



United Nations Environment Programme

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE

ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

PRESS RELEASE

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Not an official record

UNEP urges progress in tourism sector and launches new industry sector reports on sustainability performance

BALI, PARIS, June 2, 2002 – The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) today urged the travel and tourism sector to apply the principles of sustainability to all aspects of its business operations.

On the resort island of Bali, Indonesia, the venue for the Fourth Preparatory Committee Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel hosted a meeting to mark 30 years of engagement with the private sector.

Addressing 100 senior government officials, tourism and other business sector executives, Jacqueline Aloisi de Lardere, UNEP Assistant Executive Director and Director of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, outlined the findings of 22 industry sector reports prepared by UNEP, in partnership with 29 industry associations, to assess progress by business towards sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit, ten years ago.

“The reports found a growing gap between the efforts of business and industry to reduce their impact on the environment and the worsening state of the planet,” Mrs Aloisi de Lardere said.

“This gap is due to the fact that in most industry sectors only a small number of companies are actively integrating social and environmental factors into business decisions, and because improvements are being overtaken by economic growth and increasing consumption of goods and services, which rely on natural resources and systems,” she said.

The report on travel and tourism, produced with the World Travel and Tourism Council, the International Federation of Tour Operators, the International Hotel and Restaurant Association and International Council of Cruise Lines, shows the sector now accounts for US\$ 3.3 trillion of global Gross Domestic Product, almost 11 percent of total GDP; 207 million jobs worldwide, over eight percent of all jobs; and US\$630 billion in capital investment, almost nine percent of all capital investment.

“While protecting the environment, good practices in ecotourism can create small enterprises which provide jobs to local people, thereby contributing to alleviation of poverty,” Mrs Aloisi de Lardere said.

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The report found the main barrier to achieving environmental and development goals has been the inherent fragmentation of the tourism industry, which is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. This has indirectly led to a dilution of responsibilities between the private and public sectors, leading, at an ever-increasing rate, to environmental, economic and social problems.

The report notes that governments are only just beginning to take a decisive role in developing sustainable, economically successful tourism. And that strong partnerships between government, industry, labour and civil society actors are needed to catalyse meaningful networking processes, workable policies and logical planning and development.

Building on the report findings, UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel urged the tourism industry leaders to:

- Build on the dialogue with UNEP, non-governmental organisations and other partners initiated during the production of the reports, and in particular through the Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development;
- Develop, promote and implement codes of conduct and standards which take account of the environment;
- Push for the integration of sustainable travel and tourism into government policies;
- Inform travellers and employees on sustainable tourism;
- Encourage all actors in the sector to practice corporate social responsibility;
- Use the Global Reporting Initiative guidelines to report on environmental performance, and to adopt initiatives such as eco-labeling and quantified targets for improvement of environmental performance such as energy efficiency, water consumption and carbon emissions;
- Develop schemes to share benefits of the tourism with local populations and help development local entrepreneurs, such as through supply chain management;
- Carry out environmental impact assessment studies for all new tourism projects;
- Work with government to expand schemes for the establishment of economic incentives related to tourism and the environment, such as fees on cruises to help maintain national parks, or visitor payback mechanisms for local conservation projects.

Ms Aloisi de Larderel said that other sectors covered in the UNEP analysis also had an important role to play in helping develop sustainable tourism.

“These include the waste, water and energy industries, through the development of technologies and systems, such as small scale water treatment, rain water harvesting, small scale waste disposal and recycling, and decentralised renewable energy sources.

“The US\$ 300 billion advertising industry also has a crucial role in shaping the expectations and behaviours of tourists and consumers,” she said.

All the sector reports highlight the crucial role of governments, in combining regulatory, economic and voluntary instruments, in spurring social and technological innovation, and in ensuring that laggard or negligent companies do not benefit at the expense of those investing in best practices.

END

Editor notes:

Industry Success Stories

At the meeting, speakers gave examples of sustainability initiatives occurring within the tourism sector, including:

- Mr Martin Brackenbury, Chairman, World Tourism Organisation Business Council
- *the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development, a network of 23 tour operators working with UNEP, UNESCO and the World Tourism Organisation, aims to introduce good practices into business operations, including use of the Global Reporting Initiative.*
- Mr Daniel Desbaillets, Chairman of the Six Continents Hotels, and representative of the industry organisations which contributed to the Travel and Tourism sector report.
- *the Bali Intercontinental Hotel, chosen as the venue for the meeting, is a leader in sustainable tourism in the industry. Many hotels have saved up to 30 percent on energy and water consumption and waste generation using existing technologies. The new generation of cruise ships produce 50 percent less waste than those in operation 10 years ago.*
- Mr Mike Longhurst, Senior Vice-President, McCann-Ericson – contributor to the Advertising sector report.
– *McCann-Ericson introduced its new publication “Can Sustainability Sell?” marking the start of the first campaign by a major advertising agency to promote sustainability to its worldwide clients. This is part of UNEP’s Advertising Initiative, a voluntary partnership with the industry to promote sustainability.*
- Mr Antonio Manchado, First Deputy Mayor, Calvia, Spain
– *whose municipality tore down hotels to make tourism more sustainable, and instituted an eco-tax on hotel rates.*
- Mr Jamie Oliver, Steering Committee Chair, International Coral Reef Action Network
- *ICRAN, in which UNEP is a major partner, focuses on the management needs of the world's coral reef ecosystems, and their relationship to the communities that depend upon them. The health and welfare of coral reefs can determine the livelihoods of many people, as well as underpinning a profitable tourism industry. ICRAN will work with local communities, NGOs, governments and the private sector to ensure the future of these valuable ecosystems, as well as the future of the communities, and economies they sustain. Working with the International Coral Reef Initiative, UNEP and ICRAN have produced a communication tool kit to help the tourist industry explain to their customers the importance of protecting coral reefs.*

For Further Information:

The UNEP overview report *10 Years After Rio: the UNEP Assessment* and the 22 individual sector reports, covering the areas of accounting, advertising, aluminium, automotive, aviation, chemicals, coal, construction, consulting engineering, electricity, fertilizer, finance and insurance, food and drink, information and communications technology, iron and steel, oil and gas, railways, refrigeration, road transport, tourism, waste management, and water management, are available on the Web at: <http://www.uneptie.org/outreach/wssd/publications/publications.htm>

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UNEP News Release ROAP 2002/9