

Tourism, a factor of sustainable development

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All forms of tourism development that are conducive to saving rare and precious resources, in particular water and energy, as well as avoiding so far as possible waste production, should be given priority and encouraged by national, regional and local public authorities;

To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.

A sustainable future depends on the careful management of resources to ensure their availability for present and future generations. Resources that are non-renewable, in limited supply, or essential for life support are of particular concern. These include land, fresh water, forests, minerals and fossil fuels. Conservation of energy is important, especially where it is derived from non-renewable resources.

Tourism is a significant user of resources in many areas. Ensuring that it uses resources efficiently is important both for the wellbeing of the local environment and host community and in maintaining global resources. Efficient use of resources, notably energy derived from fossil fuels, is also important in the reduction of polluting emissions. Resource efficiency in tourism will be achieved largely by changing the consumption patterns of tourists and tourism enterprises. Enterprises should be encouraged to establish environmental management systems to minimize impacts and drive a process of continual improvement.

To minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.

Maintaining environmental purity means reducing waste and harmful emissions to the environment in order to preserve the quality of the air, water and land that sustain life, health and biodiversity. Actions should address all aspects of pollution prevention and control throughout the lifecycle of tourism development, during and after the use of facilities, as well as the impacts of tourists themselves.

Although local impacts on the environment, such as local air and water quality, are the most immediately apparent to local communities and to visitors, the tourism industry also has global environmental impacts.

Governments need to recognize the responsibilities towards both the global and the local environment that are inherent in maintaining environmental purity. There is a need for a profound change in the way we generate and use energy and in other activities that release greenhouse and other gases into the atmosphere. Global pollution may also impact many local destinations through the consequences of climate change.

As with promoting resource efficiency, waste and pollution control will be achieved largely by changing the consumption patterns of tourists and tourism enterprises. This should be a key component of individual environmental management systems within enterprises.