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BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. This document contributes towards a review by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its twelfth meeting, of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development,¹ pursuant to decision XI/6 item E.² It builds on document UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/52/Rev.1 and aims to support deliberations on ways and means to optimize the application of the Guidelines and related best practices, technologies and lessons learned by Parties, United Nations agencies such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), relevant associations and networks of the tourism industry, non-governmental organizations, international organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), indigenous and local communities and other major groups.

2. The document was prepared with the generous support of the Federal Environment Ministry of Germany, based on a consultant report³ and informed by a web and literature search. In preparing the document, a total of 18 national reports and 35 national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) were examined for references to sustainable tourism. All fifth national reports analyzed contained reference to tourism, and 15 of the 26 post-2010 NBSAPs available (57 per cent) mentioned targets or activities related to tourism. Six Parties (Costa Rica, Germany, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Samoa – 17 per cent of those contacted directly) supplied the Secretariat with additional information. The

* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

¹ <http://www.cbd.int/tourism/guidelines.shtml>.

² Decision XI/6, paragraph 48: The Conference of the Parties “*Decides* to review the application of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development at its twelfth meeting, in order to improve, *inter alia*, the provision of updated and innovative tools and instruments on sustainable tourism management to Parties and interested stakeholders and enhance their contribution to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.”

³ Prepared by Richard and Jackie Denman from The Tourism Company (UK), an international expert consultancy in sustainable tourism.

consultants and the Secretariat also contacted or interviewed 23 experts and practitioners in relevant institutions⁴ to compile their suggestions.

3. Further information will be provided in an information note, and through side events held on the margins of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Additional ongoing related work includes the updating and revision of the User's Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development by the end of 2014.

I. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND BIODIVERSITY – THE CBD GUIDELINES IN CONTEXT

4. The relationship between tourism and biodiversity is complex but highly important, with significant opportunities for mutual benefit. The obligations for Parties to the Convention to produce national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national reports provide an opportunity for assessing the level of application of the Guidelines and of consideration of tourism.⁵

A. Tourism and biodiversity – trends, issues and opportunities

5. Tourism and travel are a major activity and economic force, accounting for 9 per cent of the world's gross domestic product, 6 per cent of exports and contributing (directly or indirectly) to one in eleven jobs. Travel and tourism, as a sector, are growing rapidly. Between 2011 and 2013, total international arrivals increased by 9.2 per cent, reaching 1,087 million, with total receipts growing even faster (by 11.2 per cent), reaching US\$ 1,159 billion.⁶ The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) forecasts that international arrivals will grow at an average of 3.3 per cent per annum to 2030. This outlook predicts that growth will be faster in emerging economies (4.4 per cent per annum) than in advanced economies (2.2 per cent per annum). Predicted growth rates per annum to 2030 vary between the regions (Central America 5.2 per cent; Africa 5.0 per cent; Asia/Pacific 4.9 per cent; South America 4.6 per cent; Europe 2.3 per cent; North America 1.7 per cent). An ongoing trend in more mature source markets, especially from Europe and North America, has been towards soft adventure and authentic, transformative experiences,⁷ which often include an element of visits to natural areas and observing wildlife. Similar trends are now being observed in certain sections of emerging source markets.

6. The dimensions of the relationship between tourism and biodiversity can be summed up as follows:

- (a) Pressure on habitats, leading to biodiversity loss, from poorly sited, designed and managed tourism developments, operations and activities;
- (b) Direct threats to individual species, for example through recreational activity, use for food items or as souvenirs, or from competition from invasive alien species introduced through tourism activity;

⁴ UNWTO, UNEP, UNESCO, Rainforest Alliance, Bundesamt für Naturschutz (German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation), ECOTRANS (European Network for Sustainable Tourism Development), Ecological Tourism in Europe, Planeta.com, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), IUCN's Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group, the MesoAmerican Reef Tourism Initiative (MARTI), Tourism Concern, the World Travel & Tourism Council, the Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development, Inkaterra, IUCN, Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team (TIM-Team) and Third World Network, EplerWood International/Harvard University, TIME Unlimited Tours in New Zealand, University of Waterloo, University of Alberta, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

⁵ Guidelines for the fifth national report refer to "relevant economic sectors" but make no specific reference to tourism. In that sense, Parties make a free choice when deciding whether or not to identify the tourism sector among the main threats to biodiversity, and also whether or not to make reference to the tourism sector when describing how biodiversity is reflected in poverty reduction strategies and other key cross-cutting policy instruments.

⁶ UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014 Edition, UNWTO, 2014.

⁷ ITB World Travel Trends Report 2012/13.

(c) Tourism affecting other environmental conditions which may negatively impact on biodiversity, for example through water consumption or greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change;

(d) Recognition of the great importance to tourism economies of attractive landscapes and a rich biodiversity, underpinning the political and economic case for their conservation and resourcing;

(e) The development and operation of nature-based tourism products providing revenue and other support for biodiversity conservation;

(f) Support for the livelihoods and cultural diversity of local and indigenous communities from tourism providing an alternative to unsustainable activities and raising and strengthening their awareness of conservation issues.

7. Consultations with the experts mentioned in paragraph 2 reveal a number of recent overall trends that affect the relationship between biodiversity and tourism:

(a) An increase in the size of planned and developed accommodation projects, in the form of larger resorts with a more sizeable footprint, requiring greater attention to planning and development control especially in coasts and on islands;⁸

(b) Some tourism infrastructure projects still use old unsustainable design and construction methods while others have made strong efforts to minimize impact that could be more widely replicated;

(c) A challenging situation related to public funding and resources for protected areas,⁹ particularly in light of an increase in their proposed number and area in order to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, leading to an opportunity and a need to enhance institutional capacity to capture revenue from visitation and tourism; a few Parties, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Costa Rica, South Africa and Mexico, have been able to set up significant complementary revenue flows to park systems from tourism and visitation;

(d) Increasing visitor awareness and interest in ethical and conservation issues and preparedness to engage in them (including willingness to support well-presented causes);

(e) Social networking leading to greater consumer awareness and scrutiny, influencing businesses towards increased corporate social responsibility;

(f) Increased access to habitats and species not previously exposed to visitors, with accompanying threats to biodiversity;

(g) Ongoing expansion of the cruise industry bringing further threats to marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as through land-based excursions, with an inconsistent approach to environmental management between the companies;

(h) Market fluctuations in nature-based tourism in some destinations, with economic, political and other factors leading to declining visitation, underlining the need for careful attention to resilience, capacity and market access issues.

B. Positioning the CBD Guidelines

8. Ten years after the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development were developed through a consultative process, they still provide a basis for area planning and assessing tourism projects in vulnerable ecosystems. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity

⁸ At the same time, there has also been a growth in quite small, more simple and individual lodge-style accommodation in some coastal and natural areas.

⁹ Bertzky, B. et al. 2012. Protected Planet Report 2012: Tracking progress towards global targets for protected areas. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK (http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/protected_planet_report.pdf).

Targets provide a new context for the guidelines, as do the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference.¹⁰ Document UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/52/Rev.1 submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties demonstrated with examples how tourism development and management is contributing to 13 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. While some of this is about control of tourism to prevent biodiversity loss (Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 8, 9, 10, and 12, for example), the analysis also illustrated the contribution of tourism to biodiversity awareness, protected areas, biodiversity restoration, community engagement and resource mobilization (Aichi Targets 1, 11, 15, 18, and 20) and also how the tourism and biodiversity relationship is being integrated into policies and business models (Aichi Targets 2 and 4).

9. It is important to appreciate that the wider sustainable tourism agenda is in its entirety very relevant to biodiversity.¹¹ Policies and actions to reduce carbon emissions and pollution from tourism activities and to minimize the use of scarce and precious resources are highly important to global and local biodiversity, both directly and indirectly. Social aims, requiring engagement of local and indigenous communities, a focus on poverty alleviation, social equity in relation to tourism income and benefits, and the provision of decent work opportunities, also have a bearing on the provision of sustainable livelihoods which is a key to reducing negative impacts on biodiversity in some areas. Finally, economic aims of enterprise viability and local prosperity are also important in the context of sustainable livelihoods. Hence, it is critical that biodiversity priorities continue to be championed through initiatives under the Convention so they do not become lost or lose focus within this broad approach.

C. Application of the Guidelines – direct and indirect approaches

10. Evidence of recent direct use of the Guidelines includes the following:

(a) In 2011, the seven Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians signed a Protocol on Sustainable Tourism that uses as its basis the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development. The Protocol states that its Parties shall promote integration of the CBD Guidelines in the development or review of their strategies and plans for tourism development in the Carpathians, with the objective to plan, develop and manage tourism activities in an ecological, economic and socially sustainable manner;

(b) Through the Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and working with the CBD Secretariat, IUCN, WWF and UNWTO, tourism issues for wetlands were addressed in preparation for World Wetlands Day 2012 based on the experience of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development.¹² The Ramsar Convention website provides the CBD Guidelines and User's Manual as resource material for sustainable tourism;

(c) The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GPST; see paragraph 13) developed project screening and assessment to provide a tool to improve project design and implementation and for monitoring real change towards sustainability at destinations. Under "Protection of the Environment and Biodiversity", Criterion 3.1 records whether "the project prioritises its objectives in line with the CBD and its Tourism Development Guidelines, environmental conventions and/or national action plans";

(d) The criteria set by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (see paragraphs 28-29), which sets standards for tourism businesses and destinations, were developed through a rigorous process which included clear reference to the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development. Many of the tools used by the Rainforest Alliance (one of the Council's leading members) to promote sustainable tourism, including standards, certification, and training programmes, have roots in the CBD Guidelines;

¹⁰ Paragraphs 130 and 131 at <http://rio20.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/N1238164.pdf>.

¹¹ *Making Tourism More Sustainable*, UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, lists 12 policy aims for sustainable tourism.

¹² The Guidelines were referenced in Resolution XI.7 on Tourism, Recreation and Wetlands at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, Bucharest, 2012.

(e) The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is an evaluation system to help protected areas across Europe to plan, implement and monitor tourism development in a sustainable and future-oriented way. Charter criteria were subsequently mapped against the CBD Guidelines. More recent advisory publications from the EUROPARC Federation have referred to the Guidelines and User's Manual. By 2014 there were 119 Charter Areas in 13 European countries;

(f) Some of the specific programmes and initiatives of UNWTO, IUCN and UNESCO, elaborated in section D below, make reference to the Guidelines.

11. Screening of 37 fifth national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) recently submitted to the CBD Secretariat has identified Parties making reference to tourism within one or both of these documents. Of these, the following four make specific reference to the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development:

(a) Belgium: Biodiversity 2020, Update of Belgium's National Strategy, 2013. Under "4h Tourism and leisure", CBD Guidelines are presented as an instrument, and both the CBD Guidelines and the User's Manual are referenced. Operational objective 4h.1 is "Apply CBD tools to monitor and control the impact of tourism on biodiversity, in particular in protected areas";

(b) Ireland: Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan refers to the production of Biodiversity Guidelines for the Tourism Sector as part of the "Notice Nature" campaign, which includes reference to the CBD Guidelines;

(c) Malta: Malta's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2020 contains a theme covering integration with other sectors, one of which is tourism. Sustainable and responsible tourism in Malta is promoted, attuned with biodiversity conservation and in keeping with the carrying capacity of fragile ecosystems. In achieving this, specific account is to be taken of the recommendations and guidelines under the CBD thematic area "Tourism and Biodiversity";

(d) Germany: National Strategy on Biological Diversity refers to application of the CBD guidelines on biological diversity and tourism development by national and local governments.

12. Finally, many policies and actions are in accordance with the CBD Guidelines, without actually acknowledging or recognizing them. An analysis of a selection of more recent national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and fifth national reports gives an indication of the extent to which Parties have specifically recognized tourism as an issue or opportunity for biodiversity, for example:

(a) *Vision and goals, and objectives.* A number of Parties refer to specific goals and objectives in relation to managing tourism with consideration for its impacts on biodiversity. Such references can be found in NBSAPs for Germany, Italy, Myanmar, South Africa, and Switzerland, and in the fifth national report for Namibia. Myanmar specifies a 5-year action plan towards sustainable tourism, while Germany has a measurable target for at least 10 per cent of tourism providers to meet ecological criteria by 2020;

(b) *Legislation and control measures.* Some NBSAPs and national reports refer to integrating biodiversity considerations into tourism strategies (Namibia, South Africa, and Switzerland) or to the prevention or minimization of impacts on biodiversity components deriving from tourism (Italy). Fiji refers, in its fifth national report, to the introduction of a technical advisory committee, stipulated by the Environmental Management Act 2005, to prepare a national coastal development plan to regulate/monitor coastal development activities;

(c) *Impact assessment.* References here relate to environmental impact assessment (EIA) and to identification of carrying capacity. Serbia refers, in its NBSAP, to assessing the impact of tourism on biodiversity, while Belgium specifies the use of EIAs in protected habitats with high biodiversity value which are becoming popular tourist destinations. Namibia reports that strategic environmental assessments were carried out for tourism developments in five Protected Landscape Conservation Areas.

The NBSAPs for Belarus and Timor Leste refer to studies to determine acceptable levels of stress or carrying capacity for protected natural sites used for tourism;

(d) *Impact management and mitigation.* The NBSAPs for Belgium and Germany refer to reducing or limiting adverse impacts from tourism. Costa Rica's fifth national report refers to a project to reduce the impact of ongoing tourism activities, while the NBSAP for Spain reports on a programme to restore coastal landscapes in mature tourism destinations;

(e) *Monitoring and reporting.* Two Parties make reference to monitoring in relation to tourism in their fifth national reports. Tonga refers to a Pacific Community Turtle Monitoring and Eco-Tourism Development Project, while Namibia refers to recreation and tourism as one of the monitoring themes for an Integrated State of the Environment Report. The NBSAPs for Estonia, Germany and Spain refer to the development of indicators or a monitoring programme in relation to some aspect of the relationship between tourism and biodiversity;

(f) *Adaptive management.* The fifth national report for Namibia makes specific reference to a successful approach to adaptive management based on research and monitoring in relation to Community Based Natural Resource Management.

D. Relevant programmes, projects and initiatives

13. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GPST) is a global initiative launched in 2011 to inject sustainability principles into the mainstream of tourism policies, development, and operations. It brings together more than 80 partners representing international bodies, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector businesses and academic institutions, with a Coordinating Office hosted by UNEP. The GPST initiates and serves as a clearing-house for sustainable tourism projects. It is currently pursuing donor funding for projects that address tourism planning and management at their core, including ensuring that planning and zoning have taken into consideration key biodiversity areas and put stringent standards in place for facility design and operation.

14. The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Patterns (10YFP) is a global capacity-building framework that was formally adopted by Heads of State at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012. Due to tourism's economic and social importance, which has become critical from a resource-use perspective, sustainable tourism is one of the current 10YFP programmes.¹³ UNEP is the programme's Secretariat, in cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Area 3 of the sustainable tourism programme proposes "*fostering the application of guidelines, instruments and technical solutions to mitigate tourism impacts and to mainstream SCP patterns among tourism stakeholders*". This working area provides an opportunity to integrate sustainable tourism practices with other best practice guidelines developed for thematic areas such as biodiversity, climate resilience, coastal zone management, and sustainable land management.

15. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has been leading a number of initiatives in the last two years that relate directly to tourism and biodiversity, such as:

(a) 55 training courses (12-day sessions) organized by the past UNWTO Consulting Unit on Tourism and Biodiversity, with support from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety of Germany, in 2012 and 2013, on *Understanding Tourism Trends and Biodiversity Conservation for Innovative Products and Marketing*. The courses were attended by participants from over 30 countries and promoted the efficient and sustainable management of biodiversity-based destinations, disseminated the CBD Guidelines and included specific sections on mountain and coastal tourism;

¹³ More information can be found at www.unep.org/10yfp.

(b) Extensive work on sustainable coastal tourism within the Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Tourism (COAST) Project, funded by the Global Environment Facility, linking nine countries in Africa. This included a detailed assessment of governance and management issues at a national and local level. One focus was on biodiversity, including case study work and seminars on biodiversity for local tourism employees;

(c) Implementation of the preliminary phase of the Destination Flyways project with support from Germany and in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, including, among others, the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Ramsar Convention, national partners and non-governmental organizations. The project identified opportunities to enhance sustainable tourism management for the conservation of migratory birds and the sustainable use of their habitats in eight selected sites, mainly protected areas and Ramsar sites with tourism potential, and aims to mobilize funding for the main phase;

(d) Collaboration with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement for the organization of the World Migratory Bird Day celebrations for 2014 with the theme Destination Flyways: Migratory Birds and Tourism. This consisted of events around the world and a photo story competition aiming to raise awareness on the potential to link sustainable tourism and the conservation of migratory birds;

(e) Preparing a comprehensive *Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook*, in 2013, together with the European Commission. Pillar 5 refers to biodiversity and raises questions about policies, protection and products related to natural heritage assets. The guidebook also links this to methodologies that can be used. These include local participatory tourism management plans for sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, and development of related tourism products that incorporate compliance with the CBD Guidelines.

16. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s engagement with tourism is mainly focused on two of its programmes:

(a) The Business and Biodiversity Programme aims to integrate biodiversity in the development and operations of hotels and resorts and also to build the business skills of conservation organizations engaged with ecotourism. Guidelines were produced on the sustainable use of biodiversity in hotel and resort operations,¹⁴ followed in 2012 by a set of five principles for siting and design of hotels and resorts,¹⁵ illustrated by case studies, and based on previous analysis of threats to biodiversity in the Caribbean.¹⁶ In 2012, IUCN and Kuoni renewed their collaboration to bring business skills to conservation organizations in selected destinations. A partnership was also formed with Marriott relating to sustainable operations;

(b) The Global Protected Areas Programme has established a Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group (TAPAS Group) to develop capacity on tourism issues within the Global Protected Areas Programme, and to advise the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) on tourism, providing guidance on the relationships between tourism and protected areas. The TAPAS Group is very active currently, based entirely on the voluntary contribution of its members, resulting in a number of outputs including "Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Sustainability", due for publication later this year in the IUCN Best Practice Guidelines Series. IUCN also operates projects through its regional offices. One recent example has been publication of guidance to assist the

¹⁴ Biodiversity: my hotel in action: a guide to sustainable use of biological resources, IUCN, 2008.

¹⁵ Siting and design of hotels and resorts: Principles and case studies for biodiversity conservation, IUCN, 2012.

¹⁶ Impact of hotel siting and design on biodiversity in the insular Caribbean: A situation analysis, IUCN, 2011.

planning, development and monitoring of tourism in protected areas, based on experience in the Dinaric Arc region.¹⁷ The World Parks Congress in 2014 will have a number of events related to tourism.

17. UNESCO established a World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme in 2011, following an extensive consultation process with national and international bodies. UNESCO recognizes that World Heritage properties present the outstanding universal value of our shared heritage and as such are important travel destinations that, if managed properly, have great potential impact for local economic development and long-term sustainability. There have been instances where a World Heritage Site has been placed on the “in danger” list for reasons which have included “unsustainable and uncontrolled tourism development”, triggering a requirement for corrective action, supported by inspection and reporting. In addition, UNESCO is promoting sustainable tourism and the implementation of the CBD Guidelines through the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (621 sites in 117 countries, including 12 transboundary sites).

II. TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT – THEIR APPLICATION TO BIODIVERSITY

A. Policy frameworks and governance structures

18. A key tool for making tourism more sustainable is the establishment of models, frameworks and approaches to achieve better coordination between tourism, environment and other interests at all levels. Experts consulted on the production of this paper underlined the importance of this in securing greater awareness of the issues, improved actions and ultimately increased benefits for biodiversity. There have been some advances. For example, Rainforest Alliance has commented that recently there has been considerably improved dialogue, awareness and cooperation between the tourism and environment ministries and agencies in the countries of Latin America in which they are working.

19. One aspect of this is achieving clear adherence to sustainability principles and recognition of environmental concerns and opportunities in tourism policy. Likewise, environmental policies should recognize issues and opportunities presented by tourism. Of the 26 post-2010 national biodiversity strategies and action plans screened for this paper, one-third made no, or only limited, reference to tourism. Many tourism policies now recognize sustainability issues, but without necessarily identifying and committing to related action. Namibia is one of a number of countries with a programme to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism sector policies and legislation. Questions that probe the sufficiency of a country’s integrated policy framework have been set out in the UNWTO’s recent Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook (2013).¹⁸

20. Dialogue and coordination can be strengthened through putting in place relevant partnership and governance structures. These should bring together tourism, environment and other ministries and agencies, representatives of the tourism industry and key non-governmental organizations (which may relate to conservation and community interests). Examples include the recently established public-private partnership (PPP) forum for tourism in Tanzania (which included national park representatives) and the National Council for Tourism in Cameroon. The role of private sector bodies can be very important in such structures. In Kenya, for example, the Kenya Tourism Federation, itself an umbrella body for seven trade associations, has been a powerful voice in lobbying for more resources for wildlife management, addressing coastal conservation issues, and opposing potentially damaging developments including in the tourism sector itself.

21. Critically, inclusive governance structures should not just be found at a national level. It is increasingly recognized that effective sustainable development and management of tourism requires

¹⁷ Sustainable tourism management in the transboundary areas of the Dinaric Arc region: Manual for planning, development and monitoring of tourism in the protected areas of the Dinaric Arc, IUCN, 2013.

¹⁸ <http://icr.unwto.org/content/guidebook-sustainable-tourism-development>.

partnership structures at a subnational and local level (destinations), involving local authorities, the tourism sector, community representatives and conservation interests. National and subnational parks agencies and protected areas management should be closely involved in such destination governance structures. The primary requirement of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is that “a permanent forum, or equivalent arrangement, should be established between the protected area authority, local municipalities, conservation and community organizations and representatives of the tourism industry”.

22. Involvement of local and indigenous communities in the governance and management of sustainable tourism is fundamentally important. Again, this can be achieved through structures and plans related to national parks and protected areas. The Tourism Master Plan for Kakadu National Park in Australia has been drawn up in partnership with traditional owners, with the result that the Shared Tourism Vision is enriched by their understanding and aspirations for local biodiversity. In some African countries, notably Namibia, linking tourism to the governance and planning of Community Conservancies has proved successful. At a higher level, the Transfrontier Conservation Area strategy relating to nine countries in Southern Africa is an example of regional and national coordination between tourism and environment ministries, which then requires effective stakeholder engagement at a local level.

B. Legislation, planning and development control

23. The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development actually provide one of the most detailed expositions of a process to follow in area planning for tourism, leading to a spatial zonation plan and a development control procedure. Seychelles provides an example of a detailed land use planning exercise in areas of strong tourism development pressure, taking full account of community interests, land ownership patterns and enhanced biodiversity data, among other inputs. An information-based process is also leading to further designation of protected areas in Seychelles, both terrestrial and marine.

24. A land use plan is only one form of regulatory instrument to control tourism development and operations. Building and design regulations can be established in relation to construction. Operational standards and regulations should control certain environmental impacts such as waste discharge. Other regulations may relate specifically to types of tourism activity in certain sensitive zones (controls on boat mooring and diving in the Soufrière Marine Management Area in Saint Lucia¹⁹), or the establishment of procedures for granting permissions or licences for development (Ghana and the Gambia have established specific EIA checklists for tourism projects).

25. While plans and procedures may be in place (although this is by no means universal), a fundamental problem lies in application and enforcement. In a study of coastal tourism in Africa,²⁰ for example, it was found that there was a general lack of adherence and commitment to the findings of environmental impact assessments. A major issue was the capacity of government agencies and local authorities to monitor development projects and ongoing tourism operations to ensure that they were complying with the agreed conditions, mitigation measures and overall environmental standards. However, regulations and planning approvals can be used in innovative and imaginative ways. A particular example is the hotel development at North Head, Sydney, Australia, where permission was given for development but with precise conditions requiring regular monitoring and reporting of the condition of certain habitats and species, leading to enforceable adaptation of operations if changes beyond agreed limits were observed.²¹

¹⁹ Challenges and Opportunities for Tourism Development in Small Island Developing States, UNWTO, 2012.

²⁰ Sustainable Tourism Governance and Management in Coastal Areas of Africa, UNWTO, 2013.

²¹ Siting and Design of Hotels and Resorts: Principles and Case Studies for Biodiversity Conservation, IUCN, 2012.

C. Voluntary instruments – standards, certification and guidelines

26. The development and promotion of standards can provide a very helpful point of reference in making tourism more sustainable, and can be applied to issues of tourism and biodiversity at different levels. The IUCN Green List of Protected Areas (GLPA) provides a new standard developed for protected areas in order to encourage improved performance by providing a benchmark and incentivizing countries and their protected area systems. The GLPA standard will provide an opportunity to showcase and promote protected areas where tourism is compatible with and contributing to conservation impacts and equitable livelihood and governance opportunities. The concept and initial results will be launched at the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014.

27. There has continued to be much activity in the area of certification as a tool to recognize and encourage good sustainability practice among tourism businesses. There are many different certification schemes around the world, which have been used to influence “business to consumer” and also “business to business” relationships. Certification schemes vary in the coverage of biodiversity within their standard. The Costa Rica scheme, for example, has a particular section related to the interaction between a company and its surrounding natural habitat, and the National Biodiversity Institute is represented on the National Accreditation Committee.

28. A Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has been established to actively promote standards for sustainable tourism, as an overall standard for businesses to observe and to provide a basis for accrediting individual certification schemes (alongside requirements for the unimpeachable operation of such schemes). GSTC has one “approved” certification standard (Biosphere Responsible Tourism) under its criteria for hotels and tour operators, with a further 18 standards having received GSTC-recognized status. The criteria specifically refer to measures to conserve biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes. GSTC was included in a review²² of the biodiversity requirements of standards and certification schemes conducted across eight sectors, and was shown to cover virtually all requirements other than the specific inclusion of “No net loss/net positive impact”.

29. In the last two years, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council has developed a set of tourism destination criteria, built on criteria already used by over 300 businesses. Criteria require planning guidelines/regulations that protect natural resources to be in place and enforced, together with a requirement to monitor impacts and protect sensitive environments. Fourteen “Early Adopter” or pilot destinations include some that are biodiversity rich, such as Mexico’s Riviera Maya and Samoa, which have successfully built their tourism products around natural and cultural heritage. Issues remain about the level of interest shown in such certification by destinations and resources (human and financial) for the requisite data gathering and monitoring.

30. A key requirement in the successful application of all voluntary tools is improved communication. There are opportunities to improve the visibility of certified businesses. For example, a new toolkit on effective communication for businesses has been produced by Fair Trade Tourism South Africa. New opportunities to engage tourists are presented by the use of social media and consumer-generated content on websites, leading to more flexibility and transparency and potential for greater exposure of claims that are genuine and those that are not.

D. Economic instruments

31. Economic instruments effect change through their impact on market signals. They are applied particularly to influence behaviour where prices and costs do not adequately reflect value to society, including the environment. Tools such as payments for ecosystem services and payback mechanisms can be used as incentives, through imposing a penalty or gain, and can also be redistributive in gaining revenue for a particular activity such as conservation. There are also examples of leverage, whereby

²² Review of the Biodiversity Requirements of Standards and Certification Schemes. CBD Technical Series No. 63, UNEP-WCMC, 2011.

environmental management and other conditions are placed on tourism businesses that are seeking credit or other support. For example, in Mexico, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has required tourism companies in receipt of support to comply with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council criteria.²³ Marketing support, for example tailored for businesses that have sustainability certification such as in Costa Rica, can be seen as an economic incentive.

32. An area of very particular relevance to biodiversity that has been increasingly recognized for its importance in the tourism sector is the process of granting a licence or concession to a business to operate in a particular area, such as a national park, thereby conveying an economic advantage. Sustainability is integrated into concessions processes in Mozambique through information required during the bidding process.²⁴ In the Maputo Special Reserve, in Mozambique, successful bidders for concessions are required to conduct an environmental impact assessment in order to obtain an Environmental Licence. Guidance on the letting of concessions for tourism in protected areas is currently the subject of a number of studies, with publications forthcoming from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), IUCN's Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group, Semeia in Brazil, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Development Programme.

33. A related process is the charging of admission fees or other user charges (e.g. for particular types of access or recreation), notably by parks and reserves. While this occurs quite frequently, it can be haphazard and charges vary quite significantly in different locations. It has also been found in some parks, for example in parts of Africa, that the resulting income reverts to the central exchequer and is not made available locally for park management, conservation or to benefit local communities. In many parks, however, a combination of admission and concession income has been a primary source of funding. In Costa Rica, the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) recently announced an increase in entrance fees in order to increase revenue to the National Parks Fund.

34. Finally, voluntary giving by tourists has proved to be a value source of additional income, both for social and environmental purposes. This can be most effective if it is focused on a particular cause, such as an individual species or habitat. Nurture Lakeland works with 355 tourism businesses in and around the Lake District National Park in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to collect donations through a voluntary Visitor Gifting scheme which supports conservation projects, including reintroducing local populations of two IUCN Red List bird species.

E. Capacity-building and support for sustainable community livelihoods

35. Capacity-building with local communities enables them to more successfully engage with tourism and have a greater chance of sharing its economic benefits as well as understanding more about its potential impacts on their social, cultural and natural environment. In its work on poverty alleviation through tourism, UNWTO identified seven mechanisms for benefiting poor communities through tourism.²⁵ Most action relevant to biodiversity has centred around three of the mechanisms: involvement of local communities in providing direct services to tourists; employment of local people in tourism; and engaging in tourism supply chains.

36. There have been many examples of rural communities, often in ecologically sensitive areas, being assisted to develop their own tourism offers, including accommodation, guiding, catering and activities. Some have failed through insufficient quality, market access and business acumen, underlining the need

²³ Report on Governmental Incentives for Sustainable Practices in the Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism Sectors in Latin America, Rainforest Alliance, 2014.

²⁴ Tourism Concessions in Protected Areas in Mozambique, USAID, 2012.

²⁵ Tourism and Poverty Alleviation: Recommendations for Action, UNWTO, 2004.

for sound planning and capacity-building. Working in partnership with private sector businesses, and sometimes national parks or NGOs, has often proved essential for success.²⁶ Some examples include:

(a) Preah Rumkel, Cambodia – a project empowering community members to protect their forest while improving their livelihoods through tourism income, supported by links to a specialist tour operator;

(b) Nature Seekers, Trinidad and Tobago – a partnership between the local community and the government Forestry Division to protect leatherback sea turtles through involving local people as guides and engaging with groups of visitor volunteers;

(c) Amansuri Wetlands, Ghana – a joint project between the Ghana Wildlife Society and the local community, offering boat excursions to tourists, resulting in clear conservation benefits, with mangrove cutting and other misuses heavily reduced and community members now engaging in the replanting of mangroves.

37. In many locations, a more reliable and wide-reaching way to provide alternative livelihoods for local people is through involving workers. In 2013, UNWTO ran seminars in three African countries on *Turning Tourism Employees into Champions for Biodiversity and Environmental Protection*, using practical approaches which were successful and replicable. There are also various examples where smallholders and other producers of goods and services have been assisted to improve their output so that they can participate in the supply chain of local tourism businesses, so providing them with a more secure income and helping to reduce their pressure on habitats. The *Gambia is Good* initiative, for instance, has provided capacity-building to many hundreds of small farmers and linked them into a coordinated system that has been able to deliver the level of quality and guaranteed supply demanded by around 15 hotels.

F. Engaging the private sector as changemakers

38. Individual private sector companies committed to the environment as a matter of personal or corporate principle or brand positioning can be changemakers. They can take actions to address their own ecological footprint, including indirect and direct impact on biodiversity, as well as influencing and supporting others. Trade associations, such as the Brazilian Tour Operators Association (BRAZTOA), can set up awarding processes for these champions. Some tools that they may use are described below:

(a) *Life-cycle auditing*. Accor Group has undertaken what it claims to be the first multi-criteria life-cycle analysis by an international hospitality group, throwing light on key areas of ecological impact, including eutrophication in upstream farming operations, water consumption, and construction affected by design;

(b) *Developing targets*. Kuoni seeks to manage sustainability based on clear targeting, measurement and monitoring systems. Corporate responsibility goals are set annually, under a number of programme headings, including “Natural Resources”;

(c) *Corporate social responsibility reporting*. Wilderness Holdings has successfully integrated its financial and 4Cs (Commerce, Conservation, Community, Culture) sustainability framework into one coherent report;

(d) *Supply chain management*. TUI Travel PLC has its own destination policies that include protection of biodiversity. It implements them not only in its own operations but through applying minimum standards on businesses with which it contracts through its supply chain;

(e) *Financial support for biodiversity*. The Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization established by adventure tour operator G Adventures, works directly with G Adventures to minimize

²⁶ A capacity-building programme established by IUCN with Kuoni to develop business skills for conservation and community organizations is directly aimed at addressing some of these issues.

impact on destinations. In 2013, they partnered with the Inter-American Development Bank to develop community-based tourism projects in rural communities underserved by the travel economy;

(f) *Direct engagement with biodiversity conservation.* Tourism companies can manage their own properties for biodiversity. The Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort in Australia, and the Inkaterra Group in Peru, are committed to the conservation of their areas, promoting endemic vegetation, maintaining water quality, and restoring natural habitat to form biological corridors linking neighbouring national parks.

III. KEY ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN MOVING FORWARD

A. *Making the CBD Guidelines a more effective tool*

39. The CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development continue to be the official statement on how tourism should be addressed in the context of biodiversity, endorsed by the Conference of the Parties. Three lines of action are proposed.

40. First, a more rigorous and comprehensive exercise can be undertaken to monitor and report on the application of the Guidelines. This should pose questions in the following areas:

- (a) Knowledge of the Guidelines *per se* and any specific and known use of them;
- (b) Extent of coverage of biodiversity in tourism policies or strategies, and vice versa;
- (c) Existence and enforcement of a planning and development control system in sensitive areas which covers tourism development;
- (d) Management of tourism activities in sensitive areas, involving tourism development, land-use planning and protected areas agencies;
- (e) Identification of sustainability standards for the tourism sector that include biodiversity, and their levels of promotion and uptake;
- (f) Support for sustainable tourism initiatives as a livelihood option in sensitive areas;
- (g) Extent of monitoring of tourism impacts against relevant indicators.

41. Second, a reporting process can be introduced that requires Parties and other Governments and their partners to monitor biodiversity impacts from tourism and associated management processes on an annual basis. This monitoring could address the following:

- (a) Level of visitation to protected areas, reserves or other biodiversity rich areas (admission and revenue numbers to key sites, vehicle counts, spot surveys, and data from tourism facilities). Gathering and recording such information could be a requirement for contributors to IUCN's database on protected areas, hosted by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC);
- (b) Indication of extent of different types of tourist usage, such as permits for certain activities;
- (c) Record of numbers of tourism businesses operating in and around protected areas and sensitive ecosystems, including concessions and permissions given for new development;
- (d) Results of habitat, species and conservation monitoring in areas of significant tourism activity.²⁷

²⁷ For example, the mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention provide data and critical information on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. This could be emulated elsewhere.

42. Third, a specific campaign, supported by UNWTO, UNEP, UNESCO and other relevant agencies within the 10YFP programme, could be undertaken to promote the Guidelines and related material more effectively to the Parties and their partners.

B. Improving knowledge on the tourism-biodiversity relationship

43. Despite progress in recent years, there is still insufficient knowledge and understanding of the full impact of tourism on biodiversity and the nature of the two-way relationship between them. Action could include reviewing evidence from recent and current studies. This includes pioneering work on the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity and on natural capital accounting.²⁸ Another line of action is to promote a more informed approach to tourism planning and management, including early warning and foresight of global and more local tourism growth and its consequences in terms of pressures and opportunities.

C. Focusing on locations of particular need and opportunity

44. Although the application of the CBD Guidelines and related good practice should be universal and promoted among Parties for use in all situations, some prioritization can be made through the pursuit of a number of demonstration projects within countries, regions or globally. The Parties, at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, referred to the concept of “tourism and biodiversity hotspots” for the integration of biodiversity aspects into sustainable tourism development and invited UNWTO and other relevant organizations to cooperate on their identification.

45. The concept of “tourism and biodiversity hotspots” should be clarified.²⁹ In general, they should be locations where there is a coincidence of visitor interest and tourism potential (and maybe also a degree of pressure requiring management) on the one hand and significant biodiversity value (maybe partly at risk), that requires support for its conservation, on the other. Some commentators have indicated that these could be quite small, specific sites – a beach complex, wetland, mountain or forest – while others imply that they may be wider – an extensive national park or park system, a province or possibly a country. Based on this, an exercise should be undertaken, in consultation, to identify hotspots, perhaps at a regional level. Subsequently a number of hotspots may be selected for inclusion within a project or programme, such as UNWTO’s Destination Flyways project (see paragraph 15 (c)).

46. It is critically important that the identification of hotspots, and the pursuit of projects and activities within them, should take full account of the activities and programmes of all relevant international and national bodies (agencies, conventions, standard-bearers and centres of expertise) in the field of biodiversity and tourism, rather than confusing or duplicating their actions. In particular, this should include consideration of any national or international designations in terms of status and level of protection, and the obligations, approaches and resources attached thereto. A multi-agency and multi-stakeholder advisory group could be established to set criteria for identification and prioritization of tourism and biodiversity hotspots, to relate these criteria to existing designations, and to identify gaps.

47. Many small island developing States (SIDS) could be considered as tourism and biodiversity hotspots in their entirety, or may have specific locations within them which would qualify as such. Small island developing States, by their very nature, are frequently highly dependent on the tourism economy

²⁸ The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative, hosted by UNEP, is focused on drawing attention to the economic benefits of biodiversity, including the growing cost of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. TEEB is being applied to various sectors, as well as to a cross-cutting economic assessment of marine and coastal ecosystems. Natural capital accounting is a similar approach, incorporating natural capital into national accounts to help in design of management strategies that balance trade-offs between tourism, agriculture, subsistence livelihoods and ecosystem services. A set of natural capital accounts is currently being prepared for Mauritius, for instance. The next phase will include tourism, within an ecological balance sheet and analysis of remediation costs.

²⁹ The term “biodiversity hotspots” has been used in the past to refer to large-scale ecoregions (Conservation International, 1988). A recent initiative by IUCN and its Commissions to establish a consultative process to agree a methodology to identify “Key Biodiversity Areas” is also relevant and will be presented to the World Parks Congress in 2014.

while also containing a rich biodiversity, often with many endemic species.³⁰ It would be appropriate to identify small island developing States with practices that could contribute to the tourism and conservation hotspot approach outlined above, for instance from the outputs of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, being held in Samoa in September 2014. Likewise, work with small island developing States would enable a number of quite specific issues to be addressed that arise from intensive tourism activity and development, including cruise tourism, resort development and marine recreation such as diving, as well as the needs of specific habitats such as coral reefs.

D. Helping protected areas to gain more from tourism

48. In many protected areas, the availability of financial and human resources for management and conservation is severely limited, and in some cases it is nonexistent. State funding has been reduced in both developed and developing countries. At the same time, Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 calls for the expansion of the coverage of systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. There is a critical need to increase funding and other support for protected areas from a variety of sources, including overseas development assistance, national governments, and the private and non-governmental sectors.

49. The tourism sector should play a greater role in supporting the conservation and management of protected areas, which are so valuable to its existence and success. The business case for tourism's stewardship of biodiversity should be clearly made. This can be used to seek more funding for protected areas as an economic resource, and also to counter threats to their integrity and biodiversity³¹ from higher-impact development. While in some areas it may be possible to generate more direct funding for protected areas from tourism, it is very important not to rely too heavily on tourism income. In some places, opportunities are restricted owing to location and access to markets, and more generally fluctuations in tourism performance can mean that levels of income may vary year to year.³² Even where income from tourism can be strengthened, this should not be used to justify further reduction in public support.

50. There are a number of ways in which protected areas can gain more benefit from tourism. Actions should be designed that promote or assist with the following:

- (a) Pulling together and disseminating existing and emerging knowledge on the optimization of income from entry and user fees, concessions, gifting and other sources;
- (b) Encouraging greater participation in CBD processes of regional and international networks that gather and promote knowledge on tourism and parks, and that support capacity-building;
- (c) Providing a greater level of support for park management agencies and staff in developing understanding of tourism partnerships, concessions and payback mechanisms;
- (d) Further clarifying roles and responsibilities for planning, management, and decision-making affecting tourism in protected areas, at a national level and locally.
- (e) Putting in place the enabling legal frameworks and policy and governance structures required to capture a fair contribution from tourism to conservation.

³⁰ Challenges and Opportunities for Tourism Development in Small Island Developing States, UNWTO, 2012.

³¹ For example, in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia there are threats to the reef's biodiversity and to its tourism activity from the oil, gas and coal industries and dredging. In 2012, the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area generated \$6.4 billion (AUD) in direct tourism expenditures, a value-added economic contribution of \$5.2 billion (AUD) (Economic contribution of the Great Barrier Reef, Deloitte Access Economics, 2013). In Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo, tourism has been used as an argument against drilling.

³² Building up a fund over time, for example as a Trust Fund that receives support from tourism businesses, can help to mitigate against short-term fluctuations.

E. Promoting uptake of best practices by tourism developers

51. Regional projects, perhaps covering wider sustainable tourism issues but specifically incorporating impacts on biodiversity, could be aimed in particular at private sector investment and might include the following elements:

(a) Studying how private sector businesses and developers are viewing and responding to existing standards and guidelines, including identifying barriers to communication and implementation, and promoting such guidelines to this sector;

(b) Researching how real estate values have changed near or at biologically diverse sites as they receive visitation.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

52. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider adopting a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties,

Noting the significance of the relationship between tourism and biodiversity, and the relevance, in this regard, of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development,

Recalling the adoption of the ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns in the outcome document of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,³³

Considering the experience from the application of a range of tools and instruments in sustainable tourism management relevant to biodiversity,

1. *Invites* Parties and other Governments, with the support of relevant organizations, and in partnership with stakeholders in the tourism industry, including indigenous and local communities:

(a) To promote communication, education and public awareness activities for the general public and tourists on sustainable travel choices, and on the use of eco-labels, standards and certification schemes, as appropriate;

(b) To identify areas where there is both significant biodiversity and significant pressure or potential pressure from tourism, and to develop and support demonstration projects in these “tourism and conservation hotspots”, including at regional level, to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts from tourism;

(c) To report on recreation, visitation and other tourism activities in protected areas, as well as impacts and relevant management processes in ecologically sensitive areas, in future national reports under the Convention and as part of Parties’ and other Governments’ input to databases and the clearing-house mechanism related to work on the programme of work on protected areas;

(d) To build the capacity of national and subnational park and protected area agencies, or other appropriate bodies, where appropriate, to engage in partnerships with the tourism industry to contribute financially and technically to the establishment, operations and maintenance of protected areas through appropriate tools such as concessions, public-private partnerships, payback mechanisms and other forms of payments for ecosystem services, in complement to public budgetary allocations and without prejudice to public mandates and obligations toward achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 11;

2. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other donors, as appropriate, to prioritize funding available to support developing countries, in particular the least developed countries

³³ United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, in the demonstration projects for “tourism and conservation hotspots”, referred to in paragraph 1 (b) above;

3. *Invites* relevant research bodies to undertake studies of the cumulative impact of tourism on sensitive ecosystems and of the consequences for biodiversity of sustainable livelihood initiatives including tourism, and to disseminate their results;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to:

(a) Develop, in collaboration with relevant organizations, ways and means to facilitate regular and systematic reporting by Parties on the application of the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development;

(b) Collaborate with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other relevant organizations to establish criteria for the identification of tourism and biodiversity hotspots, and to define priority activities to apply the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in those areas;

(c) Continue to engage Parties, relevant organizations and other partners in the compilation and dissemination of relevant tools and guidance, information on capacity-building programmes and best practices on the links between tourism and biodiversity.
