TOURISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

THE THIRD SOUTH ASIA CHIEF JUSTICES ROUNDTABLE ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Nayana Mawilmada
August 9, 2014
Colombo
TOURISM: AN INDUSTRY THAT CREATES VALUE AT MANY LEVELS

Input Providers
Infrastructure, human resources, water supply, equipment, construction.

Trip arrangement
Transport
Lodging
F & B / Shopping
Activities/Excursions

Travel agents / tour guides
Taxi services
Railway
Airlines
Hotels
Guest Houses
Restaurants
Handicrafts
Local specialties
Wildlife
Culture/History
Beaches

Local jobs + micro, small and medium enterprise opportunities
TOURISM IS A KEY DRIVER OF THE WORLD ECONOMY

- Travel & Tourism’s contributes around 9.5% of global GDP, 1 in 11 of the world’s total jobs, 4.4% of total investment and 5.4% of world exports.

- The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to the world economy in 2013:
  - US$2.2 trillion to world GDP and 101 million jobs.

- Considering wider value chain impacts:
  - US$7.0 trillion, 266 million jobs, US$754 billion in investment and US$1.3 trillion in exports.

- Tourism contribution to GDP, over the last 3 years has grown by ~3%
  - Faster than manufacturing, retail and distribution, and financial services
  - 1.4 million additional jobs were generated directly in 2013; 4.7 million indirectly.

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council
...and is a major contributor to South Asian economies too

Key South Asian Trends

- South Asia grew 5.3% in 2013 to 15.2m arrivals
- UNWTO forecasts 18.8m arrivals to South Asia by 2020; Annual growth rates will average 6.2%
TOURISM HAS MANY POSITIVES

- A growing source of opportunities for enterprise development and employment creation
- Stimulating investment and support for local services
- Ability to bring benefits even to remote communities.
- Ability to bring tangible economic value to natural and cultural resources.
- Direct income from visitor spending for conservation, and an increase in support for conservation from local communities.
- Can act as a force for inter-cultural understanding and peace
...BUT CAN HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES TOO

- Can exert considerable pressure on host communities
- Unintended social impacts
- Dislocation of traditional societies.

- Can be a vulnerable and unstable source of income, sensitive to actual or perceived changes to the environmental and social conditions
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS CAN BE SEVERE

- Depletion of natural resources
  - Water resources
  - Local resources—food, energy, raw material
  - Land degradation
- Pollution
  - Air and noise pollution
  - Solid waste and littering
  - Sewage
  - Aesthetic pollution
- Physical impacts
  - Ecosystem damage due to construction, deforestation, marine activities, trampling, etc.
UNCONTROLLED URBAN DEVELOPMENT CAN HAVE SIMILAR IMPACTS TOO
A rapidly growing tourism industry (and urban settlements) can pose challenges

- A few illustrations from the case of Sri Lanka
  - Yala
  - Kalpitiya
  - Mannar
  - Colombo
Yala
MANNAR
“a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’

* World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)
“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

-World Tourism Organization
Making tourism more sustainable means taking these impacts and needs into account in the planning, development and operation of tourism.

Principle applies equally to tourism in cities, resorts, rural and coastal areas, mountains, and protected areas. It can apply to all forms of business and leisure tourism.

Sustainable tourism is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. It is about unleashing the industry’s unique ability to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment.
WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE?

- Sustainability is the responsibility of **all** those involved in tourism.
- However, governments need to lead if truly significant progress is to be achieved, because:
  - The tourism industry is large yet very fragmented.
    - Individual actions of micro and small businesses to make limited net difference; coordination is required.
  - Sustainability relates to areas of public concern—air, water, natural and cultural heritage, etc.
    - Many of the pertinent resources are managed by governments.
  - Governments have the necessary tools to achieve scaleable impact
    - the power to make regulations and offer economic incentives
    - the resources and institutions to promote and disseminate good practice.
A strategic and planned approach to sustainable tourism development is vital

Policies and strategies must aim to:

- Determine the level and nature of tourism
  - Spatial distribution, seasonality, potential impacts

- Influencing tourism development patterns
  - Land use planning and development control

- Influencing the operation of tourism enterprises
  - Legislation, regulation and licensing; economic incentives

- Influence consumption patterns of consumers
  - Marketing and information services; guidelines and codes of conduct
“I do not know of any environmental group in any country that does not view its government as an adversary”

-Gro Harlem Brundtland

- Tourism and the environment have a symbiotic relationship.
- Development and environmental protection should not be seen as opposing forces, particularly in the case of tourism.
- They should be pursued together as aspirations that are mutually reinforcing.