

UN Vision Project on Global Public Policy Networks

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THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVE AND THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Case Study for the UN Vision Project on Global Public Policy Networks

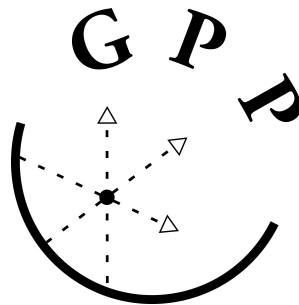


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UNDERLYING PROBLEM

The travel and tourism industry relies heavily on natural and cultural resources, both to produce its product and as an attraction for visitors. Travel and tourism related activities, however, can result in undesirable consequences for these resources, such as air and water pollution, overuse of parklands and loss of authenticity of traditional arts. These negative impacts affect the quality and sustainability of the tourist destinations as well as the quality of life for the permanent community. The benefits from tourism – job creation and cash receipts, often in desired foreign currencies, as well as its role as a stimulus for improved infrastructure and as an economic incentive to conserve natural habitats – make tourism development an attractive option in spite of its drawbacks. Concerned actors have increasingly sought to address the negative impacts to ensure the long-term sustainability of travel and tourism. These actors include representatives from governments, international and nongovernmental organizations, and the industry itself.

This case study examines a collaborative effort undertaken by representatives from industry and international and nongovernmental organizations to address the sustainability of tourism. Three organizations, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), an organization comprised of chief executives from all sectors of the industry, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism, and the Earth Council, an international nongovernmental organization created to promote and advance the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements, teamed up to draft “Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry,” which tailored the Earth Summit document entitled “Agenda 21” to the industry’s concerns. Each of the three actors came to the table with a slightly different perspective and mission, but they recognized their complimentary interests and developed a document that has been recognized as a useful tool for the industry. They have continued to collaborate to raise awareness of the Agenda and encourage adoption of the principles it embodies, although the Earth Council does not maintain a sustainable tourism program like the other two actors and therefore has played a smaller role in the follow-up to the Agenda’s drafting. Overall, the organizations in this coordination network – an effort to gather stakeholders to share information and/or develop standards – have adopted a primarily horizontal organizational structure, although they have introduced a vertical dimension by bringing in regional actors to increase awareness of the principles in the Agenda and to adapt its principles to the specific roles of governments and the private sector.

Impacts from the travel and tourism industry can be placed in two broad categories: impacts on the socioeconomic and cultural environment and impacts on the physical environment (Costa and Nobel 1999). Socioeconomic and cultural impacts include the positive aspects of economic revenues and economic conservation incentives as well as negative impacts such as overcrowding and loss of amenities for residents, crime and prostitution. Impacts on the physical environment include alterations to either the natural or built environment and are often undesirable, such as excess sewage, air or visual pollution and damage to parklands or historic sites. The industry's short-term profit calculations generally only take the positive economic revenues into account and do not consider the negative impacts, which are usually evident only in the longer term, are tragedy-of-the-commons-type impacts where operators do not believe that their individual contribution makes them responsible for the problem, and/or are environmental or societal externalities that are not accounted for in standard economic calculations.

The travel and tourism industry's size magnifies these impacts and calls attention to the need to address them. The industry is the world's largest and is growing at a fast pace. By 2000, the industry is expected to generate, directly and indirectly, 11.7% of global GDP. Earnings from international tourism are expected to rise from US\$439 billion in 1998 to more than US\$2 trillion by 2020. The number of international arrivals is expected to increase from 600 million to about 1.6 billion by 2020. The World Tourism Organization reports that the number of international tourists grew worldwide from 463 million to 594 million between 1992 and 1997 and projects that the number will double between 1990 and 2010. Four to five times as many people travel inside their own countries (WTO 1999; Yunis 1999; WTO as cited in Honey 1999, 8).

The mere size of this industry suggests its potential to affect the communities in which it operates. Its magnitude also suggests the global nature of the tourism industry. Industry actors, however, range from small indigenous entrepreneurs to large multinational companies, government regulators to the traveling public. Efforts to address the industry's sustainability therefore require a variety of issue- and site-specific actions in multiple countries by a range of actors at all stages of tourism development and product delivery. Sustainable tourism requires cooperation between and among countries and actors on joint projects and lessons learned as well as changed behavior by individual actors.

Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry offers guidelines and principles along which such changed practices could take place. It was not designed to provide a

comprehensive answer to all the industry's impacts, but it promotes learning and changed behavior, particularly through a series of regional meetings that its drafters have organized since developing the document. These regional meetings bring together actors who might not have otherwise communicated with each other and allows them to exchange ideas and solutions suited to their individual circumstances. These actors' deliberations also feed back to the original document in the form of annual "Progress Notes," which, when taken together with Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, represent the network's latest thinking on sustainable development. Some criticize the Agenda because it relies primarily on self-regulation as a means to address the market failures it seeks to address (Honey 1999, 33). This choice of focus stems from the framers' preferences. While not comprehensive in approach or choice of means for implementation, the network surrounding Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry remains one of the most organized and far reaching in promoting awareness and action on best practices for sustainable tourism. This case study elaborates on the Agenda, its drafters and their efforts to communicate the principles it contains to the regional actors and then adapt the principles based on regional actors' experiences.

CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE NETWORK'S CREATION

Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry and the tripartite collaboration surrounding its drafting and implementation resulted directly from the June 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – the Rio Earth Summit – and the rising international awareness of sustainable development principles that it signified and promoted. The Earth Summit raised international recognition that sustainability was an issue to be addressed and incorporated into all levels of activities. Many of those in attendance took this message to heart and examined how they could change their personal and business and/or governmental practices.

UNCED met twenty years after the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. During the intervening twenty years, international awareness and concern about environmental issues and damage was rising and, in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development made the connection in its report *Our Common Future* between environmental protection and global economic growth and development. This report was particularly instrumental in framing the issues discussed in Rio; it is credited with introducing the concept of "sustainable development" into the

mainstream of world debate (Sitarz 1993). Sustainable development connotes the interconnection between environmental protection and social and economic development. The member states of the United Nations decided at UNCED that these issues would no longer be addressed as individual concepts but rather as interrelated issues to be treated holistically.

Travel and tourism, like all other activities, therefore were not to be viewed strictly as economic activities but rather in light of their environment and social as well as economic impacts. The documents emanating from Rio did not address travel and tourism specifically, but provided concepts to be considered in the conduct of the industry's business. The Earth Summit's prolific output included the Rio Declaration of principles, two treaties – the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity – which were opened for signature in Rio, the Statement of Principles on Forests, and Agenda 21. The latter was most relevant for the travel and tourism industry. Maurice Strong, the Secretary-General of UNCED, said this six hundred-page document

“should provide the basic framework and instrumentality which will guide the world community on an ongoing basis in its decisions on the goals, targets, priorities, allocation of responsibilities and resources in respect of the many environmental development issues which will determine the future of our planet” (Johnson 1994: 125).

Agenda 21 paid only passing reference to travel and tourism activities, but it provided a framework through which related guidelines could be developed.

Many of the actors involved in the development of these related guidelines – in the form of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry – attended UNCED. The Rio Earth Summit brought together nearly one hundred world leaders – the largest such gathering to that date – as well as thousands of representatives from governments and nongovernmental and international organizations, including business and industry. A participant of particular note in connection with Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry was Maurice Strong, Secretary-General for UNCED and Chairman of the subsequently established Earth Council. In addition to his Earth Summit and Earth Council ties, he was instrumental in setting up and

encouraging participation in UNCED by the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD), whose message was “what was good for the environment was (probably) good for business as well” (Johnson 1994: 10). The World Travel and Tourism Council’s Business Leader’s Forum also attended and took the message of Rio with them when they left, as did representatives from the World Tourism Organization.

Following UNCED, the WTTC, WTO and Earth Council each evaluated and identified – and in the case of the Earth Council created – its own role in relationship to the Rio agreements as well as worked with the other organizations to develop a joint response. The WTTC perhaps instigated the greatest alteration of its activities following Rio. The WTTC describes these changes as having positioned the organization to take a "responsive role in the evolving global strategy in this area" (WTTC 1999). In addition to collaborating to develop Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, the WTTC incorporated sustainable development as a key plank of its Millennium Vision Policy Framework, created the GREEN GLOBE environmental improvement system for companies and destinations – incorporating an ISO (International Standards Organization) certification procedure to provide public recognition for meeting certain standards – and launched, with the European Union’s support, an Internet-based information site (EcoNETT) to spread information on good practices.

The WTTC’s approach during the post-Rio period resembles what Fombrun (1997) labels the three pillars of corporate citizenship: ethics, social benefit and profitability. The WTTC (1999) advertises that it plays

“a leading role in developing the principles and practice of sustainable tourism against the background of three overriding realities: the fact that the environment is at the core of the travel product and will be increasingly important to travelers; the global imperatives identified at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and particularly its Agenda 21 framework for action; and the belief that through good management and infrastructure expansion, travel and tourism can play a positive role in achieving sustainable development.”

The WTTC (1998) recognized that sustainability was a “moral issue – in relation to the post-Rio world imperatives,” that “properly managed, tourism can be one of the most

potent positive forces for moving society towards sustainability,” and that sustainability is “a business issue because sustainable practices will control long term costs, enhance market appeal and reduce the burden of regulation.” The profit calculation, including an emphasis on acting proactively to avoid governmental regulation, set the WTTC apart from its other collaborators, although they shared many other objectives.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) is the leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism and “serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how” (WTO 1999). This intergovernmental body’s membership includes one hundred thirty-eight countries and territories and more than three hundred fifty affiliate members representing local government, tourism associations and the private sector. The WTO and WTTC are natural allies, given the WTO’s standing as the principle intergovernmental organization with responsibility for tourism and the WTTC’s membership of chief executives from many of the world’s largest tourism corporations. The involvement of both in the Agenda effort has raised its profile. These organizations have worked together on other issues; the two organizations have collaborated in particular on satellite accounting methods, whereby efforts are made to measure tourism’s impact across an economy in its broadest sense. Collaboration with the WTTC on the Agenda 21 project flowed from this pre-existing relationship, particularly given the WTO’s international standing, wide membership and mission – to help countries maximize positive impacts, such as foreign exchange earnings and infrastructure development, and minimize negative environmental or social impacts.

The third participant’s – the Earth Council’s – objectives complimented those of its partners, although its role in the network was more as an instigator than long-term implementer. The Earth Council was created following UNCED in September 1992

“to promote awareness for the needed transition to more sustainable and equitable patterns of development, to encourage public participation in decision-making processes at all levels of government, and to build bridges of understanding and cooperation between important actors of civil society and governments worldwide (Earth Council 1999).”

An 18-member board, with participants drawn from the world's political, business, scientific and nongovernmental communities, heads the Earth Council. The Council seeks to promote and advance the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements, in part by

collaborating with major international networks to encourage their memberships to adopt sustainable development principles. The Earth Council Chairman's ties with business community networks led him to encourage, for example, the WTTC to better integrate sustainable development within its membership (Leger 1999). The Earth Council has since worked with the WTTC on another tourism-related project; in 1997 it worked with GREEN GLOBE to develop an international "passport" to promote sustainable tourism by providing travelers with information and an economic incentive to support environmentally and socially responsible tourism businesses. On tourism issues, however, the Earth Council's involvement has focused on challenging membership organizations to promote sustainable development and collaborating to create tools for sustainable development rather than devoting programming and funding to support their implementation. Programming-wise, the Earth Council works primarily with National Councils for Sustainable Development to strengthen this multi-stakeholder mechanism and to promote the integration of environmental issues within the social and economic sustainable development plans of their respective countries (Leger 1999). This emphasis has meant that, while the Earth Council is called a partner in the network for Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, it has played a smaller role in the regional seminar series than the other two partners.

Following UNCED and at the prompting of Maurice Strong and the Earth Council, the WTTC rose to the challenge, raised special funding and organized in collaboration with the Earth Council and WTO a series of workshops to develop an Agenda 21 for the Tourism industry, including its implications at the regional levels through regional consultations and workshops (Leger 1999). These organizations began with an eighteen-month study on how to fill the newly apparent gap between the lessons of Rio and the travel and tourism industry's approach to development. The WTO first drafted principles using the UNCED Agenda 21 for reference. The WTTC then developed the draft, incorporating examples of good practice that reflected the principles. The Earth Council provided input on the final draft (Yunis 1999). These roles reflect the relative strengths that each organization brought to the drafting. The WTO would be better versed in interpreting the UN language, actors and relationships encoded in Agenda 21 to the travel and tourism industry's needs. The WTTC's line of vision is closer to activity on the ground, including examples of best practices. The Earth Council would see that recommendations for decision-making procedures incorporated consultations with civil society. Based on these inputs, the three organizations released the resulting Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry in 1996.

A finding in a non-profit non-state actor's "Review of Codes of Practice for Sustainable Tourism" (Gardiner 1998) of particular interest for this case study is that the issues addressed by codes of practice for sustainable tourism vary according to whether the code has been designed by an industry, government or non-profit non-state group, such as the Earth Council. All three groups tend to emphasize environmental over socio-economic and cultural issues, but codes drafted by industrial groups contain a higher percentage of environmental concerns than codes by the other two groups, codes drafted by non-profit non-state groups contain a higher percentage of cultural concerns than codes by the other two groups, and codes drafted by international governments contain a higher percentage of socio-economic concerns than codes by the other two groups.^a

This finding highlights the importance of a tripartite network – the greater the variety of input, the more comprehensive the output. The three organizations – WTO, WTTC and Earth Council – focused on different aspects of a shared objective, therefore enriching the product. Their input was not, however, equal at all stages of drafting, which could have affected the framing of the issues; some non-profit, non-state groups outside the network do not think the document fully incorporates their interests, as discussed later (Marsh 1999). The tripartite involvement of public, private and NGO actors makes Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry fairly unique among such global public policy networks and an effort to involve all segments of actors from the start to ensure a near-universal feeling of ownership, such as the process and result for UNCED's Agenda 21, is not feasible or necessarily expected from such a network, but it is worthwhile to remember that the network's framing and direction are a product of its owners and may not enjoy unanimous acceptance.

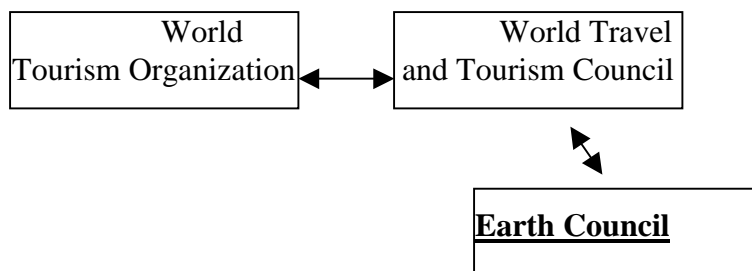
The result of the tripartite collaboration – Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry – like the document upon which it was based and as would be expected given the interests of the three drafting organizations, states the importance of partnerships between government, industry and non-profit, non-state organizations. The document analyzes the economic importance of travel and tourism and demonstrates the benefits to making the industry sustainable. Most practically, it identifies priority areas for action with defined objectives and suggests ways through which to achieve them. Nine priority actions are

^a Gardiner (1998) examines 51 codes of conduct, 14 developed by governments, 12 by non-state non-profit groups and 25 by industry groups. The study, however, does not specify how it treated codes such as Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, which was drafted by all three types of the actors examined.

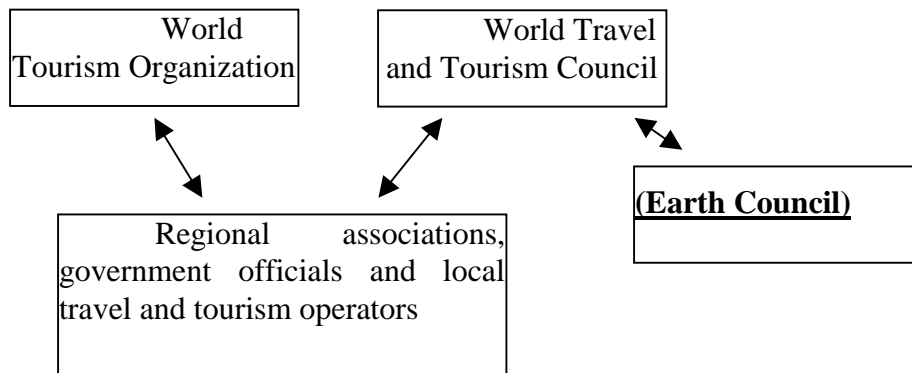
directed at governments and ten at travel and tourism companies to help them establish systems and procedures to incorporate sustainable development issues at the core of decision-making processes and core management functions and to identify actions needed to bring sustainable tourism into being. The network circulated the document to governments, industry, non-profit, non-state organizations and the media. More significantly for their continued collaboration and elaboration of the Agenda, they initiated a five-year program of regional seminars to increase awareness and promote local implementation. The results of these seminars are incorporated into Progress Notes on Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry.

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS IN THE NETWORK

The network commenced as a drafting exercise during which the three collaborators sought to identify priority actions through which government and industry actors could develop systems and procedures to incorporate sustainable tourism considerations into their decision-making processes. During this phase, the WTO and WTTC's input resembled a primarily horizontal and one-dimensional structure, although each organization's membership extends from the international to more local levels. The Earth Council encouraged the project from the start and was brought in at the end of the drafting effort. It has played a subsidiary, supportive role to the network and interacts primarily through its contacts with the WTTC, as illustrated in the following organogram:



The network, primarily the WTTC, then raised funds to enable it to take the newly drafted Agenda to the organizing institutions' members. Beginning in 1997, the network launched a five-year series of biannual regional seminars to increase awareness of the Agenda and importance of sustainable development and to adapt Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry for local implementation. The partners report that the network's objective is becoming more focused as they look for principles that mirror the specific roles of government and the private sector (Yunis 1999). Their efforts to raise awareness and to focus on specific principles have involved a new layer of actors – those at the regional and local levels – as depicted in the second organogram below:



The network's partners describe their mode of operation for the regional seminars and Agenda adaptation as one of flexible, fluid coordination. Face-to-face meetings between partners occur at least once a year, during which they discuss the progress of Agenda 21 within the industry and among stakeholders along with other issues related to ensuring the applicability of its principles (Yunis 1999). The partners also meet with regional actors at the twice-yearly regional seminars. The network has no steering committee or other formal decision-making structure. As noted earlier, the Earth Council has not maintained a program priority for this issue and therefore has played a lesser role in the regional seminar series, although it co-hosted two seminars.

The network's major decisions concern the planning, organization and location of future seminars to disseminate the principles and recommendations contained in the Agenda,

as well as finding suitable successful case studies of sustainable tourism projects to be presented at these seminars. Actors in regions that have not yet met are encouraged to present their interest in hosting a meeting to either the WTO or the WTTC, following which representatives from the two organizations coordinate their response and, ultimately, meeting arrangements in conjunction with local actors – primarily associations or alliances of travel and tourism companies as well as the host government. Regional seminars convened from 1997-1999 in London, Jakarta, Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe), Dominica, Berlin and Hong Kong. These six meetings brought together over 400 senior tourism government officials and private business people (Yunis 1999). Both the WTO and WTTC use their contacts and data bases to select speakers and participants to invite to these meetings.

The regional workshops therefore form the crux of network activity at the moment. These workshops perform an important function in addressing the market failure that the network was created to correct – they inform actors in the industry about the benefits and means to pursue sustainable development and the costs to do otherwise. The exchanges and discussions are reported to be at a high level, with active involvement from the host and neighboring governments, industry representatives and important NGOs (Leger 1999). The workshops, however, are designed primarily to exchange information rather than to instigate regional sub-networks or some other follow-up activity. In the absence of the emergence at these meetings of a regional political will to collaborate on tourism, which generally is not an expectation from the meetings and has not been reported to be found, regional actors return to their activities with new information and contacts with the central information sources of the WTTC and WTO, but not necessarily with new, lasting ties at the regional level. For this reason, the second organogram depicts vertical lines of communication between the regional actors and WTO and WTTC but does not breakdown the regional actors by type or depict horizontal lines of communication between them.

Leadership in this network has emanated from both the individuals and organizations involved. Maurice Strong is credited with establishing the initial contacts for the drafting of the Agenda as a follow-up to the WTTC and WTO's involvement at Rio (Leger 1999). One of the Earth Council's activities has been to encourage large international networks and organizations to promote and tailor sustainable development principles to their members' needs; Strong's ties to UNCED, the business community and the Earth Council combined with the recognition of the travel and tourism industry's size and impact contributed to the Earth Council's initial encouragement for the WTTC in particular to promote sustainable tourism.

The Earth Council stands ready to play a supportive role for the organizations it has encouraged to explore sustainable development applications, but follow-through with the resulting program and the organizations' membership remains the specialty of the target organization. The regional seminar series has therefore resulted primarily from WTTC and WTO efforts, and these two organizations have embraced the challenge. Their success is credited to both individuals' and organizational support. Individuals in leadership positions at the WTTC, outgoing President Geoffrey Lipman, and the WTO, Deputy Secretary-General Dawid de Villiers, are credited for their efforts in promoting the Agenda program.^b The network has also benefited from the involvement of dedicated individuals at the programmatic level (Hodgson 1999).

Both the WTO and WTTC as organizations have endorsed the principles of sustainable development, which also contributes to the network's success. The WTO "exists to help nations throughout the world maximize the positive impacts of tourism, such as job creation, new infrastructure and foreign exchange earnings, while at the same time minimizing negative environmental or social impacts" (WTO 1999). As a result, the WTO would promote sustainable development principles for travel and tourism even in the absence of its collaboration with the WTTC on Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry. The WTTC's almost simultaneous actions to adopt sustainable development as a key plank of its Millennium Vision Policy Framework and to work with the WTO and Earth Council to draft Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry has captured its programming objective in its organizational objectives and vice-versa. This organizational promise reinforces individuals' commitment to the Agenda program and network as well as organizational support for individuals' related initiatives. A recent change in leadership at the WTTC and expected

^b The Earth Times credits Lipman for lobbying successfully at the five-year review of UNCED against an international airline transportation tax intended to generate revenue to promote environmental protection; Lipman is quoted as stating that such a tax would "simply create further bureaucracy that would stymie the innovations the travel and tourism industry were already making on their own" (as cited in Honey 1999, 33). While many arguments exist for the tax being an inappropriate way to promote sustainable development and it is doubtful that Lipman was single-handedly responsible for the failure of the proposal, both as sole lobbyist and as representative of the sole view against the tax, this incident reminds the reader that participants in a public policy network may have to reconcile competing interests. The WTTC, for example, represents the world's largest tourism corporations and may encounter competing interests when it comes to proposed taxes and regulations to promote sustainable development and respond in ways that do not best address the market failure they were created to correct.

discussions and decisions on how to continue at the end of the five-year seminar series are two events that should provide further information on the roles and commitment of leadership and the organizations in this network, although it is too early at the time of writing to anticipate the results.

LOCAL-GLOBAL/NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

This network's key to success stems from how widely the principles in Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry can be communicated to and how well they can be translated into everyday actions at the local level. The five-year regional seminar series provides a vehicle for these activities. It also provides a link between the Northern-based organizing institutions – the WTO in Madrid and the WTTC in London – and travel and tourism associations and businesses in the South. Another opportunity for linkages with additional actors – in this case with actors from the international to local levels – was provided at the 1999 meeting of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). These linkages were not strictly related to the Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry network, but nonetheless they expanded awareness of the Agenda and identified additional activities, actors and concerns surrounding the industry through several dialogue sessions on sustainable tourism between participants from trade unions, industry, local governments and nongovernmental organizations and government officials. This section explores the network's linkages between different levels and areas of actors.

Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry was drafted primarily at the global level. UNCED's Agenda 21, which was drafted by a global forum of UN member states, served as its model. Both Agenda 21 and Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry were drafted with local implementation in mind and their recommended actions are general enough to enable tailoring to specific needs, but they remain primarily global level documents. Nongovernmental actors offered input to the UNCED Agenda 21 drafting exercise, but the consensus agreement focused on aggregate, least common denominators acceptable to the global community of states. The WTTC and WTO's memberships of chief executive officers and governments and travel associations, respectively, also represent perspectives closer to the global level than to those of small-scale operators. The network's current objective, therefore, is to focus on and identify principles that mirror the specific roles

of government and the private sector. The network has brought in new actors through its regional meetings to accomplish this goal.

Attendees at regional meetings generally accept Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry as a useful tool, but highlight the need to tailor it to regional circumstances for local implementation (WTTC 1998). As noted earlier, these meetings bring together government officials, industry representatives and NGOs to share their experiences and learn from the lessons the network has already identified. Participants at these meetings develop recommendations for further action, which are incorporated into annual Progress Notes put out by the network. This record of salient points from the regional meetings, taken together with Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, represents the network's latest thinking on sustainable development. This process allows the document along with the regional meeting participants to change based on the lessons learned by others.

The 1999 Seventh Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development brought together representatives of the travel and tourism industry, trade unions, local governments and nongovernmental and international organizations to discuss sustainable tourism issues and concerns with UN government representatives. This meeting represented the first time that tourism was discussed at length in the CSD, which was created following Rio to follow-up and coordinate implementation of the UNCED agreements, particularly Agenda 21. The CSD's agenda included tourism due to several governments' specific interest in the issue rather due to any urging or outcome from the Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry network, although this network's background and experience increased the industry's organization and allowed it to present a more experience-based response than it might have otherwise. The CSD session provided the network the opportunity to discuss and promote the tool it offers for sustainable tourism and to dialogue with a variety of groups with whom they normally would not have the opportunity to exchange views and learn about these other groups' activities and ideas for implementing the UNCED outcome.

The network had hoped that one outcome of this meeting would have been greater recognition of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry as the key document for sustainable tourism development, but, as noted earlier, some nongovernmental tourism activists have been less accepting of the document and they lobbied against such recognition. Although the Earth Council brought an NGO perspective to the drafting table, they believe the text does not represent all their concerns and perspectives regarding required action. Several representatives from NGOs and trade unions particularly objected during the 1999 CSD

session to governments' references to Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry as an example of a voluntary initiative in the field. They believed that such a reference would amount to the endorsement of a document that was drafted without full input in an open process (Marsh 1999; Wagner 1999). This event reminds the reader that this network, while widely recognized, does not respond to all perceived requirements for changed industry action.

A number of opportunities for new partnerships arose out of this meeting, nonetheless. During their joint participation in the Tourism Segment, for example, the WTTC and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) signed an agreement to work in partnership (Hodgson 1999). These two organizations agreed to explore how to integrate Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry and Local Agenda 21 planning – the adaptation of Agenda 21 to the circumstances of local governments and needs – into their respective work (Bettelli et al. 1999). The Earth Council also works with ICLEI, so this agreement could create multiple network overlaps. Based on an NGO suggestion, the UN member states in the CSD proposed that a working group be convened to assess financial leakages from tourism – funds that travelers spend but that do not remain in the destination country's economy – and determine how to maximize benefits for indigenous and local communities (UN 1999). The WTO, as an implementing UN organization, is taking the lead organizational role for this meeting and has invited its network partners – the WTTC and Earth Council – plus all other stakeholders to the first meeting of this working group, which will take place in Costa Rica in January 2000. This activity is not likely to generate new sub-networks on its own, but it will again bring together actors who might not have conversed otherwise to exchange ideas and learn from each other's perspective on sustainable tourism development.

The WTTC served as a co-organizer for industry representatives to the CSD meeting and, together with the WTO and Earth Council, created the Alliance for Sustainable Tourism to help prepare for it. Tourism industry operators were encouraged to become signatories and to share information and best practices through this web-based platform for exchange on sustainable development initiatives. Through this initiative the network sought to provide universal access to information and action on Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry through the Internet "to increase transparency between government and industry bodies," particularly given the industry's concern that calls for harmonization of approaches could lead to "unproductive, time-wasting regulation and conflict of positions" especially between public and private sector approaches (WTTC 1999).

This initiative brought in new input concerning best practices around the world. The Internet approach was complimented by sending letters to a large number of contacts, asking them to provide details of their activities in relation to sustainable development. The effort was aimed at organizations, most of whom have access to the Internet, and by supplementing it with inquiries by letter, a considerable amount of information was gathered (Hodgson 1999). The information flow was two-way but primarily directed toward the network in its effort to record existing practice. Any continuing ties would be from actors who became aware of the Agenda 21 network and became involved in it as a side-effect of joining the Alliance.

OUTCOME AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE NETWORK

This network's success can be evaluated on a number of levels. Participants tend to emphasize criteria such as networking opportunities, creation of new awareness and the degree of engagement by governments (Hodgson 1999). These process achievements probably represent the network's greatest success. The regional meetings in particular have brought together a cross-spectrum of actors from a variety of countries who might not have interacted otherwise and have allowed them to share experiences and learn about sustainable development principles. The Agenda and its network also provide a ready forum for collaboration and draft format for action. The ready forum, for example, proved useful for the 1999 CSD deliberations. The network was not responsible for the CSD decision to discuss tourism, but the fact that the industry had a ready umbrella for collaboration and experiences to share facilitated the discussion. The fact that the Agenda provides a draft format for action has provided an inroad when presenting ideas about sustainable tourism to interested governments. For example, the British government recently launched a new strategy for tourism that explicitly recognizes the link with Agenda 21 and, following input from the WTTC and others, takes account of the principles set out in Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry (Hodgson 1999).

Substantively, the network's success is harder to assess. The network's awareness raising efforts have no doubt inspired changed habits according to the principles in Agenda 21, but the network has no monitoring mechanism to follow-up actors' experiences with these principles to learn whether they have applied them and how much they have affected the sustainability of tourism. Participants at regional seminars have commented on this

shortcoming and suggested that there should be more measurement of progress towards environmental goals (WTTC 1998). NGOs at the CSD have also called for evaluations of voluntary industry initiatives such as Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry. They agree that the initiatives are a positive step forward, but pending an evaluation of whether industry is improving its environmental performance by adhering to such initiatives and whether the improvement is worth the effort, the true impact on the environment remains in question (Carpenter et al. 1998).

The network also does not incorporate financing considerations into its activities. The tripartite network has funded drafting and awareness-raising efforts for Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry, but it does not extend to implementation per se. The network incorporates no arrangements to fund changes to infrastructure and processes that might be necessary to become more sustainable. Participants at one regional meeting highlighted this shortcoming and the need for additional actors – international, national and local funding bodies – to incorporate the concerns raised by the network into their decision criteria (WTTC 1998).

Missing elements such as monitoring and funding remind the reader that Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry and the network surrounding it do not provide *the* single approach or center for action on sustainable tourism. The WTTC, WTO and Earth Council recognized a gap following UNCED, but their assessment of the best way to fill it was not through a comprehensive arrangement. Gardiner's study of existing codes of conduct for sustainable tourism notes that "the structure of existing codes of practice has been developed in a rather piece-meal manner, reflecting the immediate needs and interests of differing groups" (1998, 14). While the network represents an important start, Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry focuses on "self-monitoring and 'green' innovations that save money" (Honey 1999, 33), which fit industry's competing demands between profits and responding to the international concerns about sustainable development. Critics of the Agenda suggest that self-regulation by the industry will not be enough to address the market failures, stem the negative impacts and make tourism sustainable. They also highlight the Agenda's emphasis on free-trade, privatization and government deregulation – two of the Agenda's guiding principles call on nations to "cooperate to promote an open economic system in which international trade in travel and tourism services can take place" and propose that "protectionism in trade in travel and tourism services should be halted or reversed" (WTTC, WTO and Earth Council 1995) – and note concerns that small-scale indigenous actors will suffer if large multinational corporations are given the opportunity to expand

(Honey 1999, 32). While the benefits and costs of free trade and globalization and their implications for sustainable development are a matter of ongoing debate and lie beyond the scope of this study, the complexities of potential impacts call for full input by all affected actors – a forum that Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry network does not supply.

The question of who should do monitoring and assessment and what criteria should be used are not clear cut issues, however, and the enormity of the industry and variety of actors would make a single system of codes of conduct or oversight structure a substantial undertaking. The regional seminar series and feedback opportunities it offers ensures that Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry reflects more than the immediate needs and interests of the three drafters, although the network at base is a product of its creators. Education and information on best practices are necessary no matter what approach is pursued, and participants at regional meetings are reported to engage in useful and insightful dialogue in this regard. Whether the momentum can be sustained after each individual and the five-year series of regional meetings remains to be seen and measured, but the network has engaged many of the relevant actors in the issue and therefore has laid the groundwork for change in this field.

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