

Inter-American Development Bank Seminar
September 22, 2004

**Sustainable Tourism as
A Multi-sector Development Tool**

Congratulations to the Inter-American Development Bank for recognizing the need to treat tourism as a holistic endeavor of the Bank. These strands have to be drawn together if the IDB is to make the best use of all its available human and institutional resources. We at Counterpart International treat sustainable tourism holistically because tourism's impacts are felt across a broad spectrum. For example:

*** Poverty Alleviation & Economic Development***

- The Largest & Fastest Growing Industry in the World and adaptable for micro, SMEs and community-based tourism
- Tourism is the number one source of foreign exchange for 40% of the countries in the world and in the top five for 83% of countries
- The WTO predicts the value of tourism to the world economy will grow tenfold over the next 10 years

*** Environmental Protection**

- Eco-adventure tourism among the fastest growing sectors
- Creates economic incentives for biodiversity conservation
- Especially well adapted for micro, SMEs & community-based tourism development in developing nations

*** Peace, Cultural Diversity & Tolerance**

- Promotes cross-cultural exchange and understanding
- Supports historic preservation, cultural heritage & traditions
- Engenders people-to-people grassroots peace and tolerance
- Cements civil societies

Tourism and Communication

Our Caribbean Media Exchange on Sustainable Tourism brings Journalists together from throughout the Caribbean & Internationally and seeks to incorporate media input to the design of sustainable tourism policies. A rich mix of media, government, NGO and industry.

- Six CMEx's produced in Less than 3 years
- Demand for CMEx throughout the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia Pacific and Eurasia
- Economic development & job creation
- Tourism's role with HIV/AIDS prevention
- The CMEx model for programs throughout LAC

We are honored to be part of the IDB's most innovative move to use sustainable tourism as an anti-poverty tool which celebrates a glorious ancient history while giving modern Maya access to the tools they request for taking advantage of the tourism.

Mundo Maya Sustainable Tourism Project

CPI is part of the Mundo Maya Alliance working with Conservation International, National Geographic and the Mundo Maya Organization for this precedent setting regional sustainable tourism program.

In addition to the MMSTP CPI launched the following:

Maya Community Tourism & Forest Garden

*** A New Model for Community Tourism in Guatemala**

- First time in history Guatemala Govt. has granted tourism concession for an archaeological site and National Park to indigenous Maya
- Builds capacity for Maya to protect and develop their own cultural and natural patrimony
- Develops new model for Maya job training with archaeological restoration and preservation

*** Integrating Community Tourism & Forest Gardens**

- Develops model for communities to benefit from tourism w/o losing their cultural and agroforestry traditions
- Creates market linkages between local agriculture and growing tourism markets
- Provides employment and supplemental income to subsistence to poor farming communities & families
- Creates model for other regions of Central America

Brazil At-Risk Youth Training Program

*** A New Model using ICT Training for At-Risk Youth Training with the Tourism Sector**

- Provides training and job-placement for at-risk youth each year from the favelas of Salvador, the largest urban slums in Brazil and Latin America.

Coral Gardens Pacific & Caribbean

*** Linking Coral Reef Restoration with Tourism**

- Provides communities with low-cost, easily learned methods of coral reef restoration & conservation
- Restoring reef health improves fisheries, food security and local management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- Creates public-private partnership model within tourism sector to support reef conservation & local communities
- Enables communities to participate in coastal resource planning and management

Technical Cooperation between developing countries

- Coral Garden methods developed among Pacific Island Nations & now being transferred to Caribbean (Jamaica, Honduras and Dominican Republic)

World Tourism Forum for Peace & Sustainable Development

- Brings together tourism leaders from around the world in Salvador, Brazil the week of Dec. 1-5 to focus on tourism as a development tool
- First of four annual summits hosted by President Lula of Brazil in partnership with UNESCO, WTO, IH, Counterpart International, NatGeo, Conservation International & HSUS/EarthVoice
- Creates a worldwide forum and network of support for innovative sustainable tourism policy and programs

*** A World Forum for Sustainable Tourism Best Practices and model programs**

- Supports ongoing programs throughout the year representing best practices for Sustainable Tourism
- Promotes sustainable tourism issues & programs with worldwide WTF multi-media campaign

*** Tourism's role with Peace & Cultural Diversity**

- WTF promotes the role of tourism to foster peace in troubled times and places
- Encourages development of public-private models that use tourism to enhance cultural diversity and heritage
- Creates public-private dialogue and exchange among all stakeholders working in tourism development

SUMMARY

Tourism is one of the fastest growing parts of the Global Economy and the IDB needs to approach it in a holistic fashion if it wants to be among the major players effectively using sustainable tourism as anti poverty tool.

- it is about civil society
- it is about environmental conservation
- it is about poverty alleviation. The countries with the greatest needs are also those with the biggest tourism potential. The poorest and most remote countries on the planet -- untouched by development specialists -- are rich with culture tradition -- and this is precisely what tourists of this century want.
- it is about peace and conflict resolution and mitigation. Do you notice the first thing formerly warring countries seek at the peace table is the opening of borders for tourists. Did you know the WTO has at least five tourism initiatives in North Korea?
- it is about culture and heritage. Look at the Mundo Maya Sustainable Tourism Project which showcases the dazzling ancient Mayan civilizations while helping the modern Maya reap the benefits of tourists drawn to the Mayan sites.
- it is about economic development, and fortunately all developing countries have tourism potential and already tourism is one of the top investment and foreign currency earners for poorer countries.
- Fortunately, the worldwide fall in basic commodity prices over the past 30 years -- and the reduction in trade preferences -- has coincided with the growth of sustainable tourism and the increasing participation in it of poorer countries.
- it is about globalization, but the difference here is -- with sustainable tourism is -- the consumer goes to the producer. Think of it -- American tourists take -- and leave -- more money in Latin America and the Caribbean than the US government gives in aid to the region.
- it is about infrastructural development -- and again look at the Mundo Maya project where the infrastructure built to access the ruins are low-impact and designed to preserve the ecology.
- it is about trade. It is very much about trade. The world economy needs a successful Doha Development round and tourism should be part of the final package with balanced and structured liberalization to help develop the export capacity of developing countries -- and don't forget -- tourism -- which reaps foreign currency -- is an export not an import industry.

- The good news is that tourism in the developing countries has grown at twice the speed of OECD nations.
- The poorer countries have a 21st Century export leader, while the industrialized countries have advanced industry and the consumers with disposable income to support the development process and take an active part in the benefits. Tourism is a win-win for developing and developed countries alike.

So, you can't carve up sustainable tourism into several divisions of the IDB. It has to be handled holistically. If it is not managed cross-divisionally it will not be a sustainable function of the Bank.

What was the first specialized agency created by the UN General Assembly in over a decade? The WTO – no not that one – the World Tourism Organization. Recognition, again, of the integral link between tourism and development.

These are just some of the reasons why the IDB has to set up a sustainable tourism capacity. It has to pull together the competencies currently residing in many other parts of the Bank.

It has to be able to bring all the elements together to fashion for itself the greatest anti-poverty tool currently not at its disposal.

It's not a question of whether the Bank should set up a sustainable tourism division – the question is how much longer can the bank afford to do its job properly -- without a sustainable tourism department?

Thank you.