Forum: 2nd Committee (Economic and Financial)

Issue: Promoting sustainable tourism focusing on environmental protection

Chair: Sebastian Hallstein Mortensen & Stella Jacobs

Description of the issue

Tourism has since the dawn of modern society been a key factor in both economic and cultural development. However, in recent years, with a growing amount of people able to travel and tourist: social, economic and environmental problems have arisen. With special recognition to the latter, 2017 has been declared 'international year of sustainable tourism for development' by the World Tourism Organization.

Tourism harbors millions of jobs in a variety of economic sectors across the globe, and is undeniably embedded in every country in the world, from Africa to Oceania. Tourism today accounts for 10% of the world's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making it a colossal global industry. It is by default both transnational and local at the same time; any and all adjustments will therefore have a lasting impact on both macro- and microeconomic structures around the world.

The industry also has a large stake in pollution and CO_2-emission, which only grows larger due to the increase in availability for different populations.

Studies by some of the leading scientists in the field, as well as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), puts the industry's current share in the world's total CO2-emission to 5%, and around 15% if all greenhouse gases (GHGs) are included.

Nevertheless, in 2050, the industry's share is prospected to increase to a staggering 40% of the globe's CO_2-emission. Tourism currently lacks comprehensive sustainable alternatives, and with an increasing focus on making other sectors more environmentally sustainable, puts the industry far behind.

Any change to the consumption of oil and gas by the aviation industry and the general transport sector, which accounts for accumulated well over 60% of the global usage, will have a lasting effect on oil producing countries such as the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Russian Federation and many more. These alternatives are viewed with skepticism by the oil lobbies, and many fear they are not geared to sustain the demand of the whole industry.

As mentioned before, the industry is layered, which berths a variety of unique challenges with no easy solutions. Issues such as sovereignty, regulation of the free market and much more makes tourism a hot topic of debate.

Explanation of key terms

Carbon footprint

Popular descriptor for a person's, organizations' or events total emission of greenhouse gasses.

Sustainability

The World Commission on Environment and Development (commonly referred to as the Brundtland Commission) established the principle of sustainability in 1987. It refers to sustainability on three different, but equal terms: environmental, social and economic. This principle can be applied to almost anything: macro-, microeconomics, building projects etc.

Responsible tourism

Responsible tourism is *behavior.* It is the act of consciously thinking sustainability into travel and tourism, making a lasting *positive* impact. This was defined at the 2002 Cape Town World Summit on Sustainable Development. Responsible tourism have many branches:

Humane tourism:

The act of the consumer buying tourist services from local businesses, thus developing the microeconomic structure of the area in question. This has particular regard to developing countries.

Responsible hospitality:

The act of the businesses introducing a sustainable strategy. The term is linked with *corporate responsibility.*

Community tourism:

The umbrella term for the two aforementioned key terms.

Ecotourism:

Tourism that conserves the local environments, as well as preserving and contributing to the local people's social status and economic system.

Current United Nations measures

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Tourism, and measures to promote sustainable tourism, is mentioned in three out of 17 goals, namely goal 8, 12 and 14. The SDGs were signed by 154 heads of states, and set the agenda until 2030 in sustainable development.

Link: https://goo.gl/1N77FQ

World Tourism Organization & the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development
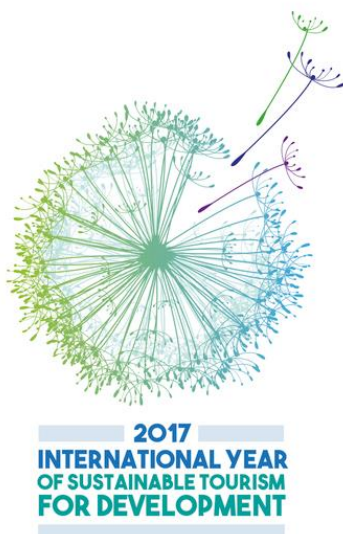
The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is a United Nations agency dedicated to tourism working with both Member States, corporations and branch organizations. The UNWTO works with promoting sustainability within the sector, with notable efforts such as the aforementioned 2017 sustainability-dedicated year of development. The UNWTO works with other United Nations agencies on the matter, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

Link to the UNWTO: https://goo.gl/pHpWh
Link to the IY17: https://goo.gl/VFMTxU

Sustainable Tourism - Eliminating Poverty (STEP)

This programme, apart from having a cool abbreviation, is a collaborate effort between the UNWTO and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to eradicate poverty through tourism. The programme was created at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Link: https://goo.gl/SR3w97

The Marrakech Task Force Sustainable Tourism (MTFST)

Established in 2006, the MTFST is a task force under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that works with all stakeholders in the industry, encouraging and lobbying for sustainability.

Link: https://goo.gl/f5sozE

The 2002 International Year of Ecotourism

The 1998 United Nations General Assembly declared 2002 the "International Year of Ecotourism" (A/RES/53/200). The proposition was first brought up in the Economic and Social Council, and was ratified at the General Assembly.
Link: https://goo.gl/SpTYuV

Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)

The GSTC is an independent and neutral organization, which establishes and manages the criteria within sustainable tourism, both for policy-makers and businesses. The GSTC is also responsible with managing and certificating businesses and policies for sustainability in the sector. The UNWTO is a GSTC sponsor.

Link: https://goo.gl/2Xcmmh

<u>Relevant United Nations legislation</u>

Sustainable Tourism as a key contributor in sustainable development in developing countries

Paragraph 130-31, the Future We Want

Link to paragraph 130: https://goo.gl/kgWBgZ

Link to paragraph 131: https://goo.gl/zjnZ54

Ecotourism and the protection of forests

Paragraph 11.20-11.21, Chapter 7, Agenda 21

Link: https://goo.gl/pLLXT4

Ecotourism and the protection of mountain systems

Paragraph 13.6, Chapter 7, Agenda 21

Link: https://goo.gl/icfrRz

Ecotourism and improvement of farm production and farming systems

Paragraph 14.25, Chapter 7, Agenda 21

Link: https://goo.gl/XGwtuP

Guidelines for the sustainable development of tourism for the protection of vulnerable ecosystems

The International Guidelines for Biological Diversity and Tourism Development, 2004

Link: https://goo.gl/mQECWc

Establishing a united consensus on the issue of sustainable tourism

The Quebec Declaration, Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), 2002

Link: https://goo.gl/BFEuoR

Creating a work exchange programme, further spreading sustainability within the industry

Decision 7/3, the Commission on Sustainable Development, 1999

Link: https://goo.gl/dzqt7p

General ethical guidelines in tourism

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, UNWTO. Specific regard to chapter three.

Link: https://goo.gl/qFq9H7

Additional research

Making tourism more sustainable: A guide for policy makers, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

Link: https://goo.gl/TcZ71L

Sustainable Tourism and the Law: Coping with Climate Change

Link: https://goo.gl/VYWAVg

Position Paper Outline

Please include general information on your country, including topic specific information such as, but not limited to: percentage of the country's GDP made from tourism, which type of tourism is local to your country etc.

Please consider and incorporate the following questions in your research and position paper:

Which efforts have previously been made by your country on the issue?

What further measures is your country prepared to ratify to promote sustainable tourism?

To which extent is your country prepared to give sovereignty on certain aspects of the issue, to United Nations agencies?

Your position paper must be at least a page long and be sent to amun.secondcommittee@gmail.com latest by the 6/9/17.

If you have any questions concerning this topic or a source, please feel free to contact me:
seba7893@rysensteen.dk