

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**PLAN OF ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIAN
AND PACIFIC REGION
(1999-2005)**

A PROGRESS REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

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**UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2001**

ST/ESCAP/2181

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

Sales No. E.02.II.F.38

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ISBN: 92-1-120100-4

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The study on the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and Pacific Region (1999-2005): A Progress Report was undertaken with financial assistance from the Government of Japan. The study was prepared by Ms. Marjorie Suriyamongkol, Consultant.

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This publication has been issued without formal editing.

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Introduction

In recent years, the concept of sustainable development has been used to advocate a general rethinking of economic development. One of the basic issues behind this concept is whether traditional economic development brings greater prosperity and better living only in the short term, thereby placing long-term prosperity and the quality of life for future generations at greater risk. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, a set of principles, goals and activities leading to sustainable development was endorsed by signatory nations. The role of governments in implementing Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development emphasized that sustainability involved policy and planning, integrated decision-making and community participation. Agenda 21 also gave impetus to greater efforts aimed at spelling out the importance of sustainable development in the tourism sector.

In the Asian and Pacific region, member countries and areas of ESCAP have been addressing various issues related to sustainable tourism development since the mid-1990s. At a number of ESCAP meetings, particularly since the Intergovernmental Meeting on Tourism Development held in 1996, decisions and recommendations related to tourism's contribution to development focused on the need for a comprehensive framework for action at national and regional levels. At its fifty-third session in 1997, the Commission suggested that a plan of action should provide the framework for effective cooperation and promotion of tourism by member countries and areas. More specifically, the plan of action should focus on strengthening national capabilities and promoting regional cooperation in sustainable tourism development.

The Commission, at its fifty-fifth session in April 1999, adopted the Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and Pacific Region (PASTA). PASTA aims to ensure long-term prosperity in Asia and the Pacific by increasing the contribution of tourism through responsible action by governments and stakeholders at the national level, with supporting action at the regional level in order to bring benefits to wide segments of society. The intention is to implement PASTA within a five-year timeframe from 1999 to 2005. Following its adoption, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and several other international organizations involved in tourism have expressed their willingness to cooperate in the implementation of PASTA.

Since 1999, ESCAP-member countries and areas have been taking action at the national level to implement PASTA. Various international and regional organizations have been providing support through actions at the regional level. There are six main theme areas identified in PASTA for action by governments and other stakeholders in the tourism sector.

The purpose of this study is to review the progress made and the obstacles or constraints encountered by reporting ESCAP member countries and areas, which have been taking action to implement PASTA since its launching in 1999. Supporting actions taken at the regional level are also covered, based on reports about the achievements and challenges faced by international and regional organizations. These afore-mentioned reports were submitted to the Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development, held in November 2000, for review and its consideration. The first chapter of the study presents the main features of PASTA; the second chapter summarizes the reports and reviews provided by various ESCAP-member countries and areas; the third chapter contains the main points reported by international and regional organizations; the fourth chapter covers recent work by ESCAP related to implementing PASTA; and the fifth chapter concludes with an overall summary of the progress and obstacles encountered in the Asian and Pacific region.

I. Plan of Action for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Asian and Pacific Region: main components

The objective of PASTA is to increase the contribution of tourism to national social and economic development in ways that sustain people's prosperity in the short and long term. Tourism is generally considered to be an economic activity, but PASTA asserts that sustainable tourism development involves almost all aspects of life. Therefore, the tourism industry must be viewed as an integrated whole with an impact on the economy, society, culture and the physical environment. Government policy makers and all stakeholders in the tourism sector must work together to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

A. Issues addressed in PASTA

The rapid growth of tourism in Asia and the Pacific has raised a number of interrelated issues that challenge the effectiveness and efficiency of government, and these are covered as the parameters for PASTA. The first issue involves tourism policy-making in both its substantive and procedural aspects. A country's tourism policy should provide the most explicit statement of the government's approach to sustainable tourism development and the roles that all stakeholders in the tourism sector are expected to take. In order for policy-making to be effective, government policy-makers and stakeholders need reliable information and timely data of good quality to enable better understanding of tourism's complex and long-term interactions with the rest of the economy. The effectiveness of tourism policy-making will clearly be influenced by the availability of resources.

The second issue relates to planning in terms of its policy and operational elements as part of a process for deciding objectives, priorities and means for achieving objectives. Sustainable tourism development can be achieved in a comprehensive way through the use of a tourism master plan as well as integrated tourism planning. In addition, planning based on reliable and timely information can highlight the links between national economic development and the tourism sector.

The third issue concerns management for sustainable tourism development, which involves leading, coordinating and controlling actions to mobilize resources

in order to formulate and implement tourism policies and plans. This also involves administrative issues about the structure, functions and responsibilities of the national tourism organization. At a more general level, management issues involve working arrangements between the government and other tourism stakeholders, coherent intersectoral coordination, promotion of broader participation and arrangements to facilitate spreading the benefits of tourism more widely.

The fourth issue focuses on participation of the private sector as a major stakeholder providing tourism services. This involves questions about how to attract greater private sector participation that is appropriate for sustainable tourism development as well as how to encourage public and private sector partnerships. Government policies and plans would need to focus on creation of a conducive business environment, formulation of an adequate legislative framework and strengthened governmental capacities to work with the private sector to make sustainable tourism development the top priority.

B. Actions proposed in PASTA's six theme areas

PASTA contains proposals for action at the national level along with supporting actions at the regional level with the aim of strengthening national capabilities and promoting regional cooperation in sustainable tourism development. This provides the framework for ESCAP-member countries and areas to review progress and identify obstacles. The six theme areas also serve as the framework for reviewing the support programmes and projects undertaken by international and regional organizations, including ESCAP.

1. Human resources development in the tourism sector

As a result of growth in the tourism industry and its priority for economic development in a number of countries and areas, developing the required human resources who will provide tourism services has become vital for sustainability. Many countries and areas in Asia and the Pacific lack strategies and policies designed to develop human resources for the tourism sector. Some specific concerns include: (a) the quantity and quality of human resources for a sector that is labour intensive and requires a high standard of specialized skills in cross-cultural working environments; (b) the shortage of tourism training infrastructure and qualified trainers in many countries; and (c) the lack of national legislation or guidelines to improve working conditions and career opportunities in the tourism sector.

In this context, the following actions are proposed:

- (a) *Actions at the national level*
 - (i) Governments should assess present and future training requirements for human resources development.
 - (ii) Governments should consider formulating national strategies for tourism training and human resources development.
 - (iii) Each country should establish a national tourism training committee consisting of representatives from the government, training institutes and the tourism industry.
 - (iv) Each country should consider active participation in the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT).
 - (v) Each country should consider setting up a national network of tourism education and training institutes to further strengthen cooperation.
- (b) *Supporting actions at the regional level*
 - (i) ESCAP, WTO and other international and regional organizations involved in tourism should extend their full support to ensure effective operation of APETIT with a view to promoting human resources development in many countries.

2. Economic impact of tourism

While there is a general awareness of the economic benefits of tourism, its net contribution to the economy is often not known, making it difficult to make effective policies. Systematic research to understand the economic impact of tourism is needed to: (a) make integrated planning easier, (b) strengthen links between national economic development policy-making and sustainable tourism development and (c) better understand how to maximize the economic benefits from tourism. Countries could also learn from studying each other's experiences with enhancing the economic benefits of tourism.

Proposed actions that could be taken are:

- (a) *Actions at the national level*
 - (i) Countries that have already made studies of the economic impact of tourism should continuously update their data and research, and use these findings to establish an appropriate role for tourism in the national economy.
 - (ii) Countries which have not yet studied the economic impact of tourism should undertake such research/studies to be able to establish appropriate policies for tourism development.
- (b) *Supporting actions at the regional level*
 - (i) Seminars and workshops should be organized to strengthen country capabilities to use different methodologies for determining economic impact, including the WTO's global methodology, tourism satellite account; and WTO could provide its expertise in support of country and regional studies.
 - (ii) ESCAP, which prepared Guidelines on Input-Output Analysis of Tourism, could assist countries in measuring the economic impact of tourism using the input-output technique, through advisory services or organization of national workshops.

3. Environmental management of tourism

The complex relationship between development and its impact on the environment creates problems for the effective environmental management of tourism development. Effective planning and coordination, as well as efficient enforcement of legislation can help address the problems. Efforts at environmental management should include coordinating strategies at all levels and among many sectors; making appropriate use of resources; and creating greater awareness of environmental consequences. Problems with legislation relate to enforcement of laws, the need for human resources to monitor and enforce and the need for stakeholders to understand the long-term benefits for sustainability if they comply with environmental laws and policies. Sustainability also involves balancing tourism development with preserving the environment, the cultural heritage and indigenous cultures of local communities.

In this context, the following actions could be taken:

(a) *Actions at the national level*

- (i) Governments should give more attention to planning, coordination and monitoring of tourism development and environmental management.
- (ii) Local communities should have greater involvement in environmental management and sustainable tourism development.
- (iii) Governments should create awareness through the mass media, among the general public and international tourists about protecting and preserving the environment in order to sustain tourism.
- (iv) Countries should pay particular attention to development and promotion of ecotourism.

(b) *Supporting actions at the regional level*

- (i) Seminars and workshops should be organized in order to facilitate sharing of experiences and information for developing ecotourism.
- (ii) Technical cooperation among countries should be promoted through exchange visits of experts on technical aspects of environmental management of sustainable tourism development.

4. Infrastructure development and investment for the tourism sector

The relationship between infrastructure development and sustainable tourism development becomes clear once policy-makers and planners see that inadequate infrastructure is one of the most serious constraints to future prospects for tourism development. Integrated planning and the use of master plans can help overcome many constraints. In addition, the government should create an environment conducive to private sector investment, which may also include investment incentives. Infrastructure requirements for the tourism sector should be properly integrated with the full range of a country's infrastructure development and investment requirements.

To this end, the following actions are proposed:

(a) *Actions at the national level*

- (i) Governments should indicate clear commitments about private sector involvement in tourism infrastructure development, and this should form part of integrated plans or a master plan.

- (ii) In order to attract private sector participation, governments should address such issues as creating a conducive business environment, liberalizing rules and regulations, providing investment incentives, developing an adequate legislative framework and strengthening governmental capacity to negotiate.
- (iii) National workshops should be organized to build capabilities among government officials in negotiating techniques and in promoting partnership between the public and private sector in order to develop tourism and related infrastructure.

(b) Supporting actions at the regional level

- (i) World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other development financing institutions should extend full assistance to tourism infrastructure development.
- (ii) Seminars and workshops should be organized on tourism infrastructure development and investment involving policy-makers, investors, national tourism organizations and other government agencies in order to share experiences among countries at different stages of tourism development.
- (iii) Training workshops should be organized to build capabilities among government officials in negotiating technique and to promote relationships between the public and private sector for tourism and related infrastructure development.

5. Facilitation of travel

A wide range of travel facilitation problems can impede sustainable tourism development. These problems can include, among others: (a) lack of accessibility; (b) inefficient policies and procedures for visas, customs and currency; (c) possible threats to the health and safety of tourists; (d) lack of information services for tourists; (d) negative image if there is overpricing; and (e) the complex nature of border formalities and customs regulations. Governments have a direct role in making policies, rules and regulations and providing related infrastructure.

In this context, the following actions could be taken:

(a) *Actions at the national level*

- (i) Each country should set up an interministerial committee/council, including representatives from the tourism industry, to promote coordinated development of tourism and facilitation of travel.
- (ii) Each country should consider setting up a consultative council comprised of the tourism and aviation industries to consider accessibility issues by sharing views and harmonizing divergent interests.
- (iii) Countries should conduct training programmes for immigration and customs officials to make needed changes and take required actions in order to improve efficiency and courtesy.
- (iv) Countries should develop national policies on tourists' health and safety and provide tourists with appropriate information upon arrival.

(b) *Supporting actions at the regional level*

- (i) Regional seminars should be organized to share experiences and learn from the best practices within and outside the region.
- (ii) ESCAP should undertake land transport corridor studies along major routes to identify barriers to tourist travel and suggest remedial measures.
- (iii) WTO and other concerned international and regional organizations should provide information and training on safety, security and health standards for tourists and encourage countries to share experiences in developing a multilateral agreement on safety and security standards.

6. Regional and subregional cooperation in tourism development

Countries and areas in the Asian and Pacific region and different subregions may have limited accessibility, lack resources and/or capabilities or have inadequate arrangement for expanding tourism. Regional and subregional cooperation could help to more effectively address many problems if countries and areas shared information, facilities, experiences and expertise. Such cooperation would promote sustainable tourism development by conserving scarce resources, increasing cultural and economic understanding, increase the frequency of international contacts and exchanges and reduce unnecessary competition.

A number of existing regional and subregional arrangements could provide the basis for initiating cooperation to promote sustainable tourism, namely: Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Indian Ocean, the Greater Mekong subregion, Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC), Tumen River area, the Pacific islands, and among countries along the Silk Road and the Asian Highway.

The following actions could be taken:

(a) *Actions at the national level*

- (i) Governments should actively participate in the existing cooperative groupings with a view to contribute to regional and subregional tourism development and to benefit from sharing and collaboration.
- (ii) Governments should take initiatives to strengthen bilateral/multilateral cooperative arrangements for sustainable tourism development and promotion.

(b) *Supporting actions at the regional level*

- (i) ESCAP, WTO and other international and regional organizations should make concerted efforts in areas of their special competence to promote regional and subregional cooperation, as well as to strengthen national capabilities in sustainable tourism development.
- (ii) Some mechanisms that could be considered by these agencies in promoting regional and subregional cooperation may include organization of regional and subregional meetings and seminars and conducting studies.

C. Modalities for implementation

One or more modalities may facilitate successful implementation of the various actions listed above. Effective implementation of PASTA would require a fundamental review of policy-making, planning, managing and defining private sector participation for the purpose of sustainable tourism development. Governments and regional organizations are encouraged to be innovative in preparing approaches that make use of national and regional resources.

Governments would generally be responsible for action at the country level, while action at the regional level has been designed to support and facilitate.

Supporting action at the regional level could include technical assistance; regional research and development, including comparative studies; opportunities to exchange experiences and know-how; and cooperation and facilitation of sustainable tourism development activities that are expected to have an impact transcending nation borders.

A number of modalities are presented in order to see that the consequences of actions could be far-reaching in the socio-economic and environmental terms that define sustainable tourism development. The following modalities could enable implementation of proposed actions at the national level:

(a) *National policy coordination committee for sustainable tourism development*

Collaboration is needed at the highest national level where policy is developed, formulated and coordinated. The main roles of the committee would be to (i) provide a framework for integrated tourism planning or master plans, (ii) harmonize strategies and (iii) propose consolidation of resources from various tourism-related ministries and agencies. The purpose of a national policy coordination committee is to attain sustainable tourism objectives in an efficient way.

(b) *Public/private sector consultative committees*

The private sector, including business enterprises and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are already involved in many areas of sustainable tourism development. Consultative committees are one type of modality enabling the government to maintain constructive dialogues and have multiple sources of information to help in policy-making, planning and management.

(c) *Facilitation committees*

Sustainable tourism development requires harmonious interactions involving parties from both the public and private sectors. They will need to work together, especially when difficult issues are raised, when the needs of various government ministries may differ and when various short-term objectives might create disagreements. Implementation also requires collaboration among various groups and organizations. Facilitation committees are one type of modality for resolving problems and issues at the working level. Such committees can contribute to improved productivity and reduction of costs.

(d) *Interdisciplinary teams*

People from specialized fields with unique experiences are valuable resources and can contribute to sustainable tourism development through the synergies created by their collaboration. Such interdisciplinary teams could be organized for special, time-bound tasks that will contribute to the process of sustainable tourism development.

(e) *Sustainable development zones*

The creation of such zones in different parts of the country provides opportunities to focus efforts and formulate experimental/pilot projects for sustainable tourism development. Development zones allow for innovative approaches and can serve as experiments before full implementation.

(f) *Demonstration projects for sustainable tourism development*

Demonstration projects at the local and community levels can serve to test legal and regulatory reforms, innovations in administration and the dynamics of public participation to make tourism development sustainable. This modality could work for small-scale projects and activities, but they could be adjusted to the national level after their success was demonstrated.

A number of modalities could be used at the regional level to provide support or serve as the catalyst that encourages the process of sustainable tourism development. The following regional modalities have been identified as appropriate for implementation of PASTA: (a) sharing information, research and data; (b) making comparative studies in sustainable tourism development; (c) supporting technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC); and (d) encouraging regional and subregional cooperation, especially through existing organizations and forums.

II. Progress and obstacles in selected countries or areas for implementing PASTA at the national level

A. Armenia¹

There is strong potential for sustainable tourism development in Armenia, because there are many tourist attractions, including the landscape, cultural and historical heritage, unique architecture and friendly hospitality of Armenian people. The Tourism Development Department of the Ministry of Industry and Trade has identified ecotourism and spa tourism as promising areas for tourism development.

Over the past few years, it was reported that tourism has been the fastest growing economic sector, notwithstanding serious constraints caused by political conflict in the region and a recent natural disaster due to an earthquake. Given the geo-political position of Armenia, it is directly affected when neighbouring countries close trade and travel routes. Despite these circumstances, since 1994 international tourism has grown steadily from 13,000 visitors in 1996 to 48,000 visitors in 2000. Plans for 2001 related to national events celebrating 1,700 years of Christianity forecast that the number of tourists would reach 100,000.

Armenia's national actions in the six theme areas of PASTA should be viewed in terms of the growing contribution of tourism to national economic development and the idea that natural and cultural attractions favour large-scale tourism development.

The national tourism organization (NTO) has given special attention to human resources development. A training programme focused on the most crucial job specializations in tourism is part of the newly developed five-year master plan "State Programme on Tourism Development in Armenia" (2000-2005). The NTO has recently organized several national tourism training and education activities. Emphasis is also given to participation in international training activities as part of technical assistance programmes. There are plans to establish a tourism school in Armenia with bilateral assistance from the Government of France.

¹ Based on a country report prepared by Rafik Margaryan, Tourism Development Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia.

The economic impact of tourism is well recognized as the engine of growth for the Armenian economy. Tourism is the main source of foreign exchange earnings and contributed about US\$ 48 million to the economy in 2000. It was estimated that direct and indirect employment in the tourism industry covered about 14,000 jobs in 1998. Standard statistics about hotel occupancy rates, international tourism receipts and regional distribution of tourists throughout the country are readily available. However, a complete and full assessment of the economic impact has been hindered by data limitations and lack of funds to make such evaluations.

In the area of environmental management of tourism, several state bodies are empowered to protect and preserve the natural environment as well as man-made sites and monuments of archeological and historical importance. The NTO collaborates with the Ministry of Ecology and Preservation of Nature and the Directorate of Heritage Preservation, including making draft laws for particular sites and areas, such as national parks. The United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) has worked with the government to help preserve and enhance important sites for cultural tourism. Currently, UNESCO has designated the monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin as world heritage sites. There are plans to add nine other heritage sites. However, almost all archeological and historical sites need substantial repair and maintenance.

Action in Armenia related to infrastructure development and investment for the tourism sector focused on improving the investment climate and accelerating the process of privatization. A new investment law was recently issued to give incentives and privileges to both local and foreign private investors, with special attention to the tourism sector. Between 1997 and 2000, there were 18 tourist investment projects approved, mostly for establishing hotels. The road network, as well as public and private ground transport, is generally in good condition. The Ministry of Industry and Trade has submitted a concept/project proposal to the Minister on Regional Governance on the establishment of tourism infrastructure, including tourism routes and various infrastructure projects. Private investment in infrastructure development is encouraged by policies that supply land at nominal prices and provide soft loans.

Facilitation of travel has been encouraged in part by economic reforms and good relations with the countries that are major tourist markets, particularly the United States and countries of Western Europe. The only international airport in Armenia has been remodeled and expanded to receive flights from a number of major cities in Europe, North America, the Commonwealth of Independent

States (CIS) and the Middle East. Access by land through the borders with some neighbouring countries can be problematic during periods of political conflict or internal instability. The government has been considering proposals to reduce visa fees, streamline visa procedures, facilitate customs procedures and reduce airline prices.

Armenia has been active in areas of regional and subregional cooperation, especially within the framework of the WTO programme on the Great Silk Road. In 1999, the First Caucasus International Fair was held along with a conference on "Peaceful Caucasus".

There have been significant initiatives in other areas of Armenian tourism development, given the short period of ten years during which Armenia has been working to re-establish the tourism industry. Familiarization tours have been organized for foreign journalists, business people and tourism industry specialists. The private sector has cooperated to publish and disseminate tourism information and international television travel programmes have featured the attractions of Armenia. WTO and UNDP have been assisting in Armenia's tourism development and the government's Department of Tourism Development has taken several new initiatives to strengthen the integrity of the tourism industry overall, make a framework of related laws and regulations and set standards for tourism services.

B. Bangladesh²

Globalization has contributed to recent general economic growth in Bangladesh, and it is assumed that the tourism sector has followed the general pattern. However, there has not yet been any assessment of the specific contribution of the tourism sector to gross domestic product (GDP). The two main components of tourism in Bangladesh consist of international tourists and domestic tourists. While data on income from domestic tourism has not been assessed, it was reported that arrivals of international tourists grew by an annual average of about 5 per cent from 1995 to 1999. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism grew by an annual average of 30 per cent during the same period. This shows that Bangladesh has an opportunity to gain benefits from international tourism.

Bangladesh prepared a Tourism Master Plan in 1991 with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour

² Based on a country report prepared by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, National Tourism Organization, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Organization (ILO), but resource constraints have prevented effective investment, marketing and promotion. A tourism policy was framed in 1992 and the government has started to plan and develop strategies. The National Tourism Council and an Advisory Committee on Tourism have been formed at the highest level, but an on-going sense of direction has yet to be formulated. Nevertheless, the government considers PASTA as an appropriate guideline and policy tool for balanced tourism development in Bangladesh.

In order to develop human resources, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) has responsibility for the state-operated tourism-training institute, the National Hotel and tourism Training Institute (NHTTI). Since its establishment in 1974, NHTTI has been strengthened with assistance from UNDP and ILO. There are a small number of private sector hotel and tourism schools, but they have limited resources and facilities. Some hotels have good in-service training and educational facilities. However, it is difficult to know if this meets human resource needs in the tourism sector. There has not been any systematic assessment of present and future human resource development requirements. There is informal cooperation among institutes and NHTTI, but some time will be needed before establishing a national committee on human resources development in tourism.

Bangladesh has not yet done any study on the economic impact of tourism. However, general information shows tourism's economic significance according to its main features. Tourism is a labour-intensive industry with tourism facilities spread throughout the country. It contributes to growth in other related activities, such as restaurants, souvenir and handicraft shops, guide services and transportation services. In Bangladesh, it is reported that a significant number of women have benefited from employment creation due to tourism. The government has taken the lead in creating a number of tourism facilities. However, the role of the private sector is being encouraged, especially to attract investment. The role of tourism is generally considered when formulating development programmes. Tourism is one of the thrust sectors for Bangladesh's industrial policy.

The government has been giving increased attention to preserving and developing the environment in relation to tourism development. Rules and guidelines for environmental management have been updated and strengthened in order to include environmental considerations in decision-making about any development activity. Environmental impact analysis is now a prerequisite for planning and designing projects, whether they are new or involve modernizing existing facilities. There is a national committee headed by the prime minister

to provide oversight on all environmental issues. Given the scale of tourism in Bangladesh and lack of overcrowding at tourist sites, the tourism sector is not seen as having any major negative impact on the environment.

The government has taken a leading role in infrastructure development, including hotel accommodations. A major constraint in Bangladesh's tourism industry is the limited number of hotels at standards expected by international tourists. Another constraint is an imbalance in the location of hotel accommodations; with most of them in Dhaka, while tourists seek accommodations in other parts of the country. The government has plans to establish tourist resorts, eco-parks and marine parks in order to more widely spread tourism facilities. The aim is to promote sustainable preservation of the biodiversity of Bangladesh's forests, coastal areas and islands. It is recognized that private investment is much needed to develop tourist facilities, and private investors have been showing increased interest.

There are now three international airports providing access to Bangladesh. The road system is being upgraded and extended in order to help encourage tourism. Improvements in ground transportation services have helped to overcome physical limits to accessibility. Health care facilities and emergency medical services are available in almost every part of the country. Immigration and customs regulations have been liberalized and simplified. BPC provides services to tourists through its information centers at a number of locations throughout the country. BPC has also published maps, brochures and guidebooks to assist tourists.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has had a Technical Committee on Tourism since 1991, in which Bangladesh has been an active member. SAARC members have been considering various forms of cooperation in tourism development. When BIMST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand-Economic Cooperation) was formed, tourism was identified as a major sector for subregional cooperation. There have been meetings of BIMST-EC tourism experts in order to develop programmes and projects, including promotion of "Visit BIMST-EC Region" in 2001.

Other significant initiatives in Bangladesh include giving three inter-ministerial committees oversight of tourism activities with a view to enhancing coordination. The three committees are: the National Tourism Council headed by the Prime Minister, the Advisory Committee headed by the minister in charge of tourism and the Coordination and Implementation Committee headed by the secretary of the Ministry of Tourism. These committees are considering

the creation of an additional committee to be responsible for travel facilitation issues.

C. Cambodia³

A specific tourism development policy in Cambodia was formulated within the overall First Socio-economic Development Plan (1996-2000). However, human resources development in the tourism sector has been severely constrained due to the low level of qualifications of tourism personnel in terms of average education level and low education standards. Tourism has expanded rapidly, and there has been fast-growing demand for more qualified personnel, especially people with foreign language capabilities. It was reported that the Ministry of Tourism had sufficient staff, but the need for training has been recognized. Strengthening human resources development within the Ministry of Tourism was considered to be a crucial first step in order for Cambodia to take other actions to develop human resources.

An economic impact analysis of tourism was conducted in 1995 under a tourism project of UNDP and WTO. However, there were few statistics and the accuracy was uncertain given the period of disruption to the national economy, followed by economic rehabilitation and very rapid economic change. As a result, there has been no detailed statistical analysis of the impact of tourism on the Cambodian economy in order to guide policy making.

The government has set forth the strategy for tourism development based on cultural heritage and the natural environment. Policies, planning and control measures for environmental management of tourism should focus on the carrying capacity of the environment; follow integrated land use planning for tourism areas; carefully manage visitor flows and use of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and other protected sites; protect and manage forest resources in a sustainable way; and maintain environmental health and safety standards for residents and tourists. A public education campaign for residents and tourists was also considered as important to help control littering in public places. The tourism infrastructure at major cultural sites in Siem Reap province is being rehabilitated and reconstructed.

³ Based on a country report prepared by the International Cooperation Office, Department of Planning and Development, Ministry of Tourism, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Urgent development was needed for all infrastructure components, particularly air transport, roads and water transportation services. Three priority locations for investment have been identified, investment incentives have been offered, investment laws and trade in services have been liberalized. In addition, Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Authority of Thailand signed an Agreement on an Action Plan for Tourism Cooperation in 1998 covering three Cambodian provinces. Each province would have a master plan that included rehabilitation of tourism infrastructure. The role of the private sector in tourism development has been recognized as important. Coordination among private enterprises in the tourism sector was encouraged along with cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Some requirements related to travel facilitation have been liberalized by allowing visas on arrival and border passes. Four international checkpoints have been designated for entry by land, and one can issue visas on arrival. There are two international checkpoints for arrivals by air.

The Ministry of Tourism is active in ASEAN tourism cooperation and has signed bilateral tourism cooperation agreements with four other ASEAN members, as well as China. There are bilateral memoranda on tourism cooperation with India and Indonesia, and plans to sign with the Philippines and Brunei Darussalam. At the subregional level, Cambodia participates actively in the Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector.

One new initiative by the Ministry of Tourism has encouraged the formation of tourism industry associations since 1996. This is related to the general policy of encouraging private sector participation by providing forums for discussing issues of common interest and encouraging the private sector to be self-regulating.

D. China⁴

The unique natural endowments, long history, diverse cultural heritage of various ethnic groups and tradition of hospitality form the basis for tourism development in China. Rational use of resources to develop tourism was considered as important for national economic development to improve people's living standards in ways that would be sustainable and carry forward national

⁴ Based on a country report prepared by the China National Tourism Administration, Beijing, China. (Translated).

and cultural traditions. In terms of human resources development, the government considers that tourism managers, tourists and the public needed enhanced awareness and more scientific knowledge about sustainable tourism development.

China has a seven-point strategy as a basic framework for sustainable tourism development that seeks to balance rational use of resources for positive economic impact with environmental protection. One point of the strategy emphasizes giving full play to market mechanisms and promoting the government's role in establishment of a cooperative institutional safeguard system. This would help at the macroeconomic level by replacing some traditional industries that used resources inefficiently and caused pollution.

Environmental protection and scientific management as key parts of a strategy of sustainable tourism development was the fundamental state policy of the National Tourism Development Plan, 1996-2000. Scientific management of natural and cultural resources would involve active development of ecotourism, especially for protecting biodiversity.

China has strengthened its legal and technical standards in order to protect tourism resources. Since the 1980s, this has included the Law on Environmental Protection, Rules and Regulations on National Scenic Spots and Regulations on Forests and Parks. At the same time, it was recognized that investors were one of several groups of stakeholders, and meeting everyone's interests required integrated coordination and management of the whole industry. Science and technology could also help to build institutional and infrastructural safeguards for sustainable tourism development. The government has identified 500 cultural relics protection sites at the national level, 99 cities of historical and cultural renown and 119 scenic spots at the national level. More than 700 nature conservation zones have been established, as well as more than 120 national and provincial holiday resorts.

Enhancing international cooperation was considered integral to promoting sustainable tourism development based on equal participation by all countries. Countries should formulate plans that are relevant to national conditions, but they should also be aware of any negative impact on neighbouring countries. International cooperation would facilitate sharing resources and technology and help developing countries to build their capacities for sustainable tourism development.

The National Tourism Administration of China has proposed guidelines on promoting tourism development at the Sixth Annual Session of the

Parliamentarian Congress on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. China has also emphasized public awareness and education campaigns on sustainable tourism development, and there have been pilot projects involving ecotourism.

One initiative under China's seven-point strategic policy for tourism development involves setting up model ecotourism projects. An important part of ecotourism projects involves action to preserve and maintain the continuity of the cultural heritage.

E. Hong Kong, China⁵

The tourism industry is one of the most important sources of foreign exchange earnings for Hong Kong, China. The tourism vision follows from the industry's economic importance, increased regional competition and the need to continually upgrade the overall tourism product to meet future challenges. Hong Kong, China would be promoted as Asia's premier international city for leisure and business visitors. This includes a focus on human resources development to improve standards and performance. Emphasis is on professionalism and promoting a hospitality culture, as well as ensuring an adequate supply of skilled personnel through liaison with industry bodies.

The tourism industry contributed over 4 per cent to GDP in 1999. The number of visitors has been growing since 1998, but tourism still needed proper recognition as a major sector of the economy. The Tourism Development Action Programme would help since it included at least two major new projects, a number of small-scale projects and a Rapid Enhancement Programme that focused on improvements to existing popular locations.

Hong Kong, China has been giving greater attention to preserving and restoring its historical and archeological heritage and making this part of the tourist attractions. The country parks, woodland trails and less urbanized island locations have been receiving greater attention, as they become more popular with tourists. About 40 per cent of the land area is country parks. The Commerce and Industry Bureau has reported that a systematic approach would be needed when opening countryside areas to tourism. Current international trends involving ecotourism and cultural-heritage tourism will be the focus of future tourism development.

⁵ Based on a report prepared by the Commerce and Industry Bureau, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Hong Kong, China.

Additional infrastructure is considered as essential to fulfill the vision of becoming a world city of Asia. At least four major infrastructure developments have been envisioned and their feasibility will be studied. These include a new cruise terminal, a full-scale convention and exhibition center, a performing arts venue and a multi-purpose stadium. Domestic and foreign expertise and investment has been welcomed, including open international competition to design and develop an international performing arts centre to be linked to other infrastructure development.

Most aspects of travel facilitation have been eased in order to make the visa regime a benchmark providing a competitive advantage. Visitors from Taiwan Province of China now experience simpler electronic processing arrangements, and a group tour scheme for visitors from mainland China has been expanded. On-going cooperation with authorities in Beijing has helped simplify procedures for business visitors.

F. Myanmar⁶

Tourism has become a growth sector since policies were liberalized to create a market-oriented economy. The Myanmar Tourism Law of 1990 was revised in 1993 to promote systematic development and encourage private sector participation. Myanmar observed that the demand for personnel trained to international standards has been strong since 1992. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism conducts training programmes and courses and also collaborates with the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT), ESCAP, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the Mekong Institute, ASEAN and others, such as the Singapore Tourism Board and the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Myanmar reported that liberalized entry formalities and the 1996 launch of “Visit Myanmar Year” had caused a major increase in tourism arrivals, although the total number of visitors had already peaked at about 200,000 per year. The largest share of tourists has been from Asian countries. No information has been reported on whether a systematic economic impact assessment has been done.

Myanmar reported that tourism was being developed in close cooperation with other ministries to ensure conservation of the natural environment and

⁶ Based on a country report prepared by the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Yangon, Myanmar.

preservation of the cultural heritage. Relevant government agencies have worked with UNESCO to preserve an archaeological zone at Bagan. Conservation through forest management involves a protective area system.

Myanmar reported on the importance of infrastructure for the future of the tourism industry with an emphasis on establishing regular flights, especially long-haul flights that could use the new international airport at Mandalay. Road networks would also be expanded. A number of cruise ships called at Yangon port and cruise tourists are able to make linkages with special excursions by chartered flights to inland tourist destinations. Foreign investment, which has concentrated mostly on hotel projects in the major cities, plus a few at border areas and beaches, has been affected by the Asian financial crisis.

Myanmar has relaxed some visa requirements in order to facilitate travel. Charter flights, cruises and certain other group tours may be granted visa on arrival based on prior arrangement with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Tourists from ASEAN member countries who have diplomatic and official passports are allowed visa free entry. Only a few embassies of Myanmar are able to issue entry visas by email or through the Internet. Entry overland at borders with neighbouring countries has been made easier for some categories of tourists who are issued border passes. Tourists with border passes who come through the border between Myanmar and Thailand are allowed to travel as far as Yangon if they have prior permission.

Myanmar participates in the Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector, BIMST-EC and ASEAN. At the same time, Myanmar has bilateral tourism mutual cooperation agreements with the other five countries of the Greater Mekong subregion.

Among other related initiatives, Myanmar reported that it supported development of a campaign initiated by Thailand for cultural tour packages known as “Great Wonders of Suvana Phumi” involving four countries of the Greater Mekong subregion. At the national level, the Tourism Development Management Committee was formed to encourage high-level coordination within the government and include private sector participation as well.

There is still a lack of awareness about Myanmar as a tourist destination, due in part to the low profile of tourism for about 30 years. The potential for tourism development in Myanmar must face with constraints caused by inadequate infrastructure and lack of funds for promotion worldwide using modern information technology. The government has committed itself to balanced tourism

development that retains the cultural heritage while developing infrastructure in line with the social and economic capacity to absorb tourism growth.

G. Philippines⁷

Tourism has been one of the top foreign exchange earners for the Philippine economy, accounting for 8.7 per cent of GDP in 1997. At the same time, tourism has been important for direct employment creation, as well as indirect employment in many other sectors. Training programmes for frontline tourism services organized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) have become institutionalized at the national and local levels. DOT has organized specialized training programmes focused on sustainable tourism and environmental awareness.

The Philippines' DOT has been developing tourism satellite accounting (TSA) in cooperation with the National Economic Development Authority and National Statistics Office based on WTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) methodology. Once TSA is completed, stakeholders at the national and local levels would be invited to workshops and seminars in order to share the information about the socio-economic impact of tourism in the Philippines.

The Philippines reported on several initiatives involving sustainable tourism aimed at protecting the environment, preserving cultural heritage and promoting community involvement. Green Globe action plans have been made for two pilot areas. An executive order by the President in 1999 established guidelines for ecotourism and created a National Ecotourism Development Council to make policy along with structures to review and approve ecotourism projects. In October 1999, a National Ecotourism Congress was organized to help formulate the national ecotourism policy. At the community level, whale-watching tourism programs have been organized based on coordination with other agencies and NGOs in order to provide supplemental livelihoods for local communities.

The Philippines has completed national and regional tourism master plans to identify priority tourism development for local and foreign investment. The plans should ensure orderly and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources and extensive consultation with various stakeholders. Tourism projects are subject to the Investment Priorities Plan of the DOT. In 1999, DOT endorsed 143 tourism

⁷ Based on a country report prepared by the Department of Tourism, Manila, Philippines.

projects for incentives under the Investment Priorities Plan. Government measures to stimulate tourism investments are contained in three general acts and plans, which cover tourism and infrastructure. The Build-Operate-Transfer Act encourages the private sector to develop infrastructure. The Foreign Investment Act of 1991 and its amendments allow 100 per cent foreign equity participation in almost all tourism projects.

An economic mobilization group (EMG) was established in 1999 to resolve some opposing viewpoints in the government about travel facilitation. The EMG is comprised of government agencies, legislators and private sector representatives. Immigration and customs officials have started working towards greater coordination to facilitate procedures at international airports and seaports. A clear process and guidelines are being formulated to liberalize aviation policy. Safety standards and related measures are disseminated through the media and foreign embassies to inform international tourists.

The Philippines has been actively involved in ASEAN, BIMP-EAGA and APEC. The Philippines advocated that there should be greater cooperation among APEC members to promote sustainable tourism. The Philippines has been participating in many conferences and meetings to share experiences with best practices and lessons learned about sustainable tourism development. The Philippines' emphasis on sustainable tourism is also pursued through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including cooperation with the Government of New Zealand to formulate a National Ecotourism Strategy.

The Philippines reported on several projects that were initiated in support of the PASTA strategies. One initiative aims to institutionalize the National Ecotourism Development Council, National Ecotourism Steering Committee and the Regional Ecotourism Committees to work on the National Ecotourism Strategy. A related initiative would formulate accreditation programmes on HRD for ecotourism. Action to promote community-based tourism includes agri-tourism and coastal resource management for sustainable tourism. The Sustainable Environment Management Program for Northern Palawan has financial assistance from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to develop environment critical area network zoning and provide soil erosion protection and project management, as well as sustainable tourism development.

H. Republic of Korea⁸

In view of many technological changes, rising levels of income and increased leisure time for many people worldwide, tourism is expected to be a strategic force for socio-economic development. The Republic of Korea intends actively promote tourism to gain benefits from the global trends in the tourism industry. Within the Korean tourism sector, there is a need for more professional human resources management as a crucial component for sustaining tourism development. A variety of training and education programmes have expanded steadily, along with the number of institutions doing research and training. The government has had a personnel qualification system covering jobs in the tourist industry. Two universities are already members of APETIT, and more are expected to join.

The Republic of Korea stated that the economic impact of tourism has already been studied, but data and findings now need to be updated. This would give a better picture of the appropriate economic role of tourism. At the same time, there have been policies aimed at strategic marketing and large-scale development of tourism. The Republic of Korea also seeks to build a sense of tourism ethics and work towards making tourism a knowledge-based industry that creates friendship and prosperity throughout the Asian and Pacific region.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Government of the Republic of Korea has planned to work closely with the Ministry of Environment in order to utilize eco-system preservation areas as ecotourism resources to be protected and preserved as unique to the country.

A significant part of the government budget in the Republic of Korea would be devoted to expanding tourism infrastructure to promote tourism in the twenty-first century. Research is being done on the creation of new, large-scale tourism projects, such as the South Coast Tour Belt, Confucian Culture Zone in Northern Kyongbuk area and a development project to link Mt. Sorak to Mt. Keumgang with a view to future increases in South-North tourism exchanges.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has taken measures to relax over 60 rules and regulations to facilitate travel and improve the tourist information system for both domestic and international tourists. Tourism information centers

⁸ Based on a country report prepared by the International Tourism Division, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

have been established in Seoul, Kwangju and other major cities. City and tourist maps have also been printed.

In July 2000, the Republic of Korea held the first APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Tourism, which was attended by tourism officials from 21 APEC-member countries. The Seoul Declaration affirmed APEC-member countries' goal to develop and enhance the contribution of tourism to the region by removing impediments, increasing access, managing tourism to be sustainable and recognizing tourism as an engine for development.

Since the Republic of Korea considers tourism as a strategic force for world development in the twenty-first century, it has developed "Tourism Vision 21" as a five-year plan (1999-2003) and declared 2001 as "Visit Korea Year". This includes plans for the growth of tourism expected in the twenty-first century due to globalization and information technology.

I. American Samoa⁹

The tourism sector has had an overall positive impact on socio-economic development and the rate of growth has been increasing progressively. A tourism development plan is clearly needed in American Samoa in order to help tourism reach its full potential. The government and the private sector have been working together to design such a plan. However, the local legislature has not yet passed the plan.

Human resources development for the tourism sector consists of off-island training and training at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC). By summer 2001, a tourism industry management course will be offered at ASCC. Off-island training has included training through the EDIT University of Hawaii-Manoa campus, seminars in environmental tourism awareness as part of the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme; and workshops and training with the South Pacific Tourism Organization along with regional seminars for staff development.

The economic development of tourism in American Samoa has involved the development of bed and breakfast accommodations in various parts of the island, a recreational diving club set up by local divers and production of handicrafts by youths and senior citizens. Ecotourism has been developed through

⁹ Based on a report prepared by the Tourism Division, Department of Commerce, American Samoa Government, Pago Pago, American Samoa.

the establishment of American Samoa National Park. A sports stadium and the hosting of the 1997 South Pacific Mini Games has helped increase the impact of sports tourism.

Environmental management of tourism places emphasis on the Samoan culture and lifestyle through community and village-based tourism as a way to protect and sustain the island environment. The national park provides an area for learning about how to conserve nature and the cultural heritage.

Most infrastructure development in American Samoa in recent years has been concentrated in the area around the airport. The runway has been lengthened and expanded and the airport terminal has been renovated. A new hotel with 100 rooms, full conference facilities and a restaurant has been approved for development and will involve some foreign investment. One existing hotel built in the mid-1960s may be sold in order to overcome the lack of maintenance that has limited the tourism potential. The overall aim is to promote the island and attract more tourists.

Action to facilitate travel has included a workshop for immigration officials to address a number of current issues and the laws involving both American Samoa and (formerly Western) Samoa. Ongoing high-level executive meetings are also held between officials to help promote tourism development for both sets of islands.

The South Pacific Tourism Organization provides the regional forum for American Samoa to join in promotional and educational activities, including workshops and seminars. Officials from American Samoa attend the tourism convention organized in Samoa. One major initiative is a memorandum of understanding between American Samoa and (formerly Western) Samoa to jointly promote South Pacific Island Samoa as a package for international tourists. American Samoa has hosted or participated in a number of special subregional events that contribute to tourism development.

J. Sri Lanka¹⁰

Tourism in Sri Lanka is considered as an industry driven by the private sector with active support by the public sector. Tourism makes a major contribution to GDP, creates a significant number of jobs and earns a considerable

¹⁰ Based on a country report prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

share of foreign exchange. Social and economic development in various parts of the country, especially semi-urban and rural areas, is enhanced by the tourism sector. At the community level there is self-employment in producing and selling handicrafts and food. Food and agricultural products are sold to hotels and restaurants, and self-employed people can provide transport for tourists.

Sri Lanka places strong emphasis on human resources development in order to provide high quality tourism services. A modern hotel school has been established to provide a wide range of training and special programmes at the national level and there are plans to have exchanges with other countries in the region. Provinces would be able to set up satellite schools to meet local needs and help unemployed youth. The Ceylon Tourist Board also conducts special training programmes. The private sector is also encouraged and supported by the government to provide tourism training.

By 1999 there were about 436,000 tourist arrivals and tourism earned about US\$ 281 million. Tourism was also declared a thrust industry in 1999 in view of its economic contribution, the increased role of the private sector and its attractiveness for foreign investors. By 2000, tourism was the fourth largest source of foreign exchange earnings. The government receives income from tourism through direct and indirect taxes. Several government agencies can earn income from tourism through admission fees collected at archeological sites, nature parks, national parks, zoological gardens and museum. Within the government, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation has been working closely with the Ceylon Tourist Board and the Ceylon Hotels Corporation in tourism planning.

Sri Lanka has a long history of environmental management based on traditional village structures that conserve and protect the forest and water sources. At present, specific government agencies are responsible for preserving and protecting the natural environment and for managing and preserving heritage sites. There is a Central Environmental Authority advised by an Environmental Council that involves the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation. Formal environmental impact assessments are required for hotel projects approved by the Ceylon Tourist Board. Ecotourism is new for Sri Lanka, but the need for clear policy guidelines has been recognized.

Important infrastructure issues arise from the fact that tourism tended to be seasonal and concentrated in a few resorts in Sri Lanka. In order to upgrade and modernize facilities and infrastructure, the government has sought assistance from UNDP for a ten-year comprehensive infrastructure development programme.

The programme would address the concentration of tourism in a few areas, which has created problems such as beach erosion, pollution of seawater, inadequate access roads, shortages of water and electricity supplies and limited communication services.

In order to encourage tourism investment, the government has been offering a number of incentives to the private sector. General fiscal and financial incentives to encourage investment have been offered by the government, but since 1992 there have been specific incentives for new tourism projects. These include a five-year tax holiday, unlimited foreign equity holdings, repatriation of capital, profit remittances through a commercial bank and duty free imports of specified items need to start operations.

Bona fide tourists from 71 countries could be issued landing endorsements valid for 28 days on arrival. Facilities at the main international airport would be expanded to improve quality standards with assistance from Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan (OECF). A new airline based in Sri Lanka began operations in 1999 with more frequent flights to a number of international destinations. Health and safety measures at tourist resorts and police stations were being strengthened. There is still a need for several resorts to assess the availability of medical facilities and health services for tourists.

Sri Lanka is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and hosted the SAARC Tourism Ministerial Meeting in 1997. That meeting covered a number issues for facilitating tourism among the member countries, such as the South Asia Integrated Tourism Human Resource Development Programme, simplified visa procedures and documentation for member countries, establishing direct air links among SAARC members' capital cities, etc. Sri Lanka has been designated as the lead country for tourism cooperation in BIMST-EC from 1999 to 2001 and has worked with ESCAP to develop a plan of action to promote tourism. Among the tourism priorities of BIMST-EC are human resources development and environmental management of tourism and cultural preservation.

One major initiative related to managing tourism development is the coordinated approach used for the management and preservation of the seven world heritage sites located in Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Cultural and Religious Affairs, the Central Cultural Fund and the Department of Archeology have been established to share the responsibility.

K. Thailand¹¹

The travel and tourism industry in Thailand had survived the economic crisis of 1997 remarkably well and reported a record number of tourist arrivals and increased earnings from tourism. However, the continued growth in international tourist arrivals has created challenges for human resources development in terms of education and training, skill requirements and opportunities for job advancement. The demand for labour in the tourism sector was expected to increase by 56 per cent per year, with the greatest demand in the accommodation and restaurant business. At the same time, just over half of all people working in the tourism industry were educated only to the high school level. Many of these people had few opportunities for training, especially to develop technical skills and management and language capability.

General data suggests that tourism has become quite important for the Thai economy. It accounted for 4.8 per cent of GDP in 1999 and tourism has been projected to grow by an average of 6.5 per cent a year from 1999 to 2010. Tourism accounted for about 11 per cent of total employment in 1999. In order to gain reliable data about the economic impact of tourism, the Thai government has approved a budget to develop a tourism satellite account (TSA). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has been working closely with WTO and WTTC since 1997 to develop a TSA. Once it is developed, TSA would be used to propose a national tourism policy. The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and National Statistical Office have also been working on the TSA project.

Thailand recognized that management of tourism resources should involve people at all levels in the industry. All stakeholders have a role in monitoring the impact of tourism, assessing the environment, collecting data and balancing carrying capacity with tourists' demand. Strong emphasis is given to ecological and cultural sensitivity, conserving biodiversity, finding alternative energy sources and managing waste disposal. The government would have a major role through linkages between policy and community participation, as well as developing national laws and regulations.

In Thailand, infrastructure development and investment policies would encourage the private sector to accelerate tourism investment and spread development to rural areas. A committee in each province would prepare tourism

¹¹ Based on a country report prepared by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand.

investment plans to inform investors. It is expected that these would be part of each province's economic strategic plan to cover agriculture, industry and services. However, systematic criteria and comparative data were still needed. A communication network would make tourism development more convenient, including plans for road, railway and airline networks to neighbouring countries. Thailand had received a tourism development and promotion loan from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan (OECF), which targeted eight provinces in the North, North-East and South for phase 2. Several ministries have projects under the loan, plus TAT and private consultants to provide management and coordination.

Overall, Thailand had few impediments related to visas for international tourists, especially from major markets. Facilitation of travel in the form of visa exemptions or visa on arrival applies to about 158 countries. Immigration procedures have been facilitated for tourists at 30 permanent checkpoints and other checkpoints could be opened on request. Slow immigration procedures when the inflow of tourists becomes congested, particularly at the main international airport was one obstacle.

Thailand is active in subregional cooperation by promoting tourism in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) as important for the overall development of all countries in the Working Group on the GMS Tourism Sector. TAT serves as coordinator for tourism projects through the Agency for Coordinating Mekong Tourism Activities (AMTA). Coordination under AMTA has involved subregional marketing activities and cooperation in human resources development.

TAT has taken a new initiative by developing the Focus Group as a tool for adjusting the tourism plan. The Focus Group would establish cooperation among airlines and entrepreneurs to help evaluate and adjust the tourism plan through participatory management that would create benefits for the whole industry. The Thai government has taken another major initiative to provide a budget that would allow TAT to develop the TSA within a period of five years in order to propose a national policy on tourism.

L. Turkey¹²

Recent growth of the tourism industry in Turkey has followed the global pattern of rapid expansion in line with rising standards of living, increased leisure time for travel and improved infrastructure. The tourism industry in Turkey contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings and employment. In view of its economic importance, the Turkish Tourism Policy seeks more efficiency in the sector and the government gives priority to training qualified personnel. Most activities to develop human resources are carried out by the private sector. However, the government provides vocational training.

The Turkish Tourism Policy aims to extend the economic benefits from tourism to the people, while ensuring that tourism policies are environmentally sound and sustainable. Tourism is primarily a private sector industry, but tourism facilities must be licensed either by municipalities or the Ministry of Tourism. Such licensing by the Ministry is intended to guarantee that the quality of services conform to international standards. The tourism industry has been undergoing dynamic change recently, so effective support and incentives would be needed from the government. In addition, the government is responsible for research and statistics to help evaluate the impact of tourism.

One principle of the Turkish Tourism Policy is to ensure the continuity of natural and cultural assets, which means giving priority to environmental protection and the cultural heritage. The government has the main responsibility for environmental protection. Turkey has a number of environmental management projects, such as the Mediterranean and Aegean Coastline Tourism Infrastructure Management Project and the Blue Flag Campaign to ensure water quality. There is also a master plan for yacht tourism.

The Government of Turkey is responsible for infrastructure and public services, although incentives are granted under the Tourism Encouragement Law. The Ministry of Tourism provides the overall orientation and coordination. However, publicly owned tourism establishments will be gradually privatized. Foreign investment in the tourism sector is encouraged according to Foreign Investment Law number 6224.

The Yacht Tourism Master Plan is intended to encourage yacht tourism and overcome legislative bottlenecks since Turkey has a comparative advantage in attracting this form of tourism. Berthing capacity for yachts would be increased.

¹² Based on a country report prepared by Ministry of Tourism, Turkey.

The geographic diversity and rich cultural heritage provide a broad range of alternative tourism experiences. The Ministry of Tourism has been working to revitalize the Silk Road and restoring eleven caravan serais with the help of private investors using the build-operate-transfer model.

Plans by the Ministry of Tourism of Turkey to develop tourism along the Silk Road would involve cooperation to ensure that it becomes a route of international peace and fraternity.

Turkey reported that the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe helped to design the Blue Flag Campaign in order to keep lake and seawater clean and improve the quality of services at beaches and marinas.

M. Uzbekistan¹³

Tourism development aimed at global markets has a relatively short history starting in 1989 and becoming more important since 1991, when Uzbekistan became an independent republic. In the years immediately after independence, tourism numbers declined. However, the efforts of Uzbektourism and Uzbekistan Airways built up marketing and direct access to principal tourist markets in Germany, France and the United Kingdom. There has also been success in strengthening the tourism potential in secondary markets, such as Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Republic of Korea, the United States and Russia. The main challenge is creating greater international awareness for tourism in Uzbekistan. At the same time, there are a number of related challenges or problems that need to be addressed within the Uzbek tourism industry concerning human resources development, the capabilities of the NTO (Uzbektourism), environmental management, tourism infrastructure and investment, travel facilitation and the government's overall tourism development strategy.

A tourism development and marketing action plan has been proposed for Uzbekistan and covers the challenges listed above. The general aim of the action plan would be to establish Uzbekistan as the "Crossroads of the Great Silk Road". In terms of human resources development, the action plan identified management training as the focus with priority given to the hotel sector, heritage sites and the NTO. Given the situation in the Uzbek tourism industry, the action plan advocated a top-down approach where 100 top managers in key positions would

¹³ Based on a country report prepared by the National Company Uzbektourism, Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

be trained first so that they, in turn, could become trainers in their organizations. It was expected that this would create a cascading effect throughout the industry. Other priorities for human resources development include establishing a hotel and catering school of international standard, training of personnel working at the airport and Uzbekistan Airways and training of NTO personnel in other countries.

The economic impact of tourism in Uzbekistan derives from two distinct types of tourists: international tourists arriving by air on long-haul flights and “day” tourists from neighbouring Central Asian countries. According to Uzbektourism, the total number of foreign visitors in 1996 was 174,000 and tourism revenue amounted to about US\$ 198 million. It was projected that there would be about 650,000 visitors in 2000 with revenue of about US\$ 1 billion. The main destinations for most tourists have been the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva with an emphasis on the cultural and historical heritage. The average length of stay has been 6 to 9 nights. Challenges for the economic development of tourism would be to spread the impact, increase the length of stay and attract other tourist market segments with an interest in skiing, trekking, archeology and ecology.

The environmental management of tourism is expected to become a more important issue area for Uzbekistan, especially if there are more tourists visiting heritage sites and there is an expansion of tourist activities to include ecotourism and outdoor sports. A number of recommendations for tourism development have focused on environmental and cultural attractions, including Zamir National Park, scenic tours between the main tourist destinations, short stays with families in typical Uzbek villages and promoting nature and cultural attractions of the Ferghana Valley. Trekking and camping holidays in the Zarafshan Mountains are also being considered.

Infrastructure development for tourism development has focused mostly on upgrading and modernizing existing facilities, especially the main airports, hotels and ground transport equipment (buses, rental cars and rail carriages). Uzbekistan can be considered as an economy in transition where the roles of the public sector and private sectors need careful planning for future sustainable tourism development. In this issue area the role of Uzbektourism has to be given special consideration. At present, Uzektourism is involved in hotel and tour management as well as tourism promotion and acting as the NTO. It could be useful to study the experience of other countries where hotel and tour management

and tourism advertising, marketing and promotion might be taken over by the private sector given the costs involved.

One possible constraint observed in Uzbekistan is that the privatization began only in 1994. There has been progress in attracting foreign investment and an action programme for sustainable tourism development should help direct foreign investors to the tourism sector. At the same time, the institutional framework for tourism could also be analyzed as part of infrastructure development. Along these lines, the government has proposed to establish a new Department of Culture, Tourism and Sports. Promoting public-private sector partnerships, especially through encouragement to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), could help support tourism marketing and promotion in international markets.

Facilitation of travel to Uzbekistan involves issues related to political stability in the Central Asian region and media reports that create negative images. At the same time, other facilitation issues include the cumbersome visa formalities, the use of parallel exchange rates and various limitations to locations and sites of tourism interest. If tourism is expected to have a significant role in economic development, then issues of facilitation require careful assessment by the government in terms of how open the country can be to international tourism. At the same time, more practical aspects of facilitation also need to be addressed, such as road maps and sign posting that meet international standards and greater choices for travelers in terms of package tours and accommodations in various price ranges.

The main focus of regional cooperation and new initiatives by Uzbekistan is the Silk Road. In order to develop tourism and market the country in major tourist source countries, Uzbekistan has the advantage of being a strategic cross roads between Europe and Asia along the historical Silk Road. There is generally good road infrastructure within the country and the Silk Road can be the attraction for visits to multiple destinations involving several countries in the region. The annual Tashkent International Tourism Fair is one possible venue for workshops with tour operators to create greater awareness of Uzbekistan, its cultural heritage, the natural environment and the Silk Road. Overall, the development of sustainable tourism in Uzbekistan would require new policies in the possible form of an action plan, new institutional structures, incentives for private sector investment and training of human resources.

III. Supporting action taken by international and regional organizations

According to PASTA, international and regional organizations would be taking supporting actions in the six theme areas. Reports by twelve organizations show that there is strong support for regional and subregional cooperation with an emphasis on sharing information, experiences, facilities and expertise. Action by international and regional organizations can help create opportunities for greater access, provide resources and help strengthen capabilities and encourage arrangements that focus on sustainability in tourism development. The activities of international and regional organizations in the Asian and Pacific region can promote sustainable tourism development by conserving scarce resources, promoting cultural and economic understanding, increasing the frequency of international contacts and exchanges and reducing unnecessary competition.

A. Asian Development Bank

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supports subregional cooperation in combination with human resources development and infrastructure development through its regional technical assistance to the Greater Mekong Subregional Cooperation (GMS). The overall objective is to help strengthen economic and social well-being in the six countries of the region. Tourism development was identified as a priority initiative and the Working Group of the GMS Tourism Sector was formed in 1995 through joint efforts of ESCAP and ADB.

The Working Group is comprised of NTOs of the six countries and provides guidance and support for implementation of priority projects. By 1997, the secretariat of the Working Group was formed as the Agency for Coordinating Mekong Tourism Activities (AMTA) under the responsibility of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Most support activities of ADB are in the form of regional technical assistance to address a number of subregional tourism issues. Since 1995 there has been regional technical assistance to train trainers in tourism, make a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of tourism development along the Mekong River, develop training for tourism planning and management, identify and evaluate the feasibility of priority tourism infrastructure development.

ADB cooperates with a number of other regional and international organizations to promote increased tourism in the GMS as a strategy to help alleviate poverty, develop human resources and contribute to sustainable development along the Mekong River. The ADB has identified inadequate infrastructure as the principal constraint to tourism development in the GMS and focuses technical assistance on identifying priority tourism infrastructure needs and promoting related mechanisms that can strengthen cooperation among the six countries along the Mekong River.

ADB also provides technical assistance at the national level in order to strengthen tourism planning, infrastructure development and ecotourism as part of overall environmental management of tourism. Emphasis is on the social and environmental impact of tourism and the need to include all stakeholders when planning and designing projects with ADB assistance.

B. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat (APEC) organized an APEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) that has been sharing information, exchanging views and developing areas of cooperation since 1991. TWG has three areas of work in its programme: (1) trade and investment liberalization, (2) facilitation and (3) economic and technical cooperation. Priority has recently focused on collective actions to overcome impediments to tourism growth. A comprehensive inventory of barriers to travel in the APEC region has been compiled. APEC members have also agreed to a series of collective actions that address impediments to tourism growth. A comprehensive analysis of the economic impact of travel and tourism in the APEC region with forecasts to 2010 was published by the TWG in cooperation with WTTC. The First APEC Tourism Forum was held in April 2000 at Hong Kong, China in order to promote private sector participation in cooperation with WTTC, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and WTO.

Since 1999, APEC members and the TWG have developed the APEC Tourism Charter that would serve as a statement of ministerial purposes and intent to achieve four policy goals: (1) remove impediments to tourism business and investment, (2) increase mobility of visitors and tourism demand in the APEC region, (3) manage tourism in ways that are sustainable and (4) recognize tourism as a vehicle for socio-economic development. At the First Ministerial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Tourism in July 2000, the Seoul Declaration on an

APEC Tourism Charter was adopted. The TWG would be responsible for compiling individual and collective action plans to achieve the four policy goals.

Other parts of the work programme of the TWG include promotion of tourism as a means to achieve sustainable economic development with a focus on best practices; human resources development with skills standardization; information exchange to enhance public-private sector cooperation; and promotion of links with other APEC working groups relevant to the tourism industry.

C. Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation

The Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation (IOTO) supports its member countries based on the vision of having every destination in the region optimize its tourism potential based on sustainable approaches for the benefit of the people. Much of IOTO work focuses on tourism activities that relate to its coastal tourism initiative. Besides a set of principles for coastal zone management (CZM) and tourism based on integrated national planning and sound environmental management of tourism, there is a five-point action programme for sustainable tourism in coastal environments of the Indian Ocean region. It was compiled during a recent workshop held at Kuala Lumpur.

The five points of the action programme for sustainable tourism in coastal environments of the Indian Ocean region include (1) creating a tourism resource center with guidelines for CZM; (2) setting up an advisory group with teams of experts to advise decision-makers, tourism developers, operators and local communities; (3) starting educational pilot projects aimed at having operational staff participate actively in sustainable tourism development and environmental protection; (4) introducing eco-labels to have international certification of coastal tourism operations with related workshops for evaluation and monitoring; and (5) actively supporting initiatives for involving local communities and staff in sustainable tourism development. In addition to making local communities aware of being stakeholders, the action programme would be developed and implemented jointly with local NGOs. Furthermore, involving local communities, resort operators, employees and guests in coastal tourism management would ensure that the environment is appreciated and protected as much as the benefits of investment and the jobs created. All stakeholders would be more aware of the dangers of over use and value environmental management.

D. International Civil Aviation Organization Asia and Pacific Office

The International Civil Aviation Organization Asia and Pacific Office (ICAO) takes a number of actions aimed at facilitating travel worldwide and in the region. One concerns the role air transportation in promoting tourism, where ICAO focuses on streamlining facilitation systems and procedures as well as enhancing flight safety and security. Systems and procedures have become more efficient as countries introduce machine-readable passports and visas developed by ICAO. Flight safety and aviation security oversight programmes have been initiated in some countries and more are planned. In relation to tourism development, the work of ICAO aims to help the Asian and Pacific region create destinations that are attractive, accessible, safe and secure.

E. International Labour Office

The work of the International Labour Office (ILO) focuses on human resources development in the hotel, catering and tourism sectors. ILO held its tripartite meeting from 2 to 6 April 2001. A background report, "Human Resources Development, Employment and Globalization in the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Sector", was prepared as an input.

The ILO would contribute to work being done on Tourism Satellite Accounts by extending the coverage to tourism labour statistics. The ILO background report showed the employment significance of the tourism industry. Direct or "face-to-face" services to tourists represented between 3 and 4 per cent of GDP in most of the world economy and employed about 3 per cent of the world's total labour force. With the addition of industries that serve tourists indirectly by providing infrastructure or inputs to the direct tourism industry, the total tourism-related economy has been estimated by WTTC to produce as much as 11 per cent of GDP and to employ 8 per cent of the labour force worldwide. Worldwide, one job in the direct tourism industry induces about one-and-a-half additional (indirect) jobs in the tourism-related economy.

The ILO background paper described the main human resource features of enterprises in the tourism sector. Most usually employed only a small core of permanent and full-time staff. Other staff were employed with part-time, seasonal and casual labour arrangements. Up to half the workers in the industry were under 25 years old and up to 70 per cent were women.

Staff turnover has been a serious issue, and employers often had to find new staff for up to half or more of their posts every year. Unattractive working conditions were not the only reason for high turnover. Other reasons for employee turnover included: poor career prospects, low pay, unsocial working hours and physical stress.

There are several other issues of concern to ILO and the tripartite partners. With the growth in nature tourism, rural, agri- or ecotourism and adventure tourism, people in remote areas could benefit from employment and income generated by tourism. However, ensuring that the benefits exceed the potential damage would need the proper involvement of local populations and regulation in order to reduce or prevent unfair competition. Sustainable development of these tourism forms therefore requires participatory institutions and social dialogue in communities.

Another human resources issue concerns very young children who work in all kinds of tourism-related occupations. The worst form of child labour in tourism is in sex tourism, and the international community has expressed concern and formed a task force against the commercial sexual exploitation of children to promote appropriate counter-measures. The industry also has developed innovative programmes to prevent and combat child prostitution in tourism.

New customer demands, new technologies, intense competition and continuing shortages of job applicants show that human resources development issues need much more attention. New forms of work organization are increasingly important factors for boosting productivity. At the same time, more tourism occupations demand higher skills, especially among managers and staff in direct contact with customers. All employees need enhanced social skills based on a shift away from operational or vocational skills towards personal and social skills.

The ILO Tripartite Meeting had four main topics for discussion: (1) globalization, (2) employment creation and working conditions, (3) human resources development and (4) social dialogue. Detailed issues under these topics included, among others: measures that could be taken to enhance the employment of women in the tourism sector; obstacles to the ratification and implementation of the Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, 1991 (No. 172), and what measures should be taken to promote ratification; strategies for human resources development to ensure that workers are attracted to and retained; measures to be taken to increase training opportunities for workers in small and

medium-sized enterprises; and how to enhance vocational training, particularly in developing countries.

F. Pacific Asia Travel Association

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is firmly committed to both the ideal of sustainable tourism and its practice in the day-to-day operations of the tourism industry. Accordingly PATA would be: (1) Adopting and promoting the PATA Code of Environmental Conduct and its application in the industry; (2) Committing to working with partner organizations in the public and private sectors; (3) Conducting meetings and workshops to raise the level of awareness about the elements behind sustainable tourism; and (4) Identifying and widely disseminating experiences with best practices. These elements were reaffirmed at PATA's Fiftieth Annual Conference, held in April 2001, in a specific resolution aimed at a vision for the next fifty years of PATA and its role in promoting responsible and sustainable tourism in the Asian and Pacific region.

G. Tumen Secretariat

The Tumen Secretariat works in association with UNDP to support cooperation among five countries of North Asia in the Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRADP). One initiative has been a strategic regional approach to sustainable tourism development that includes action programmes to protect biodiversity and the international waters from the impact of economic development. The aim of the Tumen Secretariat's strategic regional approach to sustainable tourism development would be to facilitate measures that minimize environmental degradation caused by tourism and give tour operators the ability to apply the principles of environmental best practices.

By cooperating with WTO it would be possible to have a comprehensive human resources development strategy for training and education, a needs analysis and recommendations for a full-scale tourism human resources development project. The project would be designed to use existing resources and give direct benefits to women, youth and disadvantaged groups.

From existing data and estimates, the total amount received from tourism in the Tumen River area countries was about US\$ 40.6 million in 1998. Data have not been available for all Tumen River area countries and there has not been systematic study of the economic impact of tourism in the area. Another project of the Tumen Secretariat relates to developing a tourism project for the

subregion. One activity involves creating brochures to give an international image to the subregion and attract investment.

Meetings on cross-border issues in the transport sector should help facilitate tourist travel by land routes. A working group on transport was scheduled to meet in early September 2000 for discussions related to land transport facilitation. Some bilateral agreements have been reached about border opening hours. Construction of roads and customs buildings has been subject to pre-feasibility study and some work has already begun. Recent cooperation in the Tumen River area has focused on understanding the key tourist source markets in order to strengthen the area's potential. One project would train officials from the NTOs in market research. Joint tourism promotions and familiarization tours are being considered. The Tumen River Working Group on Tourism decided to participate with joint representation at the International Tourism Asia Fair in Hong Kong, China during September 2000. The Tumen Secretariat would support this initiative and WTO would conduct a promotional seminar for the region

H. United Nations Development Programme

The UNDP office at Seoul helps facilitate the participation of the Republic of Korea in the Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRADP). As follow up to the Second TRADP Working Group Meeting on Tourism in August 1999, UNDP Seoul organized a meeting to consider various initiatives of the government of the Republic of Korea to support tourism development in the Tumen River area. Support would focus on activities that could help attract tourists from the Republic of Korea. In November 1999, UNDP and WTO supported a familiarization tour organized by the Tumen Secretariat for journalists and tour operators from five countries, including the Republic of Korea. Several strategic barriers hindering the area's tourism potential were identified, particularly impediments to facilitation of travel. In May 2000, participants at the Third TRADP Working Group Meeting on Tourism agreed to develop projects in six programme areas, including joint tourism development planning, international investment promotion, travel facilitation and training and technical exchanges.

I. United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) addresses issues and takes supporting action in PASTA's theme area of the environmental management of tourism. UNEP relies on a voluntary approach that includes

partnerships, codes of conduct and capacity building. UNEP made a feasibility study in three countries for using the Blue Flag scheme (of the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe) in Asia and the Pacific to set environmental quality standards for beaches and marinas. The study is now under review.

UNEP launched a Tour Operators' Initiative in early 2000 to share information, develop training and promote environmental awareness among members. The initiative is now being introduced to Asia and the Pacific. UNEP co-published a manual on cleaner production in hotels and resorts. UNEP and WTO organized a Conference on Sustainable Tourism in the Islands of the Asia-Pacific Region scheduled at Hainan Island, China in early December 2000.

J. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific recently reported on six tourism projects designed to address a combination of the six theme areas of PASTA. One regional project covering pilot sites in nine countries aimed to establish communication between the tourism industry and those who conserve and maintain cultural heritage sites in order to develop sustainable tourism strategies that cover fiscal management, tourism investment, community education and training and resolving conflicts among stakeholders.

During all four phases of this project, UNESCO, local governments, educational institutions and PATA would be actively involved. The project clearly involves supporting action on human resources development, economic impact, environmental management, infrastructure and investment and regional cooperation. Local stakeholders prepared in-depth case studies for the pilot sites in nine countries for presentation at a UNESCO regional conference on Culture, Heritage Management and tourism held at Nepal in April 2000.

A second regional project involves UNESCO and PATA collaboration covering seven countries in order to produce a series of site-specific publications that can educate industry personnel, policy makers and site managers about how to develop the tourism industry while preserving the environment and cultural heritage of a location. UNESCO and PATA would produce a series of publications entitled "Impact", which would address issues related to promoting a tourism industry based on responsible community-based management. This regional

project covers human resources development, economic impact, environmental management, regional cooperation and other initiatives, including private sector participation.

The Nam Ha ecotourism project involving integrated planning for culturally and ecologically sustainable tourism development through district and local community management is a national project in Lao People's Democratic Republic. In addition to UNESCO support, funds were also available from New Zealand and the World Bank. The project was designed to use tourism as a tool for integrated approaches to rural development that would conserve the natural heritage as well as validate and preserve traditional cultures. Participation and management by the community would help protect the cultural rights of the indigenous people.

Another national project of UNESCO involves integrated planning and community involvement for culturally and ecologically sustainable tourism development in and around the Andaman Sea marine and coastal protected areas of southern Thailand. The project aims at developing tourism potential in ways that protect the local environment and preserve the ways of life of the indigenous sea gypsies. The first phase of the project has been completed and the second phase would include, among other activities, training of local stakeholders and developing an integrated management plan.

As part of another national project, UNESCO planned to hold a subregional seminar to establish a preservation management plan to integrate protection of outstanding cultural and natural features of the Batanes Archipelago in the Philippines. Site managers from other countries in Asia and the Pacific would share their experiences and expertise to protect marine ecology, encourage active participation by indigenous populations and protect unique landscapes and archeological sites. An integrated management plan would serve as the means to give local communities the knowledge, skills and tools to share responsibility for sustaining the local environment while developing sustainable eco-cultural tourism.

Vigan, Philippines is the location for a national-level UNESCO project to establish a "small business incubator" at a small town near a world heritage site. When Vigan was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1999, increased tourist arrivals created a need for local entrepreneurs to provide tourism-related products and services. UNESCO has been working with the community and the local university to create models on entrepreneurship that would help sustain and

preserve a small historic town and provide livelihood opportunities. It is expected that the project would be implemented with help from other partners and private sector sponsorship.

The Office of the UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture implements all projects by working in close coordination with the national commissions for UNESCO in each country.

K. World Tourism Organization

The programmes and activities of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) cover all six theme areas of PASTA and contribute to the sustainable development of tourism at the international, regional and national levels. WTO also has a strong record of effective collaboration and coordination with other international organizations, as well as regional and subregional organizations.

The WTO programme in human resources development aims at improving the quality and efficiency of tourism education and training through the TEDQUAL methodology, certification and audits, as well as the General Tourism Aptitude Test (GTAT) certification. WTO cooperated with ESCAP to organize a Tourism Week at Macao in May 1999, which resulted in the Macao Declaration on Human Resource Development in the Tourism Sector. WTO has also been formulating a long-term Tourism Human Resources Development Plan for the Tumen River Area.

One main focus of the WTO has been the development of a tourism satellite account (TSA) to more accurately measure and analyze the economic impact of tourism. A regional seminar on TSA for Asia and the Pacific was held in February 2001 at Bangkok. National seminars and technical assistance on TSA are also provided to requesting member countries. WTO has also studied the impact of the financial crisis on Asia's tourism sector.

WTO has been working to implement the recommendations from the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development made in April 1999. This includes cooperation with the Earth Council and WTTC to organize follow-up regional seminars. WTO also organizes national seminars and provides technical assistance on ecotourism and general environmental issues.

WTO assists at the national level to support infrastructure development and investment in the tourism sector. WTO recently completed a study on visa facilitation along the Silk Road as part of a project to revive the road as a unique

tourism product. WTO has close collaboration with a large number of international and regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific, whether they are directly or indirectly involved in tourism. Cooperation covers a broad range of activities, including those that support sustainable tourism development. Other related initiatives of the WTO at the regional level have included: International Conference on Cultural Tourism at Siem Reap, Cambodia from 11 to 13 December 2000; cooperation with UNEP to organize a conference in December 2000 held at Hainan Island, China as part of a Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; publication of *Guide for Local Authorities on Developing Sustainable Tourism* with a companion volume of case studies from Asia and the Pacific.

There is close collaboration between WTO and a number of international and regional organizations, including ADB, ASEAN, ESCAP, IOTO, PATA, SAARC, Tumen Secretariat, UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO. Cooperative activities cover all six theme areas and can involve joint conferences, seminars, training programmes and workshops.

L. World Travel and Tourism Council

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) is a private sector global coalition of chief executive officers from all sectors of the travel and tourism industry. WTTC aims to assist governments in implementing appropriate policies for sustainable tourism development. There have been several initiatives taken by WTTC related to sustainable tourism development at the regional and global level. The major global initiative relates to the Agenda 21 programme for action developed in cooperation with WTO and the Earth Council.

One major regional initiative has involved collaboration with the APEC Tourism Working Group to produce and update a report on the economic impact of travel and tourism development in the APEC region. WTTC is also committed to helping implement the APEC Tourism Charter. This includes assistance to develop TSA, independent research to support implementation of the APEC Tourism Charter's action plans, contributing expertise to policy teams who are developing the action plans and setting up a collaborative travel and tourism research consortium for the region or a tourism information network.

WTTC has a Human Resource Center located at Vancouver, Canada to do research about global good practices. WTTC has published simulated TSA

for over 160 countries and worked with many Asian and Pacific government in this effort.

In 1994, WTTC started the Green Globe environment awareness programme to encourage tourism businesses to make environmental improvements. Green Globe 21 now operates as an independent organization that monitors and certifies businesses. It maintains links to WWTC. There is also a WTTC Infrastructure Task Force working towards the sustainable development of infrastructure. The Task Force is comprised of business leaders and policy makers from around the world.

WTTC has a commitment to working for the elimination of bureaucratic barriers to travel and tourism that includes working with other industry associations, immigration authorities and technology suppliers. Together, they have developed and introduced pilot systems for automated screening methods. WTTC policies also focus on trade liberalization and open skies policies.

IV. Supporting action taken by ESCAP

PASTA provides the overall framework for the work of ESCAP in tourism. The aim is to strengthen national capabilities and promote regional cooperation to bring economic and social benefits to wide segments of society. ESCAP activities at the regional, subregional and national level support implementation in the six theme areas in order to help governments maximize the socio-economic benefits from tourism development while minimizing any adverse impact. The basic forms of ESCAP assistance are studies, workshops and technical advisory missions. ESCAP gives special attention to countries in the early stages of tourism development, including the least developed, land-locked and island countries and areas economies in transition.

A. Human resources development

ESCAP serves as the secretariat and regional coordinator for the Network of Asia-Pacific Education and Training Institutes in Tourism (APETIT), which was established in 1997 at Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The purpose of APETIT is to promote regional cooperation in human resources development to overcome various problems and constraints commonly faced by developing countries with respect to tourism training and education. The work of APETIT is organized into five activity groups with a member institute acting as the responsible regional focal point for each activity. The five activity groups are: (1) information management, (2) communication links, (3) training and advisory services, (4) sharing experiences and (5) research and development.

ESCAP has cooperated with APETIT member institutes to organize two meetings of APETIT's General Council, one at Macao, China in May 1999 and one at Khajuraho, India in August 2001. There have been six meetings of APETIT's Executive Committee. As of August 2001, the membership of APETIT now comprised 120 tourism education and training institutes and organizations in 33 countries.

The Second Meeting of the General Council at Khajuraho, India reaffirmed that human resources development in tourism, especially training, played a vital role in the sustainable development of tourism and that efforts should be exerted to make APETIT beneficial to as many members as possible. The Meeting recognized that APETIT member institutes would greatly benefit should the scope of the APETIT work programme be expanded to encompass wider areas of

training, such as ecotourism, environmental management system, General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), etc. However, the Meeting affirmed that member countries and areas would be responsible for creating and designing education and training programmes according to their respective needs and priorities for tourism sector development.

ESCAP also organized a Seminar on Tourism Education and Training in the Asia-Pacific Region at Khajuraho for APETIT members. The Seminar covered a number of topics, including training needs for sustainable tourism destination management and the involvement of stakeholders in tourism education. One area of special focus was on countries with tourism industries at an early stage of development, which faced constraints in their tourism education and training systems. Countries in the early stages of tourism development were encouraged to take a number of remedial actions that would enable their education and training systems to respond to the growing demands of their tourism sector. While most of these measures were the responsibility of each country and area, cooperative efforts through APETIT could also be encouraged and developed.

A second area of special focus at the Seminar was the Pacific subregion, where countries displayed great diversity and unique obstacles to the delivery of training across vast geographical distances. An overarching framework for tourism training and education development in the Pacific could help address challenges to human resources development. The South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO) had recently commissioned a Regional Tourism Strategy with a component on human resources development that underlined the need for regional tourism training standards. This would require closer working relationships between regional and national tourism training organizations, as well as public and private sector stakeholders, and APETIT could serve as one vehicle for establishing networks of training and education relationships.

APETIT is a successful cooperative endeavour in the Asian and Pacific region in view of the rapidly increasing membership, the growing number of activities involving sharing and exchange and the continued donor support.

ESCAP has also published two studies on human resources development. One was on regional cooperation in human resources development in the Asian and Pacific region and one on human resource development requirements of the tourism sector in India.

B. The economic impact of tourism

ESCAP has long recognized that reliable research and systematic understanding of the economic impact of tourism is important for improved policy-making and integrated planning. From 1990 to 1996, ESCAP prepared a number of country studies and a regional overview in order to gain more systematic understanding of the economic impact of tourism based on input-output analysis.

The regional overview highlighted three main patterns to the economic contribution of tourism in ten Asian countries. Countries with the first pattern showed a strong economic impact on income, but a low economic contribution. The second pattern showed a relatively weak impact on income, but tourism made some contribution to the economy. The third pattern was a moderate impact on income, but a mixed economic contribution.

A number of countries have yet to study this issue area and need to build their national capacity to do such research. This would enhance the opportunities to share information and experiences as well as compare policies and actions.

C. Environmental management of tourism

ESCAP has organized regional meetings and national seminars in order to strengthen national capabilities in environmental management and the promotion of ecotourism. These activities have been in response to a greater awareness among Asian and Pacific countries and areas that tourism places special challenges on the ecology. Moreover, it is recognized that the environment is a tourism resource affected by other economic activities. Systematic, well-coordinated management aimed at sustaining the environment and preserving tourist destinations requires planning, legislative, institutional and other measures. Awareness of this point has guided the work of ESCAP within the framework of PASTA.

ESCAP has organized several national seminars on sustainable tourism development. The National Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Development in China, held from 1 to 2 November 2000 in Tianjin, China, aimed at promoting better understanding of the issues related to sustainable tourism development, including ecotourism. Presentations and discussions at the Workshop focused on identifying ways and means to balance sustainable tourism development with environmental protection and how to make proper use of local resources, targeting the western provinces of China in particular. The Workshop was organized in

collaboration with the China National Tourism Administration with financial assistance from the Government of Japan.

The National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development: Community-Based Tourism Development and Coastal Tourism Management in Indonesia was held from 27 to 28 June 2001 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The purpose was to enhance national capabilities to take action in order that tourism would be economically viable, socio-culturally acceptable and environmentally sustainable. Actions should result in movement towards responsible tourism that would bring benefits to wide segments of society. Particular emphasis was on actions that focused on community-based tourism in coastal areas with marine environments as a way to broaden social participation and good practices based on public-private sector partnerships. The Seminar was organized by ESCAP in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation (IOTO) in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Government of Indonesia.

The National Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development in Myanmar held from 30 to 31 August 2000 in Yangon, Myanmar, was held in order to enhance national capabilities for taking effective measures to promote tourism with an emphasis on sustainable tourism development. Presentations and discussions covered issues related to integrated tourism development and the challenges faced by Myanmar in sustaining tourism development. The potential of the private sector and how to strengthen its role in making tourism development sustainable was also considered. The Seminar was organized jointly by ESCAP and WTO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. The Government of Japan provided financial assistance.

In October 2001, ESCAP cooperated with SPTO to conduct a subregional seminar on development of ecotourism in Pacific Island countries.

In 2000, ESCAP published *Guidelines on Integrated Tourism Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development*. *Tourism Review Number 22* covered the topic of sustainable tourism development at the national level and was published in 2001.

D. Infrastructure development and investment

ESCAP has been cooperating with the WTO and PATA to help strengthen national capabilities to develop tourism infrastructure through investment,

public-private sector partnerships and policies that encourage investment. One regional seminar held at Bangkok in March 2000 through joint efforts of ESCAP, WTO and TAT focused on public-private partnership in tourism development. A Regional Seminar on Expanding the Economic Benefits of Tourism through Promotion of Investment in Tourism Infrastructure was held at Seoul, Republic of Korea, in May 2000. WTO and PATA contributed to the Seminar by providing resource persons.

Infrastructure development for the tourism sector is a relatively new area of ESCAP's work. However, ESCAP has been doing studies and organizing national seminars on investment, the role of the private sector and the potential for public-private sector partnerships for sustainable tourism development.

E. Facilitation of travel

ESCAP can provide support at the regional level for countries and areas that seek to make full use of tourism's development potential by overcoming travel impediments and procedural constraints. Such constraints might relate to visa policies, frontier formalities, customs regulations, and safety and security measures. ESCAP has made country-level studies on facilitation of travel and conducted regional seminars.

ESCAP, WTO, IOTO and PATA have been collaborating to assist in removing barriers to tourism and facilitate travel. Activities at the subregional level have included a Seminar on Expansion of Tourism in the Greater Mekong Subregion through Improved Air Transport in July 1999 at Vientiane. ESCAP co-sponsored an Asia-Pacific Conference on Tourism for People with Disability held in Bali, Indonesia in September 2000. One important outcome of the Conference was the Bali Declaration on Barrier-Free Tourism for People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. Promotion of barrier-free tourism in the region should focus on related legislation, education and training to raise awareness and sensitivity, and provision of accessible facilities in the tourism sector.

In 2000, *ESCAP Tourism Review* No. 20, *Facilitation of Travel in the Asian Region* was published.

F. Regional and subregional cooperation

APETIT is one of the most useful and successful mechanisms for regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific. From 1997 to 2001, as noted above, its membership has increased from 23 to 120 training and education institutes in 33 countries and areas. ESCAP has supported a number of bilateral and multilateral cooperative activities involving APETIT members through TCDC.

Since 1995, ESCAP and ADB have jointly supported the Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector, comprised of NTOs from six countries along the Mekong/Lancang River. The Working Group has been meeting annually, the Agency for Coordinating Mekong Tourism Activities (AMTA) was set up within TAT in Thailand and a wide variety of other activities have been undertaken based on cooperation with UNESCO, PATA, AMTA and ADB. ESCAP has taken the lead role in organizing national and regional seminars on tourism marketing and promotion, facilitation of subregional travel, sustainable tourism development and ecotourism in the Greater Mekong subregion.

Other regional and subregional support includes the following actions. ESCAP has been promoting tourism along the Asian Highway, and a *Study on Tourism Along the Asian Highway* was published in 2000. ESCAP has organized training programmes on tourism management for South Pacific countries in 1997 and 1999 and, as mentioned previously, cooperated with SPTO to organize a seminar on ecotourism in Pacific island countries in October 2001. A Seminar on Promotion of Buddhist Tourism Circuits was held at Kisarazu, Japan in 2001.

G. Summary

At the regional level, ESCAP works in the six theme areas of PASTA to strengthen national capabilities and promote regional cooperation in order that sustainable tourism development could bring economic and social benefits to wide segments of society. PASTA serves as a comprehensive guideline to address governmental policy making, planning and managing sustainable tourism development and ESCAP's regional modalities can play supporting roles. Within the six-year time frame of PASTA, progress is monitored through country reports submitted to the ESCAP Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development, which meets every two years.

V. Conclusion

This study has shown that policy makers in many ESCAP member countries and areas have recognized the benefits of sustainable tourism development and the role that PASTA can play as a framework for effective cooperation and tourism development. A number of international and regional organizations have shown that their expertise and work programmes can support implementation of PASTA through supporting actions. In addition, ESCAP activities at the regional, subregional and national level are guided by PASTA in order to support implementation in the six theme areas.

In effect, sustainable tourism development as outlined in PASTA offers many opportunities to have a positive impact at the national and local levels. In particular, there are increased possibilities to overcome poverty conditions through job creation in various regions of the country, including remote rural areas; employment for women, youth and indigenous communities; growth of medium and small-scale enterprises in local communities based on cultural heritage or ecotourism; income generation based on respect for the natural and social environment; and expansion of the government's resource base to provide budgets for social programmes to combat poverty conditions.

While tourism can have an overall positive impact, all stakeholders have to be aware and take action to minimize possible negative effects. In a globalized world, maximizing the benefits of tourism has become a more complex undertaking, which governments cannot do alone. A full range of stakeholders must be involved to ensure that tourism development is guided by effective laws and regulations, efficient planning and sound management.

These criteria provide the context for action within the framework of PASTA and highlight the emerging issues related to modalities for implementation at the national and regional levels.

At the national level, collaboration and policy coordination for sustainable tourism development at the highest level involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders may require more careful consideration, particularly for some least developed and land-locked countries and areas, island developing countries and economies in transition. A number of economies have only recently opened to international markets as well as begun processes of privatization. These processes may be more complex than envisaged and the links to sustainable tourism

development may need to be more clearly understood. In some countries and areas, policy makers and planners still need to have a better understanding of the role and contribution of tourism in overall national development. Technical assistance, workshops and seminars and comparative studies can provide opportunities to share knowledge and experience to those countries and areas that have reported that they need such support. In many cases, assistance in the form of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) might be an appropriate vehicle. TCDC would enable learning from the experiences of other Asian and Pacific countries and areas, especially with respect to environmental management of tourism and assessing the economic impact of tourism.

More countries and areas have greater recognition about how crucial human resources development is for sustainable tourism development. At the same time, however, budget constraints and low levels of private-public sector cooperation in training and education limit policy-making and planning at the national level in some countries and areas. Under these conditions, it would appear to be more difficult to formulate national strategies, establish a national tourism training committee or participate more actively in APETIT. Learning from the experiences of other countries and areas and sharing resources could help overcome constraints at the national level, and APETIT would be the appropriate vehicle with respect to human resources development in tourism. It may be important, therefore, to consider how APETIT could take specific account of the special constraints and needs of certain countries and areas that have not been very active members or have not yet become members.

The need for greater public-private sector cooperation in sustainable tourism development has still not been fully addressed in some ESCAP member countries and areas. This obstacle was encountered in various theme areas of PASTA, but most particularly in the area of infrastructure development and investment. International and regional organizations could help to clarify the issues involved through technical assistance, facilitating private-public sector consultations, workshops and seminars and country studies. Such supporting activities could encourage more effective action at the national level to build government capabilities and promote public-private partnerships.

Among the countries and areas reporting for this study, there has not yet been wide awareness of the need to include other stakeholders in the relevant activity areas of PASTA, especially environmental management of tourism, infrastructure development, human resources development and the economic impact of tourism. According to PASTA, local communities and NGOs should

have greater involvement and the mass media, general public and international tourists should have greater awareness about sustainable tourism development. At the national level, facilitation or consultative committees could be modalities for maintaining constructive dialogues and resolving issues.

Collaboration among regional and international organizations and the activities of regional and subregional groupings have been effective in playing a supportive role for existing national actions aimed at sustainable tourism development. It might be worthwhile to explore further how organizations and groupings at the regional and subregional level can serve as catalysts for greater, more innovative actions. This could include special attention to emerging global and regional issues in sustainable tourism development; the special needs of least developed, land-locked and Pacific island countries and areas and economies in transition; and ways to broaden and strengthen the interactions among countries and areas at different stages of tourism development.

Greater attention may be needed at this stage on the strategies and priorities for mobilizing resources in order to implement PASTA. This would clearly have to be preceded by a more thorough examination of current practices; the identification and availability of traditional and non-traditional resources at the national and regional level; and special attention to those countries and areas that would require considerable assistance. However, before many of these actions can be taken at the regional level, it will be necessary for more countries and areas to report on their progress with regard to action at the national level. The comprehensive and systematic nature of PASTA can provide benefits over the long term only when baseline information is available on the current situation in ESCAP member countries and areas and when policy makers agree that PASTA could provide a useful framework for action for sustainable tourism development.