

# ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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## Abstract

Over time an ever increasing number of destinations have opened up and invested in tourism development, turning modern tourism into a key driver of socio-economic progress through export revenues, the creation of jobs and enterprises, and infrastructure development. Globally, as an export category, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and food. For many developing countries it is one of the main sources of foreign exchange income and the number one export category, creating much needed employment and opportunities for development. However, there is no economic activity without costs. Tourism generates environmental, social, and cultural costs, which are not totally inevitable. The crucial motto of the sustainable development is development to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. So, the crucial question is how to foster sustainable tourism which respects local cultures, environment, society and economy all of which are already under the pressure of impacts of globalisation. This article investigates this question thoroughly with an aim to offer easily applicable methods and strategies to tourism professionals. In order to do that, this article starts with presenting the costs and benefits of globalisation and tourism, then moves on to the presentation of the methods for sustainable development. Finally, it discusses the strategies and methods to keep up the current level of growth of the tourism industry while preserving the environment, the earth, local societies and cultures, which is an important mission of today's globalised world.

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**Keywords:** Globalisation, sustainable development, mass tourism, cost-benefit analysis, life cycle analysis, carrying capacity, sustainable tourism

## 1. Introduction

Globalisation can be defined as a complex set of distinct but related processes - economic, cultural, social but also political and military - through

which social relations have developed global reach and significance. As an economic phenomenon it encompasses heightened capital mobility, intensified international trade and cross-border transactions, and the multi- and transnationalisation of production. All are fuelled by a revolution in information and communications technologies.

Mass tourism means participation of large numbers of people in tourism, and is triggered by the forces of globalization. Over time an ever increasing number of destinations have opened up and invested in tourism development, turning modern tourism into a key driver of socio-economic progress through export revenues, the creation of jobs and enterprises, and infrastructure development. Globally, as an export category, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and food. For many developing countries it is one of the main sources of foreign exchange income and the number one export category, creating much needed employment and opportunities for development. The total impact of the industry means that, in 2011, it contributed 9% of global GDP, or a value of over US\$6 trillion, and accounted for 255 million jobs. Over the next ten years this industry is expected to grow by an average of 4% annually, taking it to 10% of global GDP, or some US\$10 trillion. By 2022, it is anticipated that it will account for 328 million jobs, or 1 in every 10 jobs on the planet.

Sustainable development was defined by the Brundtland Commission as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’<sup>3</sup>. Some view it as ‘a political slogan rather than an analytical tool’. It can also be viewed as a social movement: ‘a group of people with a common ideology who try together to achieve certain general goals’. The connotations of both of the phrase’s root words, ‘sustainable’ and ‘development’ are generally quite positive for most people, and their combination imbues this concept with inherent and near-universal agreement that sustainability is a worthwhile value and goal which is a powerful feature in diverse and conflicted social contexts. Therefore, in an effort to encourage the creation of a broadly based social movement in support of sustainable development, many international and intergovernmental conferences are organized and reports are issued.

*Research objectives* of this article are to define and describe how the concepts of globalization, mass tourism and sustainable tourism are interrelated, and how the principles of sustainable development are to be employed successfully to achieve long-term goals of protection of local cultures, environment, society, and economy. To achieve this end, it seeks to answer such questions:

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<sup>3</sup>World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.43

- 1) How globalization impacts on the development of mass tourism;
- 2) How, in turn, mass tourism carries the forces of globalization to remote parts of the world;
- 3) How mass tourism impacts on the globalization of local cultures, environment, economy and society,
- 4) How sustainable development principles can be applied to tourism;
- 5) How the local environment, economy, society, and cultures benefit from the application of sustainable development principles in tourism.

By answering these questions, main goal of this article is to offer methods to foster sustainable tourism which respects local cultures, environment, society, and economy.

*Research methodology* of this article is mainly descriptive. It employs secondary sources of data, i.e. academic papers, official documents and statistical reports, to state the research hypotheses; and offers employing primary sources of data, i.e. questionnaires, observation and survey to empirically test these hypotheses. There are five hypotheses which can be empirically tested in any region in a specific time period:

- H-1 Mass tourism includes large numbers of people travelling to all parts of the world, which affects the local economy, society, culture, and environment in both developing and developed countries.
- H-2 Cost-benefit analysis should be done carefully. This analysis reveals the real impact of mass tourism, either negative or positive, in a region in a specific time period.
- H-3 If the result is negative, there is an urgent need for strategic planning. If the result is positive, the question is: how to keep up the current levels?
- H-4 In both cases, life cycle analysis helps to identify available strategic options to define the strategic options available for the destination and to outline the destination's characteristics and possible responses to be taken.
- H-5 By employing the principles of sustainable development to mass tourism (i.e. strategic planning, life cycle analysis, carrying capacity), it is possible keep up the current level of growth of the tourism industry while preserving the environment, local societies and cultures.

## **2. Sustainable Development**

Since the 1970s and 1980s, four key themes emerged from the collective concerns and aspirations of the world's peoples: peace, freedom, development, and environment. Several world commissions were created to study such international concerns, producing major documents that were often followed by global conferences. Since then, sustainable development

as a concept, as a goal, and as a movement spread rapidly and is now central to the mission of countless international organizations, national institutions, corporate enterprises, city councils, and locales.

The conflicts between environment and development were first acknowledged at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. In 1980, World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature argued for conservation as a means to assist development and specifically for the sustainable development and utilization of species, ecosystems, and resources<sup>4</sup>. Drawing on these, the World Commission on Environment and Development was initiated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1982, and its report, *Our Common Future*, was published in 1987<sup>5</sup>. It was chaired by then–Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland, thus earning the name the ‘Brundtland Commission’. The Commission was committed to the unity of environment and development.

Indeed, Brundtland argued that:

*‘The environment does not exist as a sphere separate from human actions, ambitions, and needs, and attempts to defend it in isolation from human concerns have given the very word ‘environment’ a connotation of naivety in some political circles. The word ‘development’ has also been narrowed by some into a very limited focus, along the lines of ‘what poor nations should do to become richer’, and thus again is automatically dismissed by many in the international arena as being a concern of specialists, of those involved in questions of ‘development assistance’. But the ‘environment’ is where we live; and ‘development’ is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable’<sup>6</sup>.*

On development, the report states that human needs are basic and essential; that economic growth is required to sustain them; and that equity is encouraged by effective citizen participation. On the environment, the text is also clear: ‘The concept of sustainable development does imply limits—not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities’<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> W. M. Adams (1990) *Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the Third World*, London: Routledge

<sup>5</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*, New York: Oxford University Press

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, pp. xi

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp.8

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (the so-called ‘Earth Summit’) was the first international and intergovernmental conference to provide full access to a wide range of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). More than 1,400 NGOs and 8,000 journalists participated to the Summit. The Conference produced a declaration of principles, a detailed Agenda 21 of desired actions, international agreements on climate change and biodiversity, and a statement of principles on forests<sup>8</sup>.

In 1999, the Board on Sustainable Development of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences sought to clarify the goals of the concept of sustainable development. In its report, *Our Common Journey: A Transition toward Sustainability*, the board focused on what to sustain and what to develop, the relationship between the two, and the time horizon of the future<sup>9</sup>. This approach is given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** How to achieve the transition toward sustainability

| What is to be Sustained?                                       | For How Long?                                | What is to be Developed?  |
|--|--|---|
| NATURE<br>Earth<br>Biodiversity<br>Ecosystems                  | 25 years<br>Now and in the future<br>Forever | PEOPLE<br>Child Survival<br>Life Expectancy<br>Education<br>Equity<br>Equal Opportunity |
| LIFE SUPPORT<br>Ecosystem services<br>Resources<br>Environment |  | ECONOMY<br>Wealth<br>Productive sectors<br>Consumption                                  |
| COMMUNITY<br>Cultures<br>Groups<br>Places                      |  | SOCIETY<br>Institutions<br>Social capital<br>States<br>Regions                          |

In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, the commitment to sustainable development was reaffirmed<sup>10</sup>. 737 new NGOs and more than 8,046 representatives of major groups (business, farmers, indigenous peoples, local authorities,

<sup>8</sup> E. A. Parson and P. M. Haas (1992) ‘A Summary of the Major Documents Signed at the Earth Summit and the Global Forum’, *Environment*, October Issue, pp.12–18

<sup>9</sup> National Research Council, Policy Division, Board on Sustainable Development (1999) *Our Common Journey: A Transition toward Sustainability*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, pp.22-26

<sup>10</sup> The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, 4 September 2002, [http://www.housing.gov.za/content/legislation\\_policies/johannesburg.htm](http://www.housing.gov.za/content/legislation_policies/johannesburg.htm)

NGOs, the scientific and technological communities, trade unions, and women) attended the Summit. These groups organized themselves into approximately 40 geographical and issue-based caucuses. The Johannesburg Declaration created ‘a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development - economic development, social development and environmental protection- at local, national, regional and global levels’<sup>11</sup>. In so doing, the World Summit addressed a concern over the limits of the framework of environment and development, wherein development was widely viewed solely as economic development.

Davos Declaration on Climate Change and Tourism states that ‘Given tourism’s importance in the global challenges of climate change and poverty reduction, there is a need to urgently adopt a range of policies which encourages truly sustainable tourism that reflects a ‘quadruple bottom line’ of environmental, social, economic and climate responsiveness’<sup>12</sup>.

All decisions taken at the Rio Summit are without an exception the most important topics for the future of the world tourism sector. These topics include: population increase, global warming and greenhouse effect, acid rains, loss of forests, pollution and the depletion of clean water resources. Tourism industry is built upon these resources, and any deterioration of these resources will crucially affect tourism<sup>13</sup>. For this reason, in Rio Summit world leaders signed Agenda 21 that aims to protect the world’s natural resources both for the sake of environment and economy. However, although at international level many initiatives have started and many important decisions have been taken on environment, the implementation of these decisions has caused a big disappointment.

The concept of sustainable development is widely and variously defined. The long-held view has been that economic growth would inevitably lead to environmental degradation through the consumption of non-renewable resources, the overuse of renewable resources, and the production of waste and pollution. Sustainable development offers the possibility that this is not inevitable; economic development can occur while still protecting the environment. So, sustainability is a term which can bridge the gulf between development and environment. Dresner explains that ‘the starting point of the concept of sustainable development is the aim to integrate environmental considerations into economic policy’<sup>14</sup>. The World

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p.1

<sup>12</sup> UNWTO (2007), *Development Assistance*, p.2

<sup>13</sup> See Ayala, H. (1995) ‘From Quality Product to Eco Product: Will Fiji Set a Precedent’, *Tourism Management*, Vol.16, No.1, pp.39-47; Wall, Geoffrey and Mathieson, Alister (2006) *Tourism: Changes, Impacts and Opportunities*, Pearson Prentice Hall

<sup>14</sup> Dresner, Simon (2008) *The Principles of Sustainability*, London: Earthscan, p.69

Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as ‘tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be filled while maintaining cultural integrity, essentials ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems’<sup>15</sup>. So, sustainable tourism is really an issue of how best to encourage tourism while minimizing its costs. For this reason, in order to ensure a sustainable development in tourism, there is a need for the integration of the disciplines like management, economy, ecology, and sociology.

### **3. Effects of Globalization and Mass Tourism**

Globalization gives way to the participation of large numbers of people in tourism, which is commonly called as mass tourism. Since 1950, destinations around the world have experienced pressures resulting from the growth of demand. The rapid expansion of international tourism in the 1960s and 70s was fuelled by technology, affluence and a supply-side response by the tourism sector<sup>16</sup>. The first analysis of mass tourism was made in this period of expansion by Swiss author Fink who defined the basic elements of mass tourism as ‘participation of large numbers of people; mainly collective organization of travelling; collective accommodation; conscious integration of the holidaymaker in a travelling group’<sup>17</sup>.

The number of international tourist arrivals continuously grew in the last decades. WTO statistics demonstrate the evolution of international tourist arrivals at world level from 1990 to 2011 and annual growth rate of tourist arrivals per region in the period 1990-2011 (see Table 2). When the figures are analysed carefully, it is seen that almost all regions of the world have been involved in the phenomenon of mass tourism in the last two decades. 2012 figures also demonstrate that this trend continues to grow. *International tourist arrivals grew by 4% in 2012 to reach 1.035 billion, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. Emerging economies (+4.1%) regained the lead over advanced economies (+3.6%), with Asia and the Pacific showing the strongest results. Growth is expected to continue in 2013 only slightly below the 2012 level (+3% to +4%) and in line with UNWTO long term forecast.*

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<sup>15</sup> WTO Report 2005

<sup>16</sup>Cooper, Chris (2000) ‘The Contribution of Life Cycle Analysis and Strategic Planning to Sustainable Tourism’ in Wahab,S. and Pigram,J., *Tourism, Development and Growth: The Challenge of Sustainability*, London:Routledge, p.79

<sup>17</sup> Fink, C. (1970) *Der Massentourismus*, Berne: Verlag Paul Haupt

**Table 2:** Annual growth rate of tourist arrivals per region in the period 1990-2011<sup>18</sup>

|                           | International Tourist Arrivals (million) |       |       |       |       |       |       | Annual growth (%) |
|---------------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|
|                           | 1990                                     | 1995  | 2000  | 2005  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  |                   |
| <b>World</b>              | 435                                      | 528   | 674   | 799   | 883   | 940   | 983   | 3.5               |
| <b>Advanced Economies</b> | 296                                      | 334   | 417   | 455   | 475   | 499   | 523   | 2.4               |
| <b>Emerging Economies</b> | 139                                      | 193   | 256   | 344   | 408   | 441   | 460   | 5.0               |
| <b>Europe</b>             | 261.5                                    | 304.0 | 385.0 | 440.7 | 461.7 | 474.8 | 504.0 | 2.3               |
| <b>Asia and Pacific</b>   | 55.8                                     | 82.0  | 110.1 | 153.6 | 181.1 | 204.4 | 217.0 | 5.9               |
| <b>Americas</b>           | 92.8                                     | 109.0 | 128.2 | 133.3 | 141.7 | 150.7 | 156.6 | 2.7               |
| <b>Africa</b>             | 14.8                                     | 18.8  | 26.2  | 34.8  | 45.9  | 49.7  | 50.2  | 6.3               |
| <b>Middle East</b>        | 9.6                                      | 13.7  | 24.1  | 36.3  | 52.8  | 60.3  | 55.4  | 7.3               |

The economic and social impacts of the mass tourism are great and have two different aspects: benefits and costs. The key benefits of mass tourism are income and employment generation. These two benefits are created by tourism expenditure and tourism investment in a cyclical way, meaning that investments depend on the expenditures in the present, the past and the future; in turn, investments stimulate expenditures.

The first benefit of mass tourism, income generation, occurs in three forms: *direct income*, *indirect income*, and *induced effects*. This process is explained by multiplier mechanism<sup>19</sup>. Taking the expenditure in a hotel as a starting point, the multiplier mechanism works as follows: ‘One part creates direct income within the region concerned. A second part leads to local business transactions because a hotelier restocks inventories to provide for future sales (bread, meat, vegetables, fruit, etc.). A third part of the expenditure is used to pay profit taxes, local taxes, etc., to local, regional or national governments. A fourth part is spent on leakages such as imports of goods and payments of profits to people and organizations outside the region or country’<sup>20</sup>. For example, purchases of groceries provoke these multiplier effects with the butcher, the baker, the farmer, and so forth. This process continues with a third and a fourth round. The income created is called the indirect income. On the other hand, ‘the more that wages and profits due to the hotel expenditure rise, the more consumer expenditure increases, and this

<sup>18</sup> Source: WTO Tourism Highlights 2012,

<http://mkt.unwto.org/en/publication/unwto-tourism-highlights-2012-edition>

<sup>19</sup>Vanhove, Norbert (2000) ‘Mass Tourism: Benefits and Costs’ in Wahab,S. and Pigram,J., *Tourism, Development and Growth: The Challenge of Sustainability*, London:Routledge, p.61

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p.61



provides further impetus to economic activity. Additional business turnover occurs and this generates income. These are the so-called induced effects'<sup>21</sup>. The income generated by the mass tourism has been increased greatly in the period 1990-2011.

**Table 3:** Income generation of mass tourism, 1990-2011<sup>22</sup>

|                         | <b>International Tourism Receipts (billion)</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Local currencies</b> | <b>1990</b>                                     | <b>1995</b> | <b>2000</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> |
| <b>USD</b>              | 262   | 403         | 475         | 679         | 853         | 927         | 1,030       |
| <b>Euro</b>             | 206   | 308         | 515         | 546         | 612         | 699         | 740         |

The second benefit of mass tourism is employment generation. Both in developing and developed countries it is a sector which promises many job opportunities. The characteristics of tourism employment are as follows<sup>23</sup>:

- 1) Tourism is a growth sector; both current and expected trends emphasize growth in tourism investment and expenditure which continuously create job opportunities.
- 2) Tourism is a sector with a high degree of semi-skilled and unskilled employees. This aspect is an opportunity for large number of unskilled workers with a job, especially in developing countries.
- 3) Tourism is a sector with a high percentage of part-time jobs.
- 4) In tourism there is a high share of female workers.
- 5) The sector has many small firms and self-employed.
- 6) The sector employs increasing number of young workers.

The third benefit of mass tourism is that it creates external economies. Improvements in transportation networks, water quality and sanitation facilities may be prompted by the tourist industry but benefit other sectors of the economy. For instance, an international airport built for tourists provides improved access to other regions for locally produced goods. Table 4 demonstrates all these effects clearly.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p.61

<sup>22</sup> Source: WTO Tourism Highlights 2012,

<http://mkt.unwto.org/en/publication/unwto-tourism-highlights-2012-edition>

<sup>23</sup> Vanhove, Norbert (2000) 'Mass Tourism: Benefits and Costs' in Wahab, S. and Pigram, J., *Tourism, Development and Growth: The Challenge of Sustainability*, London: Routledge, p.66

**Table 4:** Benefits of mass tourism

| <b>Direct Contribution</b>   | <b>Commodities</b>  | <b>Industries</b>  | <b>Sources of Spending</b>  |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Attractions</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation services</li> <li>• Food and beverage services</li> <li>• Retail trade</li> <li>• Transportation services</li> <li>• Cultural sports and recreational services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents' domestic T&amp;T spending</li> <li>• Businesses' domestic travel spending</li> <li>• Visitor exports</li> <li>• Individual government T&amp;T spending</li> </ul> |
| <b>Indirect Contribution</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel and tourism investment spending</li> <li>• Government collective travel and tourism spending</li> <li>• Impact of purchases from suppliers</li> </ul> |  |   |
| <b>Induced Contribution</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and beverages</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Clothing</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Household goods</li> </ul>  |  |   |
| <b>Total Contribution</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To GDP</li> <li>• To employment</li> </ul>   |  |   |

These benefits of tourism sector can be illustrated by using recent data for worldwide touristic destinations. The 2011 figures show that North Africa, South East Asia and Caribbean are the regions gaining most from the tourism sector. Tourism's direct contribution to GDP is 13.9% in Caribbean, 12.4% in North Africa and 10.9% in South East Asia; while its contribution to employment is 12.4% in North Africa, 12.1% in Caribbean, and 8.7% in South East Asia. For all these developing countries' economies, these are big and important contributions.

**Table 5:** Tourism's benefits for world's touristic destinations, 2011<sup>24</sup>

| <b>Travel and Tourism's Direct Contribution to GDP</b> | <b>2011 % share</b> | <b>Travel and Tourism's Total Contribution to GDP</b> | <b>2011 % share</b> |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| North Africa   | 5.8                 | Caribbean   | 13.9                |
| Caribbean  | 4.5                 | North Africa  | 12.4                |
| South East Asia  | 4.4                 | South East Asia                                       | 10.9                |
| Middle East  | 3.2                 | Oceania   | 10.7                |
| Latin America  | 3.2                 | Latin America   | 8.6                 |
| European Union   | 2.9                 | North America   | 8.5                 |
| North America  | 2.9                 | Middle East   | 8.1                 |
| Oceania  | 2.7                 | North East Asia                                       | 8.0                 |

<sup>24</sup> Source: World Travel and Tourism Council, T&T Economic Impact 2012, [http://www.wttc.org/site\\_media/uploads/downloads/caribbean2012.pdf](http://www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/caribbean2012.pdf)