 September 2011).

UNWTO ST-EP Foundation, *Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty*
<http://unwtostep.org/> (Accessed 15 May 2011).

UNWTO and UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) (2011) *Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010. Preliminary Findings*. http://www2.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/folleto_global_report_on_women_in_tourism-corregido.pdf (Accessed 10 July 2011).

Vijay, N.M. (2007) Medical tourism – Subsidizing health care for developed countries. *Third World Resurgence*, No. 207-208, December, pp. 39-40.

Williams, A. (2007) Buying into the green movement, *New York Times*, 1 July.

WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) (2003) *Blueprint for new tourism*. http://www.wttc.org/bin/pdf/original_pdf_file/blueprintfnt03.pdf (Accessed 1 July 2011).

Titles in the TWN Environment & Development Series

- No. 1 Globalisation & The Crisis of Sustainable Development *by Martin Khor (68 pages)*
- No. 2 International Environmental Governance: Some Issues from a Developing Country Perspective *by Third World Network (40 pages)*
- No. 3 Mekong Tourism – Model or Mockery?: A Case Study on ‘Sustainable Tourism’ *by Anita Pleumarom (52 pages)*
- No. 4 The Tigray Experience – A Success Story in Sustainable Agriculture *by Hailu Araya and Sue Edwards (52 pages)*
- No. 5 Putting Farmers First in Sustainable Agriculture Practices *by Hira Jhamtani (32 pages)*
- No. 6 Enduring Farms: Climate Change, Smallholders and Traditional Farming Communities *by Miguel A Altieri and Parviz Koohafkan (72 pages)*
- No. 7 Small Farms as a Planetary Ecological Asset: Five Key Reasons Why We Should Support the Revitalisation of Small Farms in the Global South *by Miguel A Altieri (24 pages)*
- No. 8 The Food Crisis, Climate Change and the Importance of Sustainable Agriculture *by Martin Khor (24 pages)*
- No. 9 The Case for Sustainable Agriculture: Meeting Productivity and Climate Challenges *by Lim Li Ching (32 pages)*
- No. 10 The Impact of Compost Use on Crop Yields in Tigray, Ethiopia, 2000-2006 inclusive *by Sue Edwards, Arefayne Asmelash, Hailu Araya and Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher (32 pages)*

- No. 11 Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change through Ecological Agriculture *by Lim Li Ching (24 pages)*
- No. 12 The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development: An Assessment *by Chee Yoke Ling (72 pages)*
- No. 13 Reaffirming the Environment-Development Nexus of UNCED 1992 *by Martin Khor (40 pages)*
- No. 14 Ecological Agriculture, Climate Resilience and a Roadmap to Get There *by Doreen Stabinsky and Lim Li Ching (48 pages)*
- No. 15 The Rwenzori Experience - The Farmer Family Learning Group Approach to Human and Social Capital Building, Environmental Care and Food Sovereignty *by Mette Vaarst, Jane Nalunga, Thaddeo Tibasiima, Aage Dissing and Inge Lis Dissing (64 pages)*
- No. 16 Financialisation, Biodiversity Conservation and Equity: Some Currents and Concerns *by Sian Sullivan (40 pages)*
- No. 17 The Politics of Tourism, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development *by Anita Pleumarom (80 pages)*

THE POLITICS OF TOURISM, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This paper gives an overview of the work that has been done in the field of tourism, sustainable development and poverty reduction and highlights major policy statements of agencies promoting 'responsible', 'sustainable' and 'pro-poor tourism'.

After providing a brief outline of the historical controversy of tourism as development, it discusses various aspects that play a crucial role in the tourism debate with a focus on poverty and sustainable development: e.g. economic performance, livelihoods, land and natural resources, food security, environmental sustainability, climate change, and the role of women. It also takes a critical look at the new concept of tourism and 'Green Economy', as the latter has been included as a key item on the agenda of *Rio+20*, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012).

The key message of this paper is that all discourses and initiatives on sustainable pro-poor tourism are of little value unless the realities on the ground and the voices of local people are fully taken into account. It is also vital to make tourism part of a wider political debate on how to effectively tackle the root causes of poverty, inequality and problems of environmental degradation and climate change in the context of globalization.

ANITA PLEUMAROM is a geographer and political scientist trained at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. She currently coordinates the Bangkok-based Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team (tim-team) and is editor of the news bulletin South-East Asia Tourism Monitor. She has also published in Thailand and internationally numerous articles on tourism in the developing world, sustainable and ecotourism, and climate change as related to tourism. Her organization tim-team is part of a wider network of non-governmental and grassroots organizations working for social and ecological justice and human rights in South-East Asia and beyond.

TWN ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT SERIES

is a series of papers published by Third World Network on the increasing challenges to the relationship between the environment and development, in particular those posed by the process of globalization, liberalization and new technologies. It aims to advance a Third World perspective of analyses, strategies and proposals for reforms of policy, practice and institutions, at both the international and national levels – towards greater social justice, equity and ecological sustainability.

ISBN 978-967-5412-71-4

