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Item 17.6 of the provisional agenda*

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: PROGRESS REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION

Addendum

**RESULTS OF THE ELECTRONIC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT
INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. As mentioned in paragraph 65 of the progress report on cross-cutting issues, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at its seventh meeting, in paragraph (d) of its recommendation VII/5, requested the Executive Secretary to organize an electronic consultation inviting further reactions to the text of the draft International Guidelines for Activities Related to Sustainable Tourism Development in Vulnerable Terrestrial, Marine and Coastal and Mountain Ecosystems that had been prepared by the Workshop on Biological Diversity and Tourism convened in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 4 to 7 June 2001 pursuant to decision V/25 of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Following this request, the Executive Secretary opened an electronic mail box (tourism@biodiv.org) to host the electronic consultation. Comments were submitted by four Governments, namely, Canada, Costa Rica, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Germany. The present note provides a synthesis of these submissions.

Support for the Guidelines and integration of new findings

3. Both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Germany expressed their support for the draft Guidelines. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considered them to be a useful tool for the management

* UNEP/CBD/COP/6/1 and Corr.1/Rev.1.

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of tourism activities, since economic considerations are still dominant in the decision-making processes in the tourism sector in the country, and environmental and biodiversity considerations have not become an integral component of tourism planning.

4. Germany has suggested the application of the draft Guidelines in field projects and the integration of the findings into the Guidelines.

Format and language

5. Costa Rica reported lack of consistency in the development of the different thematic areas and difficult language, resulting in difficulties in understanding the text of the draft Guidelines. According to Costa Rica, the structure and content do not correspond to what technically is defined as “guidelines”, and implementation suggestions to government and other sectors are often not concrete.

General comments

6. According to Canada, the draft guidelines confound assessment of possible impacts of new tourism developments with management of impacts of existing tourism developments. Elements of both are covered together under “Impacts assessment” and “Impact management” (in “Management process steps”, part B). However, the emphasis is largely on the former. The draft guidelines also tend to confound the preparation of a sustainable tourism strategy at the national level with assessments of individual tourism projects. They fail to recognize that individual bioregions (subnational) may provide the most effective scale for tourism planning and stakeholder involvement.

7. The management process steps should address how to manage impacts, manage resources, and manage visitors. Impact assessment and management processes are described in a planning context. However, resource management; and the assessment, targeting, and management of visitor impacts; are covered only in a cursory fashion.

8. A number of successful models are emerging where government is not the instigator of sustainable tourism development. Globally, many countries lack government resources to carry out all the management process steps in annex I. Various types of partnerships and alternatives should be examined, not just included as stakeholder involvement.

9. The “notification process” outlined in part C is essentially a framework for environmental impact assessment. It duplicates information in “Impact assessment” (paragraphs 39-53). Both of these sections are largely aimed at small-scale developments and omit consideration of cumulative impacts. A more efficient and cost-effective approach to tourism development is for governments and other parties to develop a ‘desired outcomes’ vision for a particular region. Potential developers will know ahead of time if their plans/concepts match in a basic way the policies and vision for that region, rather than reacting to government-led processes of which they may not be aware.

Specific comments

10. Canada also provided the Secretariat with comments specific to some paragraphs of the text of the draft Guidelines, as follows:

(a) *Paragraph 8* - Consultation processes need to include more than information-sharing. There must be a willingness to share control. A key to sustainable tourism is local control of tourism. There needs to be mutual learning, including appropriate ways to access traditional and community-based

knowledge of local stakeholders, including indigenous communities. A process based on consensus-building is quite different from consultation;

(b) *Paragraph 9* - A national commission based on stakeholders would not work in larger countries, with different ecosystem types and different characteristics of tourism in each. Distinct bioregions will have different stakeholder groups, and different expertise among individuals and publics;

(c) *Paragraph 15 (g)* - Many Parties have prepared only biodiversity strategies, and not action plans. Only the latter contain the specifics needed to help move forward;

(d) *Paragraph 32 (a)* - While national legal recognition of Ramsar sites and Biosphere Reserves is well and good, government assistance for management, as opposed to legal recognition, is needed to promote sustainable tourism at these sites. Many “paper parks” exist with no support for managing tourism and other benefits/pressures;

(e) *Paragraph 54* - The concept of carrying capacity in the tourism context was rejected by recreation planners over 25 years ago. Artificial limits may be placed on anything, but there is no linear relationship between numbers and impact. Accounting for behavioural elements is the key. New rapid-appraisal tools are finding widespread use, especially for developing areas, and should be considered;

(f) *Paragraph 59* - Although there are some elements of visitor management and resource management here, this is a very cursory treatment. These topics warrant separate and more detailed consideration;

(g) *Paragraph 62* – Decision-making is not a step that “flows out” of the previous material. These points are conditions for success in any process;

(h) *Paragraphs 70-75* - With respect to implementation, the possibility of government reversals due to the political process is a real risk in the context of these management process steps. A process so comprehensive will obviously be lengthy. Governments truly need to be resolute to proceed with the planning of their predecessors. The notion of monitoring and enforcing compliance (paragraph 74) is at best a fall-back and at worst an indication that tourism planning has not adequately engaged the tourism industries, local communities, and tourists themselves;

(i) *Paragraphs 76-84* -The monitoring section is quite detailed, and could be considered as an ideal. But even most developed countries are not likely doing all this, consistently, comprehensively, and across all levels of planning. A rapid evaluation process for any one destination is needed to put some of these points into perspective.
