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A POSSIBLE APPROACH TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIORITY ACTION ON TOURISM

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Based on the overview entitled "Elements for Feasibility Study for the Development of a Regional Co-operative Project on Tourism and Impact of Tourism on Mediterranean Environment" which was prepared by PAP/RAC for the forthcoming meeting in Geneva on 13-14 November 1980, and with a view to providing in this stage as concrete elements for the development of the tourism priority action as possible, this short paper has tried to develop a concept of formulating pilot projects which would ensure that all major problems pertaining to the tourism-environment interrelations are covered.

Starting from the present level of knowledge about these interrelations, it appears the following would have to be investigated through the tourism priority action:

- social and economic effects /positive and negative/ of tourism development in a settlement, zone or tourist region;
- its environmental consequences; and
- its ecological consequences.

This could^{be} obtained through various pilot projects which should be aimed - in addition to identifying causes and consequences - at providing optimum solutions to individual problems and give recommendations for future action.

Consequently, the principal tasks of such pilot projects would be the following:

- /i/ within socio-economic considerations, to ensure best economic effects while alleviating negative social phenomena as much as possible. This implies adequate ratio of tourists to residents, or to put in other words, ensure such an influx of tourists in an area which would not require more "imported" labour force than reasonable, and balanced number of tourists with available labour. This also implies extending tourism activities "deeper", beyond the narrow coastal strip, and thus relieving the pressure on the coast;

/ii/ within environmental considerations, to recommend those tourist accommodation capacities which would be congruous with the environmental capacity of the area concerned, including:

- beach capacity;
- capacity of land suitable both for developing tourism facilities and providing necessary accommodation of residents;
- capacity of communal installations and services /watersupply, energy, collection and disposal of liquid and solid wastes/;
- transport capacity /roads, railway, air and sea terminals/.

/iii/ within ecological considerations, to ensure:

- that cultural and social values /tradition and specific life styles, typical activities, arts and crafts, cultural identity, etc./ of the area concerned are not destroyed by tourism development;
- that environmental values /landscape, urban and rural heritage, balance between the natural and the man-made, traditional methods of construction necessitated by climate, topography, culture, etc./ are not encroached by new structures;
- that - while ensuring ecological balance and protection from all forms of pollution - tourist industry is harmonized with other existing and/or potential activities.

Meeting the above mentioned criteria calls for specific solutions, because impacts on environment considerably vary with different situations.

Therefore, it would be necessary to investigate existing and potential consequences of tourism development on several typical cases, and recommend respective solutions.

Although therein appears to lie innumerable alternatives, the essential elements /prerequisites/ of tourism development which would be in harmony with the protection and improvement of environment could be identified through the following situations:

1. Mass tourism /development of large receptive capacities/:

- on vacant areas outside existing settlements, which implies construction of complete agglomerations with all complementary facilities, installations and services for tourists and local labour;
- in immediate vicinity of existing settlements, where tourism development is dependent upon existing infrastructure, social life and economic activities.

Conclusions and recommendations relative to this particular type of tourism could be formulated through two pilot projects.

- /a/ The first one would deal with a large tourist zone developed on an open area far from existing settlements /a complex in Languedoc, for example/; identify positive or negative effects of such tourism development; and produce guidelines for future development of such complexes.
- /b/ The second one would deal with planning of a larger tourist zone /possibly on the coast of North Africa/ linked to existing town and its economy. The project would investigate the compatibility of tourism with other activities; advantages of the town in terms of seasonal employment, organization of cultural, social, health and other services for tourists, etc.

2. Specific tourism catering for a special profile of tourists and specific tourist supply /small tourist agglomerations close by coastal towns or villages in the hinterland/. This aspect of tourism development could be investigated also through 2 pilot projects.

- /a/ The first pilot project would deal with the construction of hotels and tourist facilities in or around coastal settlements significant for their urban and historic value, specific economic

activities, social structure and culture /a small town in the Eastern Mediterranean/. In the framework of this project the following aspects would have to be dealt with in particular:

- optimum number of tourists the environmental and social capacity of the area can sustain;
- construction of tourist accommodation consistent with urban and physical values of the settlement;
- improvement of sanitation in the settlement by using new communal and infrastructure systems built for tourist buildings to serve local population as well;
- creation of a specific tourist supply /appropriate accommodation and amenities, special type of entertainment, various additional activities such as congresses, seminars, etc./ based on historic and cultural values of the settlement, its natural phenomena, authentic culture and tradition, ethnical features, etc.

/b/ The second pilot project would deal with a coastal subregion /Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece/ attractive to and widely recognized by tourists - and, thus, saturated - which is, as the result of tourism development, characterized by heavy migrations from the hinterland areas to the coast. This project would be expected to give suggestions with regard to:

- relieving the pressure on the coast by developing tourism in the hinterland towns and villages;
- creation of "complementary tourism", i.e. integration of summer and winter tourism;
- provision of adequate coast-to-hinterland communication systems and, thereby, easy everyday movement in both directions;

- disposition and construction of tourist buildings in harmony with traditional building elements, climate, location and specific demand /tourist settlements, hotels, motels, botels, etc./;
- economic "exploatation" of natural and man-made phenomena, but also their appropriate presentation and preservation;
- creation of a large variety of amenities and tourist attractions in addition to sun-bathing and swimming.

These four pilot projects would cover a wide range of problems pertaining to tourism and its impact on environment, and the obtained results could provide a good basis for the development of guidelines and standards for planning, building and management of tourist complexes and facilities in consistency with the protection of environment.

Therefore, the feasibility study would have to identify:

- /a/ interest of Mediterranean countries in participating in the suggested pilot projects; and
- /b/ their interest to propose tourist zones, complexes or settlements as potential pilot areas.

Information obtained and knowledge acquired through the activities suggested in this paper would be very useful in defining the second stage of the tourism priority action.