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Promoting sustainable tourism towards  
economic growth

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**Forum:** Environment Commission

**Issue:** Promoting sustainable tourism towards economic growth

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## Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's most profitable businesses. What's great about it is the fact that any country in earth can use it to get economical and social benefits. Reasons for tourism for leisure vary from cultural and social enrichment to historical and political education of the area for visitors; and last but not least, natural views and beauty of the environment have a huge role in tourism. According to a survey directed by, and focused in the European Union, around 30% of travelers list landscapes, biodiversity and views as their main reason for travelling, and 50% state it as the main reason for coming back. So, nature is one of the main reasons to visit a country and the main reason to return, making it one of the most crucial aspects of tourism. Every country qualifies for at least one of the previous reasons, what means that with the right approach, every country can profit from this, creating yet one more weapon in the fight against poverty. Briefly, tourism is a great source of income available to all countries, and the environment plays a great role in this industry so it must be protected. To finish with, a relatively new concept appeared for sustainable tourism called "Ecotourism", a concept that aims to bring tourists to areas with no human activity in order to raise awareness about the need to protect the environment and to raise funds to support sustainable tourism and natural reserves.

## Definition of key-terms

### Subtitle - Write here

#### **Tourism**

Tourism is a wide term, and is not only used for people that visit a country for leisure but those who do it for business as well. Any person that travels away from their usual life, routine and environment for less than a year, to destinations inside and outside their countries is considered a visitor/tourist.

#### **Sustainable Tourism**

The exploitation of tourism in a way that finds a balance between the environment preservation, social welfare and economical needs, and most importantly, the role played by tourists and governments in the issue.

#### **Pollution**

The human action of throwing a substance or agent into the environment at a higher rate than the ecosystem can sustain without having a measurable negative effect.

#### **Natural Environment**

All living and nonliving things and their interactions in an area or region with limited human action to a minimum. Areas that can be considered as human action free. Destinations for Ecotourism due to their characteristics.

#### **Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is the action of visiting regions with minimum to none human disruption to create awareness of the need to protect the environment, educate tourists in sustainable tourism and raising funds for maintaining reserves and habitats.

## General Overview

### Background

Since the middle 19s tourism has grown and developed exponentially, bringing with it negative effects on the environment such as the rise of CO2 emissions due to transport and the waste of water due to services and accommodation such as hotels, a luxury hotel room wastes 1800 liters per person per night, directly and indirectly. Many tourism and environment dependent countries have already taken action in repairing and preventing altogether the damaging of these industries on which they rely so deeply. Nowadays tourism counts for approximately 10% of the world's GDP; with staggering numbers such as 80% of Maldives GDP and 35,8% of Iceland's GDP. We can see that tourism represents higher percentages on GDP in developing countries rather than MEDCs (Most Economically Developed Countries).

### Why is it important?

Three things we know for sure, first of all tourism represents a huge source of income for the whole world and most importantly for developing countries. Secondly, tourism is dependent on the environment to function, as 30% of tourists regard the environment as the main reason to travel and 50% as the main reason to return to a country. Last but not least, tourism brings heavy damaging to the environment it so strongly relies on. Such is the case of Machu Picchu, where too much human interaction with the site and lack of control and preservation resulted in the damaging and erosion of the structures that attracted so many people. As a consequence, a halt had to be put in place before the structures disappeared altogether, further damage was prevented, but no one could recover what had been lost due to lack of involvement and knowledge of the degradation of the site.

Tourism counts for 11% of the world's employment, directly and indirectly; but there will be no industry to exploit if the product of the industry is destroyed. For every country to be able to profit from this industry and use it to combat poverty and working towards development, the industry must be protected from the harms it imposes on itself.

## Major parties involved and their views

### Costa Rica

Costa Rica is an example of sustainable tourism as well as environment safe-keeping. The country consists of almost 25% of its territory as rainforests and generates 93% of its energy from renewable resources.

### New Zealand

New Zealand, as an environment and tourism reliant country is undoubtedly focused in preserving this which makes it unique and functional. The country has created an organization called Qualmark NZ, the organization gives the Green Qualmark Enviro logo award to businesses that promote sustainable tourism in ways such as but not limited to: Energy efficiency, Water conservation and waste management.

### Iceland

Iceland is one of the most tourism growth focused countries, with a staggering rate of approximately 20% per year between 2010 and 2016. This sudden increase on tourists forced the country to prepare a programme of sustainable tourism to preserve its unique wilderness. Geothermic and Hydraulic energy cover for 81% of Iceland's energy needs in heat and transportation. Iceland's capital is planned to be fossil fuel free by 2050. Most importantly, the country offers good opportunities for tourists to take an active role in sustainable tourism by limiting the energy consumption in transport and housing.

### UNESCO

The UNESCO declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism. The UNESCO takes care of preserving the culture in countries, and tourism is the main way of learning about different countries' cultures and promoting a countries' own.

### UNWTO

The World Tourism Organization, as its name states, is the United Nations agency that takes care of tourism; it makes sure tourism is responsible, sustainable and accessible. Of course the agencies involvement is aimed at promoting sustainable tourism taking into account economic development.

## **Argentina**

Argentina is a good example of sustainable tourism hand in hand with economic growth. In this case, we can focus on the “Cataratas of Iguazu” that are a great tourism destination for tourists all around the world. In this reserve can be found a Sheraton hotel, many might find this controversial, but what represents less than 1% of the whole reserves area, provides enough income to sustain the reserve plus profit.

## **WTTC**

The World Travel and Tourism Council Is a voice given to business leaders in the travel and tourism industry to speak to governments, and a constant struggler aiming to raise awareness of the importance of the industry worldwide.

## Timeline of important events/Documents

Date	Description of event
1975	First WTO General Assembly
1976	UNWTO secretariat created
1985	Tourism Bill of rights and tourist code
1990	WTTC founded
1992	1st Rio Earth Summit, concept of sustainable development introduced together with sustainable tourism.
1997	Rio +5
2002	Rio +10
2002	World Ecotourism summit
2012	Rio +20
2015	2030 Agenda
2016	7th International Conference on Sustainable Tourism
2017	Declaration for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for development

## **UN involvement**

### **Subtitle - Write here**

**Rio declaration on environment and development.**

**Agenda 21- Action on Sustainable Development.**

**World charter for sustainable tourism +20**

**A/70/215 - Sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America**

**Declaration for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for development 2017**

**(A/RES/69/233) Resolution on Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection**

**(A/RES/67/223) Resolution on Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection**

## Possible Solutions

Unless countries around the world start to take care of the environment which attracts so many people, the possibility to profit from tourism will be none. In order to get the benefits of tourism, tourism itself must be preserved. A person cannot be charged a fee to visit a reserve if there is no reserve to go to, the same with natural wonders and wildlife.

Raise awareness inside countries, to local tourists and foreign tourists so that they know the precautions they should take, teach them in the several ways they can help with sustainable tourism, ways such as but not limited to: Ecotourism, using services and buying goods from locals that the countries label as eco-friendly and such, as set in the example of New Zealand, healthy ways in which tourism can be exploited, acknowledging the harms tourism poses to the environment and limiting them to a minimum.

Tourists themselves should take notice of the precautions to be taken in order to preserve the receiving countries' environment. For tourists to be able to familiarize with this precautions, receiving countries should have clear knowledge of the threats their environment faces, and providing said information to every incoming tourist. What stands out in this problem is the need for tourist and receiving government to work together towards the common goal that is preserving the environment through sustainable tourism. Tourists must be open to learn about healthy tourism and countries must give the necessary resources to make this task easier for tourists.

The use of local businesses and the correct distribution of income from tourism should be promoted by host countries in order to make sure the industry helps towards economic development. We shall not forget the motion addresses not only the way tourism must be carried out, but why is it beneficial for economic development as well. By the single act of protecting the industry, economic development can be continued, but resources and profits that come from the business must be properly directed to make sure economic development reaches its full extension and potential while protecting the environment.

Finally, countries should limit the impacts caused by CO2 Emission due to transport by promoting public transport and low pollutant ways of moving, as well as, placing some kind of controls on hotels' waste management and water wasting. Countries should create and

implement policies that promote sustainable tourism to create jobs and promote local goods and culture.

Countries are looking for ways to preserve their environment, culture and history through eco-friendly means and policies, all they need is a boost from the UN and a clear model to work with to further protect the environment through sustainable tourism.

## List of Sources

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