

Forum: General Assembly Second Committee

Issue: Maintaining Sustainable Tourism Industries in LEDCs

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Introduction

Tourism in modern day acts as one of the world's fastest growing industries with an annual growth of 5%. International travelling is growing day by day as the expenses of international travel doubled since 2006 with a 25% growth of market between 1995 and 2005. A recent research report shows that tourism is behind 10% of all of the world's economic activity. The potential within this market is widely recognized and if manipulated successfully, it can no doubt generate mass amounts of income for Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) as well as creating jobs for local citizens to have a stable income. Cultural exchange from foreign nations plays a key role for the diplomatic aspect of the nation in order to become more culturally connected with other countries. Annually, billions of dollars are exchanged throughout the year and is now ranked 6th by its economic role.



The ruins of the imperial complex located in Baiae from the era of the Roman Republic,

Romans sustainable tourism destination

On September 25th of 2015, world leaders came together and adopted a set of goals known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for the next 15 years. They include goals such as: no poverty, zero hunger, quality education and etc. As there are 11 African nations that have an above 40% of citizens living in extreme poverty, Africa has been widely considered to be the poorest continent in the world. Tourism is considered to be one of the most important elements of a country's economy, using a nation's culture in exchange for wealth has been adopted by many nations to make up a large section of their economy. The World Travel and Tourism Council has reported that in 2016, 10.2% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita will be comprised of tourism. Many African nations' tourism industries are purely powered by sustainable tourism; this shows how powerless these nations can be in

front of traditional commercial tourism and the dire need of successfully promoted sustainable tourism to support their economy and bring more people out of extreme poverty.

The advantages these nations have but haven't fully recognized are that the lack of urbanization reduces pop culture influences and keeps a fresh traditional culture that attracts many people from around the world. There are several examples of nations, mainly LEDCs, which rely on sustainable tourism to support their economy. In the statistics, top 10 countries ranked on tourism's dependence on GDP are all LEDCs, with Macau about 46.7%, British Virgin Island about 27.1%, and Aruba about 26.5%. South Africa, Costa Rica, India and Ethiopia are also examples of nations that built their tourism industries based on sustainable tourism and generated wealth and contributed much to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along with stabilizing income for many families.

The purpose of promoting sustainable tourism in these countries, which has popular sustainable tourism destinations, is to maximize the wealth earned and support the local economy's structure. This will allow many poor nations to walk out of poverty with the help of the international society and the improvement of the eco-tourism infrastructure of the nation.

Definition of Key Terms

Less Economically Developed Countries

Countries that, according to the United Nations, exhibit the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development, with the lowest Human Development Index ratings of all countries in the world.

Sustainable tourism

A tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that involves tourists visiting uncivilized regions of earth, undisturbed natural areas, focusing on the biotic aspect of tourism and any forms of tourism that involves its natural surroundings. The biotic aspect of ecotourism specifically includes observing wildlife and minimizing human impact upon ecosystems. Ecotourism is greatly beneficial for the well being and wealth of local people since ecotourism requires financial support to the local economy in many different ways.

Extreme Poverty

The people who needs to live on or less than US\$1.9 per day as defined by the World Bank (TWB). In 2013, 10.7% of the world's population is living in extreme poverty. In Sub-Saharan Africa, a recorded 389 million people are living in extreme poverty by 2013.

Human-wildlife Conflict

A major problem between humans and the environment. Human-wildlife conflict is the negative effect generated by the interactions between humans and wildlife on the human social, economic and cultural infrastructures. These may include damaged resources for human, people's living standards, and animals and their habitat. The effects of human-wildlife conflict include mass habitats lost for animals, animal deaths, food chain disruption and climate change.

General Overview

Throughout history, tourism has always been relevant, as we have always been interested in distant sections of the world. Through tourism, we started to understand each other and learned to celebrate our diversity, creating our world and society. People travel for cultural exchange, leisure, and knowledge, and tourism is creating more international bonds between the global communities and shaping our society into a more international community. Tourism, therefore, creates numerous effects, such as socioeconomic and environmental.

Leisure travelling

Leisure travelling is currently the most popular form of tourism. It is extremely common, as the contemporary people are always under pressure; leisure travelling is one of the most common ways to release such stress. Leisure travelling is tied to the Industrial Revolution as machinery can be used to assist with constructions of resorts, transportation, production of necessities and others. This allowed the middle class citizens to enjoy relatively luxury travelling as well. In 1758, the first general leisure travelling company Cox & Kings was founded. Leisure travelling is greatly tied with commercialism from tourists, thus creating mass commercial tourism. Leisure tourism strongly depends on the individual's taste in travel, which means that sustainable tourism is an element of leisure tourism if an individual enjoys interactions with the nature.

Socioeconomic benefits of sustainable tourism on LEDCs

The remarkable socioeconomic benefits affect LEDCs and Third World Nations in a larger scale. By encouraging or maintaining sustainable ecotourism attractions, LEDCs can attract more international tourists from More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs). These tourists will purchase local goods, generating wealth for the local citizens to improve their community, thus improving living standards. Furthermore, LEDCS usually do not have a large industrial sector, which causes unstable income and high unemployment rates. Development in sustainable tourism creates job opportunity, as more people set up micro businesses and generate stable income. This is crucial for eliminating poverty, as people receive a chance to earn more profit, which can be spent on necessary commodities. Finally, sustainable tourism in LEDCs greatly motivates people to work hard to protect both the physical and manmade features due to the immense economic benefits they generate.

Environmental benefits of sustainable tourism on LEDCs

Another crucial aspect of sustainable tourism is its environmental benefits. The issues of poaching animals to create luxury products and the existence of black markets have always been serious problems for numerous countries. The main cause of this issue is that poachers are unable to earn a stable income, forcing them to depend on such illicit actions. The development of sustainable tourism allows people to depend their income on the preservation of the environment. This not only decreases any future illicit actions but also effectively preserves the local environment. Preserving the environment and limiting human-wildlife conflict, such as urbanization, animal decimation, habitat destruction, and deforestation will greatly benefit the environment.

Problems raised

Sustainable tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism industry in the world, with many people seeing the benefits of this new way of traveling, but many problems are raised. Sustainable tourism is not universally defined. People from different interest groups have very contrasting definitions of the term sustainable tourism to their own benefits towards these issues: biodiversity interaction limitations, local community involvement and benefits, environmental issues and solutions, and more. The definition differences cause fundamental misunderstanding and problems towards the issue itself. Also, the fundamental understanding of sustainable tourism is still debatable between various interest groups. Some people believe that sustainable tourism is extremely centered around the consumer, whereas many others believes that sustainable tourism is based on protecting the environment. Therefore, a balance is needed between these two types of interest to resolve the conflict between different definitions. In addition, the development of sustainable tourism itself may seem ironic, as this process itself causes environmental hazards through industrialization and urbanization. Although the goal of

sustainable tourism is to be educational and eco-friendly, the development can go against the main principles. In some cases, industrial development may name itself sustainable to attract tourists, while damaging the environment. Other issues include displaced peoples, losing cultures, negative impact on local society and so on.

Case studies

There are many successful examples of nations using sustainable tourism to generate economic benefits and to exchange cultural traditions. For example, India has already established its first official and planned sustainable tourism destination known as Thenmala few years ago and is gaining great profit. Travelers are satisfied with the quality of the sites and what it has to offer. Many nations set examples for the creation of sustainable tourism and help bringing this important issue to the UN's attention. Now, by encouraging other nations to follow their footsteps, these countries can promote socioeconomic development while earning more international recognition.

South Africa

South Africa is one of the most important nations involved in this issue, as South Africa has had major socioeconomic, environmental breakthroughs in recent years with the help of ecotourism. This makes South Africa one of the most successful examples of well-established sustainable tourism infrastructures. South Africa had major problems with poverty eradication: when the UN millennium goals were set in 2000, 32.3% of the nations population was already living in extreme poverty. But in recent years, South Africa has discovered its potential in sustainable tourism, as South Africa is the seventh most bio-diverse nation in the world. 10% of all plant species on earth are found in South Africa with more than 1,200,000 km² of its land covered with plants and animal habitats. When South Africa decided to adopt government supervised programs of sustainable tourism destinations developments, it created extremely positive effects, such as: profit for interest groups and organizations, more money circulating between the government and local community, more jobs created. The World Wildlife Fund commented on the success of the projects: "Generator of jobs, income and overall live hood." The southeast edge of South Africa is a section of land known as Eastern Cape with a large percentage of unemployed individuals living in poverty. The South African government saw the potential in the area and started numerous projects to support the local economy by developing ecotourism. Now, Eastern Cape is one of the most well known sections of South Africa creating over 5,000 jobs annually by 2007 and earning millions of dollars. The establishment of Port Elizabeth, Addo Elephant National Park, Tsitsikamma National Park and Jeffreys Bay are all popular travel destinations in Eastern Cape, successfully leading people out of poverty and protecting the environment. Kruger National Park is one of the largest and most famous national park in South Africa; in 2002, it attracted 1 million tourists annually with 60,000 jobs within the park. Kruger National Park was a huge success and led many other countries to consider developing sustainable tourism.

Poaching was quite a serious issue in South Africa before the establishment of these projects as many animals, mainly rhinos, were poached and sold internationally. With approximately 20,000 rhinos killed each year, South Africa is one of the countries that are dominated by trading in illicit products. But as more and more sustainable tourism projects were established, the amount of illicit trade of animal products had decreased significantly as the poachers joined the tourism industry. The successful projects showed both the locals and global citizens how beneficial ecotourism is. By 2011, South Africa only has around 16% of its population in extreme poverty. By 2017, South Africa has become the most successful nation to develop environment protection and treating poverty through sustainable tourism.

Costa Rica

By the 1990's, Costa Rica became a well-known nation through its breakthrough in sustainable tourism development as it gained immense popularity with its destinations, successfully eradicating extreme poverty and being eco-friendly. It is truly remarkable that by 2016, Costa Rica was ranked 10th in the Americas for international tourism receipts with an astonishing 3,879 million US dollars that year. It is only then that the world started to see the perks and potential in the sustainable tourism market.



Veragua Rainforest, Costa Rica sustainable tourism destination

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

UNWTO is one of the major parties that promote sustainable tourism in the global community for its socioeconomic growth. Poverty reduction through tourism is also one of the major targets set by UNWTO, as sustainable tourism can practically be established even in nations with a large percentage of population in poverty. UNWTO was established as an executing agency of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1975, and by 1980, the world already had a World Tourism Conference, which was held in Manila, Philippines. Between 2015 and now, the establishment of the SDGs has given specific instructions to the UNWTO regarding how sustainable travelling should be established and its subsequent economic and environmental effects. From 15th to 17th or February 2017, the first UNWTO World Conference was held, discussing promotion of sustainable tourism and smart destination. During this conference, nations and relevant groups shared technological advancements for sustainable destinations to encourage nations to support sustainable tourism. The UNWTO is continuing its

influence in the tourism industry by holding conferences, meetings, and Expeditions to shape the tourism industry into a sustainable market, which takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impact.

General Overview

Not many previous attempts were made regarding the promotion of sustainable tourism due to its novelty in the tourism industry. Without nations working together, sustainable tourism could be hard to achieve for many poor nations. However, there are resolutions passed by the United Nations General Assembly regarding elements that make up the issue. These resolutions together make up the foundations of the solution towards the issue. They have successfully established the involvement of the United Nations regarding such issues while clarifying the importance of these sustainable development projects to be transparent and accountable to the public. Furthermore, the United Nations General Assembly has agreed upon exchanging information and experiences in order to establish successful sustainable development projects in more nations.

The United Nations has been quite successful with the issue of sustainable tourism development. Nations are extremely willing to contribute their parts to these issues together as it is extremely beneficial for the majority of the nations. The United Nations General Assembly has passed the majority of resolutions regarding these types of issue. As the UN is the major party involved in these issues, the 69th session of the General Assembly has been quite the year for sustainable tourism, especially ecotourism. Despite the fact that numerous resolutions do not tackle the issue directly, there is one resolution during the 69th session that stood out, titled: “Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection”. This resolution includes solutions such as: improving relationships between World Tourism Organization and the United Nations, recognizing ecotourism as the driver of sustainable economic growth, and emphasizing the use of resources. The following are resolutions previously debated and passed by the UN that is strongly relatable to the topic.

- General Assembly Resolution 327, 14 September 2015 (A/RES/69/327)
- General Assembly Resolution 233, 19 December 2014 (A/RES/69/233)

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
March 1 st , 1872	Founding of Yellowstone National Park. First national park in the USA.
1975	Establishment of UNWTO under the request of the United Nations Development Programme.
1980	First World Tourism Conference.
1990s	Costa Rica became poster child for sustainable tourism. South Africa begun planning projects for sustainable tourism.
January 14th, 2015	United Nations General Assembly press release publically supporting sustainable tourism.
September 25th, 2015	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal established by world leaders. These goals are set to be completed by 2030.
February 15th-17th, 2017	UNWTO World Conference regarding sustainable tourism and smart destinations. Sharing technology breakthroughs in conferences and interest groups.

Possible Solutions

- One of the possible solutions is to publish a universal definition of sustainable tourism that most interest parties agree on. This will limit false advertisement and private manipulation to gain popularity and clear most disagreements between nations and groups. Under the influence and pressure of nations combined, sustainable tourism will be forced to change and agree to the universal definition. Defining the term sustainable tourism will solve a few problems as the criteria of the term is used and adopted by the majority.
- Another solution is to work on the previous resolutions passed by United Nations and cooperate with both GOs and NGOs to gather funding for poorer nations that have the potential to develop sustainable tourist attractions. Sustainable tourism projects are fragile without international assistance; they might fail due to corruption. As international involvement is crucial for the solution, such fund will be very effective and helpful for developing countries to start their own tourism industry. Keeping in mind that nations would most likely want these funding transparent and accountable to eliminate any chances of corruption within the process. These nations would like to see these funding go into good use and benefit them as it will benefit the local community and wildlife. Therefore, both funding and regulation will benefit the global tourism industry.
- Another important solution is to search for a reliable agency's (or multiple) involvement in the search for expertise and non-corrupted individual and groups to recognize the potential in different nations. Many organizations are fit for the job but they all have their own interest. It is crucial for member states to agree upon organizations that are well balanced and could be the best fit for this role. These unbiased agencies can effectively recognize more environmental potentials that lead to more prosperity.

- The prevention of environmental hazards is also extremely important. The rising problems of climate change and deforestation generate fear in these regions. Possibly by limiting urbanization and industrialization in a certain perimeter will help solve this issue successfully. Relevant member states may need to form new legislations and strengthen regulation to make sure the environment is out of reach from the threats of any hazards mentioned above.

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