

STATEMENT BY MS. ALISON DRAYTON, GUYANA DELEGATION, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTER-SESSIONAL AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS AND ON TOURISM UNDER AGENDA ITEM 4: TOURISM

New York, 23 February 1999

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China would like to first thank the Secretariat for the very useful reports on tourism and sustainable development contained in documents E/CN.17/1999/5 and Addenda 1-3.

These reports make it very clear that tourism is both currently and potentially a significant contributor to sustained economic growth and sustainable development. In a number of developing countries tourism has emerged as a dominant economic contributor, providing infrastructure development, jobs, foreign exchange earnings, government tax revenue and other significant benefits to local communities.

Developing countries experience trying times with regard to not only environmental management, but also socio-economic welfare and tourism market growth. Uplifting people is the biggest challenge facing the tourism sectors of these countries, and we consider the creation of sustainable job opportunities and the promotion of emerging enterprises, as well as appropriate training, to be of cardinal importance.

There are also, however, a number of challenges associated with tourism, among which are:

- A concentration of services and profits into very few big transnational corporations, which often leads to the development of enclaves with no linkage to other socio-economic sectors of the local society.
- In many developing countries tourist facilities belong to outside investors, because they have easier access to capital and other resources and this often leads to the marginalization of domestic entrepreneurs.
- The need for the involvement of local communities, at all levels, in all aspects of the tourism development process, such as policy-making, planning, management, ownership and the sharing of benefits.
- Improving the access of small scale tourism facilities to government incentives and publicity. They generally lack the resources to access tourist agencies, the media and tourist expositions.
- Tourism could have the potential to enhance the cultural heritage and social well-being of communities. However, measures are needed to address possible negative factors, such as cultural erosion and environmental degradation.
- Assess national resources and optimize market segmentation for total benefit.
- Strengthen local economic bases by promoting efforts to diffuse the economic benefits of tourism activity throughout local communities.
- Promote better coordination between the public and private sectors to achieve sustainable tourism.

- The need to educate tourists to be sensitive to local culture and traditions.

Among the possible actions which can address these problems, are the following:

- Promote an enabling environment for small business oriented tourism.
- Establish human resource development programmes to support development of the tourism sector.
- Establish an assistance framework in terms of which developed countries can support tourism development in developing countries.

The absence of agreed intergovernmental guidelines on sustainable tourism is one factor which is hindering our discussions in this fora. During CSD-7 there should be a discussion on the principles governing sustainable tourism. This could include the following elements:

1. Promote the recognition by the international community of the value of tourism as an economic tool for development, particularly developing countries, and the fragility of the resources on which it depends, as well as the resulting need for international support to encourage its sustainable development.
2. Promote long term tourism development that increases the economic and educational benefits from the tourism resources and maintains the cultural and environmental integrity of the host community.
3. Promote national efforts to achieve an equitable distribution throughout local communities of the net benefits of resource use and environmental management.
4. Develop regional and international mechanisms for the exchange of information on the development of a safe and sustainable tourism sector, using, as appropriate, the capacities of regional and international tourism organizations, including through the establishment of an international awards scheme to recognize particularly valuable contributions to sustainable tourism development.

In addition,

During CSD-7, we should agree on how we wish to address the following:

- The process and modalities for celebrating the Year of Eco-Tourism in 2002.
- Explore the linkages between the Year of the Mountains, also to be held in 2002.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.