

Theme 1 – A Sea At Risk: The Adriatic

Presentation: Sustainable Tourism and Coastal management in the Adriatic

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Everyone knows what a quality tourism experience looks and feels like. But, managing tourism, the major force for economic development in this region, toward positive and sustainable outcomes is a difficult challenge.

Sustainable Tourism and Coastal Management

Tourism is a diffused industry, not a monolith. It is comprised of gigantic corporations and one- or two-person operations in local communities. It is a competitive industry, one with little experience with cooperative and integrated approaches. Competition for tourism exists across and within nations, regions, cities and even within sectors of the industry itself. It is a complex industry with many stakeholders and institutions, including tourism operators, brokers, tourists, government and non-governmental organizations, and local people and cultures affected by tourism either positively or negatively. Tourism can contribute to sustainable development, it can improve the competitiveness of the private sector, and it can meet social needs and preserve the cultural and natural environment.

We are going to talk about tourism and coastal management. First, we will provide some background on global and Mediterranean tourism and then briefly describe the benefits of integration of tourism with coastal management. Then we will provide a global overview of ocean and coastal issues largely prepared for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

and compare these issues with the situation in the Adriatic and conclude with some possible directions for the Adriatic Sea.

There are many coastal issues, the context within which tourism and coastal management must take place. We have heard a lot about unplanned, uncontrolled, coastal development in the Adriatic; we have heard about inadequate infrastructure; lack of sewage in many places; solid waste disposal; even lack of roads and other hard infrastructure. We have heard about pollution, particularly in the northern Adriatic and the Po River; localized poverty and unemployment; security issues; illegal trafficking of drugs, tobacco, and of women; and migration issues.

We have not heard much about fisheries decline but we think there are significant problems with fisheries decline; loss of important habitats such as wetlands and estuaries, biodiversity protection, particularly in the southern Adriatic, which has been identified as a biodiversity hotspot; lack of public involvement and participation in decisionmaking, planning and management and the large potential for an explosion in tourism over the next decade.

Like other industries, tourism is an agent of development and change. As Woodley notes: "It is consumptive like any other industry and the level of consumption is determined by the scale and style of tourism development. At low levels, and with careful design, tourism may be able to operate at a sustainable level. However, controlling the level and style of development over the long term presents challenges which, to this point, have not been successfully met. Because of its potentially high impact, tourism should be considered in the same manner as any other industry and should be subjected

to the same environmental and social impact assessment processes during the planning stages.”¹

Tourism is the world's largest industry measured by both the number of people that are employed in tourism as well as by its economic impact. Tourism generated \$3.4 trillion in gross output in 1995; it employed over 200 million people, and produced about 11% of the gross world domestic product. In the Mediterranean, the tourism situation is dramatic. The Mediterranean is the world's leading tourism destination, accounting for a third of all international tourism. In 1997, almost 190 million tourists came to this region, and 135 million tourists visited coastal areas. Tourism is expected to double both worldwide as well as in the Mediterranean over the next 20 years. Although most tourist arrivals are still in the western part of the Mediterranean, we suspect that with the significant expected growth in Mediterranean tourism that there will also be significant new growth in the Adriatic region.

Tourism security is also an issue. The last four months of 2001 saw a drop of 11% in international tourism arrivals worldwide. Tourists chose means other than aircraft for traveling and started to use trains and roads for arrivals at tourist destinations. Tourism dropped 13% in the U.S. during that period, 7% in the United Kingdom, and 9% in the Middle East. However, in this area, which has a very large market, very close to the Adriatic Sea, travel was actually up more than 10% in both Croatia and Slovenia.

Thus, the message that we bring is that tourism cannot take place in a vacuum, it cannot take place only as a single sector of the economy, but must take place in the context of integrated coastal management.

The idea of coastal management is that residents, stakeholders, businesses, developers, local governments should be involved in the decision making. This will probably not happen if tourism is only planned as a single sector. The ecological, social, and cultural sensitivity of particular areas within the Adriatic region need to be identified and protected. We cannot count on the tourism industry to provide that kind of information. It has to be done in the context of coastal management.

Management objectives--balanced objectives that look at the benefits and costs of different kinds of sectors of the economy - also have to be planned in an integrated way, not in a single sector touristic basis, and benefits to local communities have to be produced from touristic activities. We cannot count on the industry alone to provide that kind of management objective. There certainly are many things that can be done in a management sense with respect to tourism and coastal management, including the development of marine protected areas and the whole concept of ecotourism and setting aside areas for their biological and ecological importance and looking at tourism from a regional basis - the entire Adriatic Sea - not simply on a country-by-country basis.

There are certainly rules for the development of tourist activities that can be provided by coastal management expertise including, for example, strict setback lines from shorelines when developing tourist facilities. In Albania we saw some of the development right up on the beach and, in fact, almost in the water in many places. With coastal management, that should not be permitted. It could be managed. Breakwaters and marinas and other structures that harden the coast and encourage coastal erosion can be prevented with sound coastal management and will not be provided only by

the tourism industry. And, in fact, there are many incentives that could be provided by coastal management so that tourist facilities can be built with nature, not against nature, with designs, materials, and technology that can have low impact. Finally, and this is a short and selective list, we think, through coastal management, developers could be required to pay for the upgrades and the infrastructure that has to be developed such as sewage disposal, landfills, etc., to support the development for which the industry achieves most of the benefits.

Global Trends on Oceans and Coasts

In this section we discuss the status of oceans and coasts at the global level and then compare these findings to the situation in the Adriatic.

In the preparatory process leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), initially oceans - which represent 70% of the world's surface - and coasts - where 50% of the world's population lives - were not on the agenda. This gave governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) dealing with oceans a great deal of concern, and an informal coalition pressed ahead to ensure that oceans and coasts would be placed squarely on the WSSD agenda. A major effort to assess what progress, if any, has been achieved on oceans, coasts and islands in the last ten years since the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit was mobilized, culminating in a major international conference held at UNESCO in Paris in December 2001, attracting over 400 participants from 61 countries, with representation from all three sectors--governments, NGOs, and IGOs - and having also the benefit of 19 ministerial officials.

The first point to underscore is the great economic and social importance of oceans, coasts and islands and the imperative link among economic development, social welfare, and resource conservation in this area. They are mutually interdependent. Regarding the coastal zone first, on this narrow strip of land that comprises only about 20% of the world's land, lives 50% of the world's population. This area yields 90% of global fisheries and produces about 25% of global biological productivity. Seventy percent of all megacities (cities larger than 1.6 million) are coastal. We have already noted that travel and tourism, especially marine and coastal, is the world's largest industry. We also get a lot of energy from the ocean - 25 to 30 percent of world energy supplies. Ninety percent of all trade moves through the sea rather than through airplanes. About 400 million fishers rely on the ocean for their livelihoods around the world.

Considering trends since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, we find both good news and bad news. The first good news is that we have seen major initiatives by governments all over the world to create coastal management at both national and local levels - in 1993 there were 59 countries that had coastal management efforts, now there are close to 100 countries working on coastal management. Forty-six percent of countries have actually adopted some kind of coastal law/policy, and 42% of countries have created some kind of coordinating mechanism to overcome the fragmentation that typically exists in most coastal areas with so many ministries and agencies responsible for various aspects of the coastal zone. The other good news is that we have seen the conclusion of a number of very good, far-reaching ocean agreements including the Law of the Sea, the UN Straddling Stocks Agreement, the FAO Compliance and Code of

Conduct agreements, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution, the Convention on Biological Diversity with the Jakarta Mandate emphasizing the protection of marine biodiversity, and others. These have just been adopted and are just being implemented. If we can assist countries with their implementation, the prognosis for these agreements to have the desirable positive impacts is quite good. Also, we have seen much new funding on oceans, coasts, and islands (for example, \$438 million from the Global Environment Facility, \$1.2 billion from the Asian Development Bank). In this region, the European Union (EU) has also invested considerable funding in the promotion of coastal management, particularly through the establishment of pilot projects to test and explore the concept. Finally, on the good news side, we have made significant scientific progress in the understanding of oceans and coasts, both on the natural science and the social sciences sides. We are well on our way to developing an integrated global ocean observing strategy.

The bad news is that notwithstanding all this institutional progress, the on-the-ground conditions of ocean resources and coastal communities remain poor. It is partially because there is a lag time between changes in institutions and changes in on-the-ground conditions. The bad news is that poverty continues largely unabated and unhealthy conditions predominate in coastal communities, especially in coastal megacities of the developing world. Ninety percent of sewage in developing countries for example is not treated, leading to serious public health issues. Two-thirds of fisheries are either depleted or overexploited or over-utilized in some way so two-thirds of fisheries around the world are in trouble. Seventy percent of marine

mammals are threatened. Seventy percent of coral reefs are threatened. Fifty percent of coastal wetlands have been lost and 46 million people per year are at risk from flooding.

Coastal Management in the Adriatic

What is the status of coastal management programs, governmental initiatives, in this region? The operative word is “beginning.” All of the countries in the area are beginning coastal management. They are all carrying out initial planning, developing coastal profiles, beginning to draft laws. Each of the nations in the region is only at the beginning of the coastal management process at both national and local levels. The European Union (EU) has been very influential in fostering coastal management in the region. For example, Slovenia, which is working to become a member of the EU in the near future, has adopted many of the very good European directives on coastal management into its own operative framework. The EU will continue to be a very good influence on the development of coastal management in the region. However, there is a tradition of physical planning in this region which may be good for some things but is not very good for planning of the interface between the land and the sea and is particularly not very good for planning for issues related to the marine environment. Some of those traditions need to change.

When one looks at international agreements and international funding levels in the Adriatic, we know that we have an important framework in the Mediterranean, in the Barcelona Convention, and the Mediterranean Action Plan. These mainly involve prescriptions to governments and assistance to national governments. They don't really involve direct work in fostering

regional cooperation in particular subregions of the Mediterranean. There has not been much attention focused on sub-regional development in this area. Also, there has been little funding for integrated coastal management in the Adriatic compared to other regions of the world. There are some exceptions; for example, there is Global Environment Facility funding for Croatia for sewage control and for biodiversity analysis. Slovenia has benefited from the PHARE European Program. The World Bank has assisted Albania in coastal management. But, generally, in a comparative sense, the funding has been on a small scale. What about the science? This area is blessed with first-class, very high caliber, marine science institutions on both sides of the Adriatic, but they tend to emphasize oceanography and marine biology and have little capacity in the social sciences, law, etc., which are also needed to carry out integrated coastal management. There really has not been, we understand, coordinated, long-term monitoring of conditions in the Adriatic Sea except in the case of fisheries.

To date there appears to generally be little collective action on the Adriatic among the countries and institutions bordering the sea. There is a tri-lateral commission among Italy, Croatia and Slovenia that is supposed to be dealing with the North Adriatic but colleagues tell us that it really has not met for two years, so maybe it is not as active as it could be. There does not seem to be a standing forum for discussion of Adriatic-wide issues. There does not appear to be much communication between the Western and the Eastern sides of the Adriatic. For a time, there was an Italian-Yugoslavian joint commission of the Adriatic and an Italian High Authority on the Adriatic, but both of these efforts are no longer operative. We also know that there are problems of communication between the countries in the Eastern

Adriatic because of the war, but that is getting better, that's changing. As Edi Rama, the mayor of Tirana says, regarding his country, Albania, he could characterize it as going from barbaric collectivism to wild individualism which means that in some places the tradition of individual responsibility for the environment is low and it needs to be taught and nurtured.

What possible directions might there be for the Adriatic? It seems to us that to answer this question, we need to ask a series of questions. First, is there agreement on the nature and severity of the problems in the Adriatic? We don't think that has been determined yet. An assessment needs to take place to achieve overall agreement as to what are the main problems and how they need to be tackled. In fact, the marine science participants in the conference will be presenting some ideas in this regard a little later today. Is there a champion for Adriatic-wide cooperation? We put that to you as a question. We have not seen a champion emerge either on a governmental or non-governmental side but no doubt there is a lot of interest out there and champions will emerge. Is there an epistemic community to support problem analysis and resolution of region-wide issues (“epistemic” means a community of interest, for example scientists related across borders and showing the seriousness of a problem and then mobilizing themselves and governments around that). Many people suggest that the Barcelona Convention was in part the result of the work of the scientists around the Mediterranean rim who pushed the idea of Mediterranean-wide problems and the need for solutions. Perhaps the key question is, is there high level political will to address the problems? We are unclear on that question but if there is an epistemic community and there are good NGOs and you have a lot of people pushing, then you do get the high level political interest which

is imperative. The final question is, can existing institutions address the problems that are there or are new institutions needed? In general, we do not think these questions are answered yet.

On this trip we have seen some grand spots, we have seen the Albanian Coast, we have seen Kotor, Split, the Slovenian Coast, Venice. Because of our schedule, because we traveled at night, because we were so busy with so many good speakers, etc., in a week we missed seeing the sea itself and appreciating the grand nature of the sea. This is such a magnificent sea and we missed some of its greatest assets - Dubrovnik, the thousand Croatian islands which are a world heritage site, the Istrian peninsula, others. These are places of incomparable beauty and, in many cases, high historical value that need special attention. We care for them too, so we will say a few words about possible directions. When we think of regional issues, very simply, we can think of two types of issues. One is shared issues - transboundary issues such as pollution, where to solve it everybody has to come together. In a region, you could also have common or similar issues. All the countries are facing the problem of how to do coastal management right at the national and local level; how to do tourism right. We are going to start with common problems. At the national level, the first priority has to be on working to give support to the nations in the region to build capacity for integrated coastal management in two ways. One is by advancing the legal and policy frameworks at the national level; the other is by encouraging on the ground implementation by sub-national authorities, thus encouraging democratization. We have to be very clear that one of the most important lessons that we have drawn from all over the world is that coastal management really has to happen at both of these levels--national and local.

In terms of a region-wide effort, this is an evolutionary process that has to start probably with more analysis and assessment of region-wide issues; the fostering of a regional forum that brings together governments, nongovernmental organizations, and academic institutions to define issues, goals, criteria, and priorities; the encouragement of networking among educational institutions and also perhaps the creation of some kind of consortia to develop a greater multi-disciplinary capacity for integrated coastal management. From a policy point of view, some of the assessments might consider the creation of regional networks of marine protected areas for protection of biodiversity and creation of high quality tourism. At the sub-regional level, the pollution issue in the north Adriatic appears to be a priority for the countries (this certainly seems to be a priority for the scientists), so a tri-lateral effort on pollution in the north Adriatic, particularly focusing on discharges from the Po River and eutrophication, seems warranted. This effort will need more political support than it has now.

The second idea is that the network of a thousand islands in the Croatian coast is a real precious biogeographic region--a biodiversity hotspot. It is also an area that is very much in need of economic development for the islanders, many of whom are leaving, they don't have other sources of income, there is inadequate water, transportation is not good, etc. Some industries like marine aquaculture are being developed in a very *ad hoc* fashion without looking at the effects on the environment. This is the candidate for a model case of responsible tourism development that gives benefits to the local inhabitants and also protects biodiversity.

In closing, we want to recall two key concepts that a number of speakers have talked about. One is ethos and one is love. Nations in this region may have their differences but in their ethos, in their innermost cultural selves, they all love the Adriatic Sea. It is a big part of their lives personally, socially, and economically. To the Italians it is “il nostro mare Adriatico”, to the Slovenians, Croats, Bosnians, Herzegovinans, and Montenegrins, it's “nase Jadransko more,” all with emphasis on the belonging and the "our" Adriatic - we love it, it is ours. Love for the sea, for this sea, for this majestic sea, is deeply rooted in this area. With some leadership, inducing people to care more for their sea, and to protect it more fully, will come naturally.

ⁱ Woodley, Allison. 1993. Tourism and Sustainable Development: The Community Perspective. In *Tourism and Sustainable Development: Monitoring, Planning, Managing*. J.G. Nelson, R. Butler, and G. Wall (eds.). Department of Geography Publication Series number 37. Waterloo: University of Waterloo.