

# TourismWatch

Informationsdienst Dritte Welt-Tourismus

Nummer

## FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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Special Issue – October 2009

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Dear Friends,*

*As people in the Pacific islands find sea levels rising and water reservoirs turning salty, and the Maldives government is planning land acquisitions to resettle up to 400,000 people, these are more than slight indications of a looming climate change.*

*The Lakhshadweep islands in India are another example: Those who have contributed the least to climate change will be affected the most. Though there is a political consensus that temperatures must not rise beyond two degrees Celsius, there are hardly any signs that similar amounts will be invested in climate change mitigation, adaptation, disaster preparedness and resettlement as have been made available to save banks and stabilise the eroding economy. It remains unclear if and when the tourism industry, which is part of the problem, will understand that "business as usual" is no solution.*

*As tourism has hardly played a role in climate reports and negotiations, tourism NGOs and allied networks have joined hands in demanding a more active commitment of the tourism industry and its international business associations. With this "TourismWatch Climate Change Special" in English, we would like to contribute to the debates surrounding the climate negotiations in October in Bangkok, in December in Copenhagen, and beyond.*

*We have included articles and abstracts from the current issue of the German TourismWatch (No. 56, September 2009) which has a focus on climate change, as well as from TourismWatch No. 52 and 53 (September and December 2008), in which we took up climate change and tourism on the occasion of World Tourism Day 2008.*

*You will also find all these articles and more in our website [www.tourism-watch.de](http://www.tourism-watch.de), which has been upgraded to include an English section. It regularly brings you abstracts and articles from the German TourismWatch, which is published four times a year. To receive e-mail notifications of new TourismWatch issues, you are welcome to join our mailing list. Please contact us at [tourism-watch@eed.de](mailto:tourism-watch@eed.de).*

*We hope that you will find our coverage of the tourism and climate change nexus useful and look forward to your critical and constructive feedback.*

*Yours faithfully,*



Heinz Fuchs



Christina Kamp

## **Perspectives on Climate Change**

### **Two Degrees – “A Recipe for Disaster”**

#### **Huge Challenges for the Tourism Sector**

By Christina Kamp

Tourism has not been playing a major role in climate reports and negotiations. At the international symposium "Travel & Tourism in the Age of Climate Change" in July 2009 in Eastbourne (UK), the tourism-climate change nexus took centre stage. The British University of Brighton brought together experts from both fields, saving part of the conference-related emissions by inviting Michael Hall, University of Christchurch, New Zealand, for a virtual presentation.

"If tourism was a country, it would rank 5th in terms of global emissions", says Michael Hall, giving a rough idea of the dimensions of the global tourism challenge, and especially the aviation sector. Regulation, he says, will become a major area of debate in the future. Efficiency as part of a "business as usual" approach is not enough. The number of consumers is increasing, reducing natural capital further and further. Michael Hall therefore points out the need for more research on the nature of consumption, sufficiency and reorientation.

#### **China: Discouraging trends**

Wolfgang Arlt, China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI) in Heide, Germany, has analysed the travel motivation of Chinese tourists, with discouraging results. For the Chinese, international travel serves to gain prestige and cultural capital through conspicuous consumption. They hardly distinguish between leisure and business tourism. Both are seen as "investments". Since 2009, China has been Asia's biggest source market (excluding Hong Kong and Macao). Due to serious ecological problems and scandals, "green" ideas are slowly gaining ground in China. Tourism, however, is not seen as a source of pollution. The Chinese tourism industry is not interested in climate change and is not taking any special measures. There is no pressure from consumers, says Wolfgang Arlt. Chinese culture is based on a strong distinction between "ingroup" and "outgroup", which means that the Chinese hardly care about people in other countries, let alone the atmosphere. It is therefore unlikely that Chinese tourists will respond to either moral or financial pressure to review their travel behaviour in terms of their contribution to climate change.

#### **Carbon neutral destinations?**

It is also unlikely that tourism destinations will be able to offer "carbon neutral" tourism in the foreseeable future. According to Stefan Gössling, University of Lund, Sweden, even "carbon neutral destinations" continue to emit CO<sub>2</sub>, but seek to compensate their emissions. Flights to and from the destination are usually not included. While carbon neutral destinations appear to be a feasible concept, it remains unclear how carbon neutrality can be maintained in the longer term. "What would happen if everyone offsets? It wouldn't work", says Stefan Gössling, pointing out the systemic problem involved. Reducing the first ten percent of energy consumption will save money, as a lot is still being wasted. Another ten percent can be saved through restructuring, he says. Then, however, costs for emission reductions will increase. Emissions distribution will therefore be of great relevance in the future.

## Who will pay for tourism growth?

Considering the total cumulative emission budgets until 2100, it is physically impossible to let tourism grow and get the emission rights from other sectors, said Paul Peeters, NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands. Purchasing allowances from carbon markets means that others have to pay for tourism emissions. "It is a complicated way of saying, we are not doing much, others have to do it", says Paul Peeters. Assuming 100 percent emissions in 2005 as a basis, ongoing fleet renewal and technology development can lead to 30 percent reduction (by 2050). Achieving 70 percent less emissions in 2050 would require mode shifts – a complete restructuring of transport, towards other modes of transport, such as rail, while significantly reducing cars. Aviation, however, remains a key area. "As far as emission reductions and growth in tourism are concerned, UNWTO is not anywhere near a realistic scenario", says Paul Peeters.

There are huge challenges ahead for tourism to achieve the aspirational goals and emission reductions consistent with the climate policy targets of the international community. Furthermore, this might not even be enough. Even the target of not allowing global warming beyond two degrees is, according to the British author Mark Lynas, "a recipe for disaster", as it would neither save the coral reefs, nor the glaciers, nor the Amazon rainforest.

(712 words, 63 lines, September 2009)

## Voices from the Grassroots

### Indian Consultation on the Climate Crisis

By Sumesh Mangalassery

In recent times, climate change has captured the attention of scientists, policymakers and civil society groups. It is far less common that people's groups raise their voices and discuss the local level impacts of climate change and its implications to their lives and livelihoods. From 20th to 21st June 2009, some 100 activists from social movements, trade unions, and civil society organisations from across India met at Ranchi, Jharkhand, for a national consultation to evolve the people's understanding of the climate crisis.

At the meeting, hosted by the "Jharkhand Jungle Bachao Andolan" (Movement to Save the Forests of Jharkhand), they discussed the need to evolve equitable strategies for development that are low carbon based and incorporate improvement of social indicators such as education, health and environment. The gathering was a unique opportunity for groups to discuss their struggles and to formulate a common agenda.

### Climate change in different parts of India

Indigenous (Adivasi) groups expressed that though they have not contributed to the climate crisis, they are being profoundly impacted by it. Recent drives for industrialisation in their areas have led to increased carbon emissions. Mining activities have been a prime cause of the cutting of forests. National and international solidarity is needed in their struggle to protect the forests, which will lead to a stabilisation of the climate. There is also a need for cross-country coordination efforts on adaptation. For example, the North East of India is also affected by policies pursued by neighbouring countries. In case of heavy rains in China or excess snow melting and water overflow in

Chinese dams, villages in Assam get washed away. Flash floods in Bhutan have a similar effect in India. Weather patterns are already changing in the North East. There has been a steady decline in rainfall in all the seven North-Eastern states, while temperature has increased significantly.

In Himachal Pradesh, increased temperatures have caused several glaciers to melt. The horticulture economy has been adversely impacted and apple cultivation has been affected. Farmers are forced to move to higher altitudes for cultivation. The agriculture sector is already in the midst of a deep crisis and climate change could be the last nail in its coffin. The prevailing drought in regions like Bundelkhand has led to a total collapse of agriculture. Women, Dalits, and agricultural labourers are most affected.

### **Tourism as “climate killer”**

The tourism industry is a contributor to the current crisis, especially through transport and aviation. Tourism also consumes water and energy and destroys natural environments (forests, mangroves). The proposed “solutions” are often displacing marginalised communities from their land and livelihood. In Kerala, an artificial reef in Kovalam is supposed to mitigate sea erosion. If they establish this, 500 traditional fisher folk’s livelihoods will be at stake. So whether it is climate related disasters, false solutions or non-solutions, the prime victims are coastal people and Adivasis.

### **Contentious CDM projects**

From an Indian perspective, the non-solutions for the global climate crisis include the so-called CDM (“Clean Development Mechanism”) projects. They are financed by the global North, but as a rule the beneficiaries are not small environmentally friendly projects, but large corporations. All these projects actually end up justifying the increased emissions in the North. Moreover, 30 - 50 percent of the credits that are sold by the CDM projects to Northern corporations do not reflect genuine reduction. The struggles against CDM projects are very difficult, as these projects are presented as a clean alternative that is not only beneficial to the South, but also to the North. However, carbon trading is a method to shift the responsibility to others. In addition, the CDM projects that are being projected as alternatives often have serious effects on the environment and people.

In a case study presentation on a CDM project of a wind based power plant in Maharashtra, it was highlighted that land was acquired using political power, displacing more people than needed. The company has even used the land designated for the CDM project for other activities. The project involved the felling of trees on the Western Ghats, which may affect the monsoons.

In another project on bio-fuels, the hay that the project used for energy production not only produced fly ash that has its own health hazards, but also affected the local cattle-breeding, as it is traditionally used as fodder, and is not really biomass waste. The National Adivasi Alliance highlighted that the large number of CDM projects which have mushroomed in Jharkhand are not only engaged in the dubious carbon trade, but provide the excuse for exploiting and polluting natural resources and displacing the rightful occupants of these regions.

### **Strategies, demands and campaigns**

Thus, there is a need for coordinated dissemination of such information, not just about individual projects, but also on the global implications of such projects. In Ranchi, several strategies were proposed to move the agenda of climate justice forward. These

include the strengthening of campaigns on the ground and interventions in national and international processes with the aim of influencing government policies (e.g. energy, mining, transport, tourism). International negotiations relating to climate change need to be monitored. Furthermore, alternatives to conventional energy sources need to be developed and the issue of high consumption and use of energy in cities needs to be addressed.

Generally, the consultation concluded in an opinion that this is a crisis that has its roots in capitalism. At its heart, climate change is undermining the rights and access of the marginalised over common goods and resources such as water, land, air, forests, etc. The marginalised constitute the majority of people in India and many other parts of the world. They will be hugely affected by climate change and global warming. So it is essential that those struggling world wide for a better life and against inequality, injustice and exploitation of all kind, incorporate climate justice in their struggles.

*Sumesh Mangalassery is a founder member of "KABANI – the other direction", a voluntary initiative working on tourism issues in India.*

(988 words, 83 lines, September 2009)

## **Climate Change, Tourism and Social Justice**

### **Some Reflections from the South**

By T. T. Sreekumar

Both global tourism and domestic tourism are deeply interlinked and pose serious threats to the livelihood options of local communities. They also have enormous impacts on carbon emissions and consequently on global warming. In most discussions, the complicity of the national capital and conspicuous consumption of the new middle class does not get adequate attention although it is both politically and economically a significant phenomenon to reckon with. It is our experience that the local struggles against exploitative tourism will have to strategically respond to the new phenomenon.

What is also less debated is the localized impact of climate changes, particularly how local communities will be impacted and in the eventuality of erupting disasters, how they would be able to cope with the problem of social and economic reconstruction. Moreover, it is difficult to capture the exact connections of global-local linkages of climate changes.

### **Responses and responsibilities**

Tourism is an industry that affects the lives of common people in a multitude of ways. The tourism industry initially attempted to create the self image of a victim of climate change. Concerns were mostly regarding the likely threats that climate change held out to the sustainability of tourism destinations. But subsequent research and introspection rightly highlighted the role of sending markets in aggravating the negative impacts of tourism on climate change. The patterns of consumption at home and abroad by citizens and manufacturers in Northern countries have been under scrutiny by the developing world for their lion share of contribution to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, ever since the discourse on climate change began to take root.

Trends such as increased air traffic from North to South, forced liberalisation of Third World economies for supporting conspicuous consumption of tourists by way of over

expanding luxury hotels, overcrowding of infrastructure facilities in tourism destinations and diversion of local resources for meeting demands of the tourism industry have all aggravated in recent years. All these factors have a long term nefarious impact on climate change, with disastrous consequences for local communities. A statement issued by the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) summarizes the argument as follows: "Climate change is affecting us all - the Global North and the Global South – but the injustice is quite apparent. Carbon emissions of the North are far higher per person than from the Global South. Unfortunately, the impact of Northern-induced climate change – due to 'luxury emissions' from global trade and tourism – is far more tangible and visible in the South."

While Global Tourism significantly contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, through emissions from transport, accommodation and related activities, the solutions mooted by the industry have been inadequate and irresponsible. It was with great pain and bafflement that the developing world received the news of European Union's decision to enforce carbon trading. The market argument has been overstretched and it fails to address the issue of social justice in any satisfactory manner. It helps legitimize increased exploitation of southern energy sources by the North, a strategy that clearly smacks of neo colonial economic subjugation.

### **New middle class and new challenges**

The emergence of a new middle class in developing countries – particularly in countries such as India and China where liberalisation and globalisation have brought highly skewed impacts on wealth and welfare of the people – has resulted in deep changes in consumption patterns, lifestyles and world outlook. This has created new demands for travel and tourism in developing countries.

Furthermore, the phenomenon has also catapulted some of the developing countries into the group of newly emerging sending markets. The travel patterns from these markets are not yet clearly understood. It is likely that it has increased the burden of destinations in other developing countries themselves. In July 2007, the Tourism Secretary of the Philippines identified the "Chinese market" as the fastest growing among the top five sending markets for the Philippines while Korea emerged as the leading sending market. The United States was the second biggest provider of tourists, while Japan came in at third. China and Taiwan were listed at the top fourth and fifth position. Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom ranked from sixth to 10th. The case of the Philippines will not be an exception in Asia.

Sustainable mobility in the newly emerging countries and markets is not an isolated issue. It is closely linked to the imposition of the neo liberal development paradigm in developing countries that the tourism industry has been steadfastly clinging on. It raises new questions of inclusion in deliberative democratic practices and also challenges us to redefine the meaning and import of participatory decision making processes in local destinations as well as international negotiations.

### **Climate change, tourism and social justice**

Over recent years it has become increasingly clearer that the poor people in the Third World are being forced from their homes by flash floods, draughts, quakes and other natural calamities. Seasons that the local farmers are so familiar with and which define their life cycle are fast disappearing, causing displacement and a sense of loss of rootedness with nature. I come from an Indian village where the major instrument of agricultural production is rainfall. There is no major irrigation infrastructure. The

peasants depend entirely on the regularity of seasons. In the villages, a popular oral tradition preserves an agricultural song that describes how the seasons were equitably distributed among three kings when they got the "boon of rain" from the God. The three kings, instead of warring over "rights to climate" decided to share it following the principle of "each according to his needs." They believed that the erratic changes in climate will cause "diseases, scarcity, price rise and above all erosion of social values." The sense of justice that formed an integral part of the local understanding of climate and climate change comes out clearly in the narrative of this agricultural song called "krishi geetha" (krishi means agriculture, geetha means song). It is precisely for this reason that the climate change and climate shocks, causing large scale migration, insecurity and conflicts, are creating enormous anxieties for the rural poor. An appropriate compensatory mechanism that can address this issue has not yet evolved.

*Dr. T T Sreekumar is Assistant Professor of Communication & New Media Programme at the National University of Singapore.*

(1.037 words, 87 lines, September 2008)

## **Small Islands under Pressure**

### **Underestimated Threats**

#### **Climate Change and Tourism in Lakshadweep**

By Anitha Sharma

The impacts of climate change in small islands like the Union Territory of Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea manifests itself in myriad forms. The IPCC projects an increase in global mean surface temperature of 1-3.5 degree Celsius by 2100. Its best estimate of sea level rise is 50 cms over the next century, but it could be as high as one metre. Lakshadweep, which is part of India, is yet to acknowledge its vulnerability vis à vis sea level rise.

The 1997-1998 El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events elevated sea surface temperatures of tropical oceans as high as three degrees centigrade. This has been the most palpable effect in the Lakshadweep islands, with bleached coral comprising 82 percent of the total coral cover in the lagoon reefs, with a bleaching related mortality of 26 percent. The effect on marine biodiversity which is associated with loss of habitats gets reflected in the livelihood options and choices available for people. The reduction in availability of bait fishes, an essential prerequisite for tuna fishing, has had its impact on fisheries in Lakshadweep.

"We feel that the behaviour of the sea has changed. The tidal cycles have been disrupted. We are not able to predict ocean currents which used to bring in our fish. The wind pattern is not uniform. The seasons have lost their regularity." Many people remarked that the sea is alien to them, more so after the Tsunami. And: "The coastline of the islands has shrunk. More and more land has gone."

There is more evidence now that the most immediate consequences of climate change are likely to be extreme events such as flooding, tropical cyclones, storm surges, and heat waves, and climatic variability (droughts, prevailing winds accelerating coastal erosion). Sea temperature warming has ranged from 0-0.5 degree centigrade between 1971 and 2004 for the Indian Ocean region. "Rain has not decreased, but its regular frequency and intensity patterns have been disrupted", people observed. "The

summers have become hotter. It is common for even average income households to budget a cooler/AC.”

Apart from some brief mentions of the need to develop a climate change adaptation strategy and the promotion of renewable energy on the islands, Lakshadweep is yet to address issues concerning the global phenomenon. The new Administrator of this 32 sqkm Union Territory with a highly subsidised economy is a member of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Task Force on Climate Change. He is keen to address the issue in a proactive manner, as is evident from his Independence Day Speech (August 15, 2009), with practical tips to reduce carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.

### **Tourism in Lakshadweep**

The tourism initiatives started in 1974, when the first resort for international tourists opened in Bangaram island. The Union Territory of Lakshadweep with its ten inhabited islands and several uninhabited islands has taken on the low volume – high value tourism. Tourism was expanded in 1983 to five islands, with restrictions in issuing permits to the tourists (4,000 per year).

The resort owners are yet to address issues of climate change, except for the usual rhetoric on eco-tourism designed on principles of how conservation pays. The Scuba Diving Training centre in Lakshadweep has been doing some outreach activities in the islands with children, symbolically taking up issues like garbage disposal. The Department of Environment and Forests in Lakshadweep has been observing days of importance like World Ozone Day with programs and distributing LED bulbs and lamps as a step towards a carbon neutral approach.

The need to assess the tourism carrying capacity of the islands has been stated clearly in a training manual (“Ecotourism in Coral Reefs”. LEAD/BNHS/Darwin Initiative, March 2006), keeping in mind the imminent threat of global warming and sea level rise. The drive to increase the number of tourists to 10,000 and the decision to open up more uninhabited islands for tourism in Lakshadweep has to be placed in the context of underestimation that exists about this global phenomenon.

*Anitha Sharma, an environmental educator and researcher based in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, has been working in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep for a decade.*

(676 words, 57 lines, September 2009)

## **Resettlement as a Last Resort**

### **Climate Change, Tourism and Adaptation in the Maldives**

By Anitha Sharma

Climate Change affects the world’s small islands the most, with potentially devastating consequences for health, land, infrastructure and the economy. More than 80 percent of the 1,120 islands in the Maldives are less than 1 m above sea level, making it one of the world’s lowest countries. With an economy in which tourism accounts for 27 percent of the GDP, Maldives is now coupling initiatives in tourism with its National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA). “We can do nothing to stop climate change on our own and so we have to buy land elsewhere. It is an insurance policy for the worst possible outcome. We do not want to leave the Maldives, but we also do not want to be climate refugees living in tents for decades”, said President Mohammed Nasheed, announcing

a bold plan to buy land elsewhere where the country's population of 386,000 can rebuild lives as sea level threatens to inundate this tiny Indian Ocean island nation.

A small rise in sea level manifests itself as significant erosion and submersion of land, increase in floods, loss of reefs, and beaches. It has serious implications for tourism such as higher costs to protect and maintain waterfronts. The most critical attraction for tourists in islands and coasts is the pristine beaches and coast line which, when gone, can lower the visit rates.

### **Tourism-induced climate change vulnerability**

The contribution of tourism to human-induced climate change has never been comprehensively assessed. The major areas in which emission calculations have been done have been transportation, accommodation and activities. Maldives has to take stock of what has been happening in the past that has made this small country one of the first nations to sink.

Transportation causes 75 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by tourism, with aviation forming the bulk (40 percent). "The number of aircraft that land on the island has increased. I have been reading about climate change and feel anxious about emissions over Maldives", says a driver working in the Male airport for 14 years. The air navigation in Maldives is through five airports, two of which are international. The Maldivian Air Taxi Pvt. Ltd. flies on a conservative average of 150 flights a day to 40 resorts. Government data show 683,012 tourist arrivals in 2008, with more than 94 percent from Europe and Asia. A total of 13,501 international charters have arrived in Maldives in 2008. In addition to tourism-related carbon emissions from air transport, cars, accommodation, and various tourist activities, emissions from dive holidays create unsustainable levels of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The coral reef and lagoon ecosystem has been abused in the name of tourism. The often quoted example of Royal Island in Baa Atoll, where coral reefs were dredged for building a harbour for mooring the vessels used by the resort, is to be reviewed. The artificial breakwaters created at high cost did not protect the island during Tsunami.

The 236 tourist establishments in Maldives belonging to various categories like resorts, hotels, guest houses and safari vessels have been made with no standardised regulatory framework on architecture, energy and water use. A small country like Maldives has 90 manmade harbours besides 14 natural harbours. This has been made at the cost of common property resources like reefs and lagoons. The recent coral bleaching events that occurred have also had their impact on the diversity and integrity of the coral ecosystem.

The plans by the Maldivian Government (May 2008) to develop ten artificial islands by reclaiming natural lagoons of inhabited islands especially to create resorts will damage coastal protective elements and lead to more damage and vulnerability in the crisis situation that the country is moving towards. Laamu Gaadhoo beach, a protected area for turtle nesting will also be disrupted.

### **Going green**

Maldives Government prepared the National Environment Action Plan which stated the need for reducing emissions from automobiles. Only three percent of the land area in Maldives is covered by trees. The Government of Maldives has been planting trees along with NGOs and resort owners. The soft coastal protection measures like

reforestation and conservation of mangroves and other shore-stabilising vegetation that can act as a natural buffer is yet to be adopted systematically on the islands.

“We want to invest in green technology. If we perish, we want to show that we were trying to do the right thing. We will continue with tourism. But we now want to reach out to the tourists who visit Maldives and ask them to help us go carbon neutral”, said Mohammed Aslam, Minister of Environment, Housing and Transport. President Mohammed Nasheed said an environment tax of \$3 per tourist per day was soon to be levied on all tourists.

The isolated attempts that are being made by some corporate investors in the tourism scene to introduce carbon neutral programs, though a good attempt, are overshadowed by the hard reality that they are majorly contributing to this tiny nation’s carbon footprint by operating sky taxis and chartered flights every day. This cannot be compensated for by conducting outreach programs for school children or planting trees and protecting turtles. The adoption of eco-practises and the now trendy carbon offsetting programs if to graduate beyond a marketing strategy have to have a solid base with emphasis on community participation and sustainable eco-restoration.

(893 words, 73 lines, September 2009)

## **A Matter of Survival**

### **Interview with Fei Tevi, Pacific Conference of Churches, Fiji**

By Christina Kamp

Pacific islands countries are among the most vulnerable to climate change, which becomes a life and death issue in the Pacific. The impacts of climate change vary according to the geographical formation of each country. To find out how climate change is affecting people’s lives and the tourism sector, we spoke to Fe’iloakitau Kaho Tevi, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, on the occasion of his visit to Germany in September 2008.

#### **TW: What does climate change mean for people in the Pacific? And for tourism?**

**Fei Tevi:** In the Pacific, all the effects of climate change are exacerbated because of the smallness of the islands. Our islands are sinking. Settlers are starting to leave their islands, others are preparing for their relocation, without any hope to ever return to their homes. For coral atoll countries such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands and other smaller islets of bigger volcanic countries, rising sea levels due to global warming lead to the erosion of coastal lands. We have experienced drinking water sources becoming highly salinated. Where water is salty, human beings can not live. Our food security is in danger, resulting in the increased importation of staple foods such as rice and root crops. For bigger volcanic countries such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and Tonga, the intensity of rainfalls is increasing, causing flooding and loss of crops and lives. Another danger is the increased frequency of cyclones and changes in temperatures. Our coastal ecosystems are suffering disruption. Climate change leads to a loss of cultural lands and will cause displacement of people who live near the shorelines.

These climate change impacts will surely dent these countries’ income from tourism. Changes in the global climate will affect tourism in several ways. The direct impacts include higher temperatures and less water availability. Indirectly, the environment

changes to such an extent that it results in a loss of attractions, including reef attractions and biodiversity. Coral bleaching and beach erosion are classical examples for what we are experiencing. With new policies being introduced to combat climate change, e.g. carbon taxes on travel, we have to expect changes in tourist mobility. A growing proportion of consumers may be reluctant to undertake medium and long haul air travel.

**TW: What are the possibilities for people to adapt to climate change? What kind of adaptation may be feasible in tourism?**

**Fei Tevi:** There is a need to gather concrete information on the costs and benefits of different adaptation options. The transition from tourism to another form of industry is an option that some of the countries need to consider. A better strategy would be a form of tourism that is environmentally friendly. We have observed that tourism and its development have also become a destructive tidal wave for the Pacific people's livelihoods. In Tahiti, local people compete with tourists for freshwater.

New forms of tourism should include learning tours on climate change and its impacts on Pacific communities. Airlines and hotels could be requested to put aside money from their earnings toward renewable energy, mitigation and adaptation efforts in their locales, and to encourage tourists to contribute as well. The key players in the tourism industry in the Pacific should look at reducing their reliance on oil and invest in renewable energy.

**TW: What kind of solidarity do you expect from the tourism sector?**

**Fei Tevi:** Tourism should engender a sense of "tourism in solidarity", inspiring the tourists to come not only for "fun" purposes, but with a sense of social and environmental contribution. There is a need to raise awareness about greenhouse gas emissions and provide user friendly information to tourism businesses. Country level tourism accreditation and standards programs should be enhanced through incorporation of climate change mitigation measures and benchmarking. In educational curricula and business training schemes, climate change and sustainable tourism should be included. Tourism businesses should to take a long-term risk management approach to climate change and help us keep our life styles.

*During his visit to Germany in September 2008, Fei Tevi and other "climate witnesses" from different parts of the world called upon the German government to take a leadership role in the fight against climate change and to refrain from further investments in or the expansion of coal-fired power plants.*

(682 words, 57 lines, September 2008)

## **Aviation and the Tourism Industry**

### **Airlines as a Climate Lobby**

#### **For a Global Solution in Aviation**

By Christina Kamp

Aviation will continue to grow. To prevent growth from being hampered by "enforced" regulation and to maintain competitiveness between airlines, an industry lobby has made suggestions on how to include international aviation in a new global climate deal to be agreed in Copenhagen in December. The industry coalition – the Aviation Global

Deal (AGD) Group – brings together a couple of airlines, the airport operator BAA and the international NGO "The Climate Group".

Chris Schroeder, Senior Manager, Corporate Social Responsibility, Environment & Fuel Optimization, Qatar Airways, says, "The aviation industry has to do its part to reduce the overall carbon footprint but we do not see how this can be achieved by unilateral enforced emission trading schemes, hence we fully support a global solution for the aviation industry." According to the airlines, a global climate deal for aviation must maintain a level playing field. They criticise the decision taken by the European Union to include aviation in the European Emission Trading System (ETS) from 2012. This would "penalise" European carriers and encourage international operators to use alternative hubs such as Dubai.

The "AGD Group" favours a global solution for the aviation sector. It should set a target for aviation to ensure that it plays its part in global CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions. This should be achieved through a 'cap and trade' emissions trading mechanism, where the sector has open access to global carbon markets – thus enabling airlines to emit more greenhouse gases than they are actually allowed to. Emissions should be reduced "at least cost to global society", and according to the AGD Group, aviation has high mitigation costs. A proportion of the sector's emission allowances should be auctioned to generate revenues for adaptation and mitigation activities in developing countries and for research into greener aviation technology. The airlines' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be based on the carbon content of their annual fuel purchases. An international body should administer the system.

**Further information: [www.agdgroup.org](http://www.agdgroup.org)**

(331 words, 29 lines, September 2009)

## **Aviation in a Climate Deal**

### **Interview with Dudley Curtis, European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E)**

By Christina Kamp

The climate summit in December in Copenhagen is meant to come to a new agreement to set the course for equitable, climate-friendly development. However, while big and bold steps are required, the cumbersome preparation process rather points towards a tug-of-war over minor concessions. Structures such as the emission trading system are to support a "business as usual" approach – for those who can afford it. To find out more about the prospects for the aviation sector, we interviewed Dudley Curtis, European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E), an environmental organisation in Brussels campaigning on sustainable transport.

**TW: Has tourism, and particularly aviation, played a role in the climate negotiations to date and what can we expect from Copenhagen?**

**Dudley Curtis:** International aviation emissions, like those from international shipping, were excluded from the Kyoto climate agreements of 1997. Responsibility for cutting aviation emissions was given to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), who failed to act, and actually blocked progress for over a decade. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from aviation exceed 730 million tonnes annually – up well over 45 percent since 1990. Additional climate impacts from other exhaust gases and cloud effects are around

double those of CO<sub>2</sub>. Overall, aviation is responsible for 4.9 percent of global warming today. International aviation emits more CO<sub>2</sub> than France or Australia. ICAO is unlikely to bring anything to the Copenhagen talks beyond promises and proposals for modest efficiency and operational measures – mostly voluntary or partial in scope. But left unchecked, emissions from aviation and shipping will double or triple by 2050, forming by then a very significant proportion of a global carbon 'budget' consistent with keeping warming below 2° C. The climate deal to be agreed in Copenhagen must control emissions from all sources if it is to protect the climate. That means including international transport within the overall carbon budget.

**TW: The European Union is planning to include aviation in the European Emission Trading System from 2012. What does that mean, and is it a good solution?**

**Dudley Curtis:** The EU's decision to include aviation in its emission trading scheme was an important first step, after decades of inaction on the environmental impacts from the sector. However this development must be seen in context. Sadly, the terms on which aviation has entered the ETS will mean very limited reductions in emissions from aircraft – this might create the illusion that other measures that would do much more to reduce emissions (emission standards, kerosene taxes, etc) are no longer needed.

Aviation's entry into the ETS was never going to make a massive difference to emissions from air travel, but the deal we have means any reduction will amount to no more than a year's growth. Airlines will be allowed to buy permits from other sectors without restrictions, so their emissions will continue to grow. Instead of changing to greener technologies and operations, the aviation sector is likely to limit its climate efforts to buying permits in the carbon market. In addition, this directive only addresses CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, ignoring the fact that NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from aircraft at altitude and aviation-induced clouds also have climatic impacts. It will mean aviation remains the least efficient and most climate-intensive mode of transportation.

**TW: The "Aviation Global Deal Group" (AGD Group) has made a proposal on how to tackle aviation emissions in a post-Kyoto agreement. Is this a proposal in the right direction?**

**Dudley Curtis:** In contrast to most of the aviation sector, the AGD group's members have recognised that environmental issues are not going to go away, and have said that aviation should be included in a post-Kyoto deal. However they believe aviation should be allowed to continue polluting roughly at 2005 levels, while other sectors have had to reduce based on their 1990 levels. A number of members of the group have also been critical of the EU-ETS. So it remains to be seen whether they are serious about aviation making a genuine contribution to carbon reductions.

(675 words, 57 lines, September 2009)

## **Efficiency is not enough**

### **The Role of Tour Operators in Climate Change Mitigation**

By Andreas Zotz

Tour operators currently find themselves in a dilemma: On the one hand, they recognize that climate change mitigation is essential for protecting their economic success in the long term. On the other hand, a net reduction of their corporate

emissions would “cannibalize” their core business in the short term, as it requires a fundamental reorganisation of their contemporary business models. Among the big players in the European tour operating industry, the overall commitment to climate change mitigation varies considerably. Whereas some tour operators have begun integrating voluntary offset schemes, setting up internal carbon reporting systems or formulating (unambitious) reduction targets during, others do not even have a contact person for environmental matters.

The tourism sector in most countries – inbound and outbound – is dominated by a few but strong players, which have enormous market power to influence producers and service providers on the one hand, and consumers on the other hand. The strategic decisions of leading tour operators will therefore have a tremendous influence on the future performance of the tourism sector in climate change mitigation.

### **Technology-oriented approaches**

Analysing public reporting and communication of some big players in the European tour operating industry, it can be observed that mitigation measures are generically only undertaken as long as these are compliant with their strategy of consistent growth and expansion of long-haul segments. These measures largely aim at improving operating efficiency, such as saving energy in accommodation facilities or reducing fuel consumption of aircraft. Research shows that such an approach will not reduce the tourism sector’s emissions, nor stabilise them at current levels.

For tour operators to effectively reduce their product-related emissions in absolute terms, technological innovation has to be combined with other approaches: fostering a change in travel behaviour (shift to nearby destinations, decrease in the number of trips per person and increased length-of-stay), shifting passenger transport from airplane and car to rail and coach, as well as optimizing passenger transport chains through mobility management. The European market leaders have so far become little active in these areas. The industry argues that their action potential is constrained by the current market situation: Even though tourism consumers are well aware about the problem of climate change and declare willingness to act, they do not demand climate friendly travel products nor do they accept these if offered actively (as observed with low uptake rates of carbon offset schemes). The market demand is still dominated by long-haul destinations, short breaks, air travel and individual car use.

### **Mitigation as a guiding principle**

Additionally, low cost carriers intensify competition for the short and mid-haul markets. It needs to be questioned, however, how strong current marketing activities of tour operators reinforce such demand patterns. Despite these obstacles, there are a couple of measures to be implemented by tour operators which could lead to significant emission reductions. They include incorporating climate protection as a guiding principle into existing business strategies and assuring top-level commitment. Suppliers and partners need to be selected according to their mitigation performance. Customers need to be educated about the environmental impacts of products by qualified sales staff and through personal “carbon footprinting” in combination with credible offset schemes. Intelligent product design can reduce carbon emissions through itinerary planning, modal shift, mobility management, innovative technologies and integrated carbon offsets. Furthermore, companies can create a “carbon clean” image by collaborating with credible partners (governments, NGOs) and by communicating achievements in carbon reductions to the public.

In the short term it is likely that big operators will further enhance voluntary offset schemes, as it allows them to communicate action against climate change without undertaking immediate structural changes. There remains a risk that voluntary carbon offsetting – even though an important intermediate instrument – could become the principal means for tour operators to “reduce” emissions. Even though climate change seems to have become a major topic for the industry, willingness to initiate structural changes still seems to be limited.

*Andreas Zotz works with “Respect – The Institute for Integrative Tourism and Development” in Vienna, Austria, as an expert on tourism and climate change.*

(664 words, 60 lines, September 2008)

### **In brief**

#### **World Tourism Day 2009: No reason to celebrate**

‘Tourism - celebrating diversity’ – the theme chosen by the UN World Tourism Organisation for the 2009 World Tourism Day – raises many questions, says the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) in a statement issued on the occasion. Tourism enables visitors to be exposed to the riches of this planet, and this can be seen as ‘celebrating diversity’. However, ECOT believes that the 2009 World Tourism Day, which this year marks its 30th anniversary, draws attention to the more positive side of tourism, while ignoring some troubling dimensions. These include the standardisation of tourism facilities and even destinations, ‘demonstration effects’ of tourism which tempt younger generations, staged ‘authenticity’, with dying traditions being staged to entertain tourists and attract their dollars. Globalised tourism thus contributes to the homogenisation of cultures. Rather than being its “natural ally” tourism can also destroy biodiversity, especially if long haul travel is involved, contributing to climate change, and if a heavy human presence is involved. To respect and celebrate diversity, the ethos of Community-based tourism (CBT) is best suited.

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(179 words, 15 lines, September 2009)

#### **Looking Back: World Tourism Day 2008**

On World Tourism Day 2008, the official celebrations focussed on “Tourism Responding to the Challenge of Climate Change”. The main event was organised by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 in Lima, Peru. At a pre-event in Lima, a group of civil society organisations, including EED-Tourism Watch, had formulated their inputs to the discussion (“Another tourism is possible! A civil society’s perspective on tourism and climate change”). As Sabine Minninger reports in the German edition of Tourism Watch 53 (December 2008), they were surprised at the degree to which tourism officials talked about social responsibility, social and environmental indicators and awareness raising to promote climate friendly behaviour. Though the rhetoric at the official event had shifted towards climate protection and poverty alleviation, NGOs raised criticism regarding the lack of civil society participation in UNWTO events. They also questioned the method recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to calculate aircraft emissions. UNWTO presented two new initiatives: “TOURpact.gc”, in cooperation with the UN Global

Compact, aimed at encouraging the tourism industry to adopt social and ecological standards, and the website [www.climatesolutions.travel](http://www.climatesolutions.travel), set up in cooperation with Microsoft to serve as a portal on solutions to combat climate change.

(206 words, 18 lines, December 2008)

### **“Caribsave”: Vulnerability and Resilience in the Caribbean**

A partnership programme between the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the University of Oxford addresses the impacts and challenges surrounding climate change, tourism, the environment, and economic development and community livelihoods across the Caribbean Basin, using an integrated approach. The region is one of the most vulnerable in the world to the impacts of climate change including sea level rise, biodiversity loss and impacts on human health. The “Caribsave” programme is aimed at making the Caribbean a carbon neutral tourism region. “The private sector is fundamental to the partnership”, says Murray C. Simpson, one of the directors of Caribsave. He also emphasizes the “democratisation of science” and the sharing of the information generated by Caribsave through the media.

**Further information: [www.caribsave.org](http://www.caribsave.org)**

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(127 words, 11 lines, September 2009)

### **Disaster Prevention in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia**

Sustainable tourism development is the best form of disaster prevention in tourism. This was one of the conclusions drawn by organisations from Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia at a meeting in August 2009 in Bangkok, as Sabine Minninger reports in the German edition of TourismWatch 56 (September 2009). For more than three years, several organisations had been working on disaster preparedness in tourism and Tsunami affected areas in their countries. As part of the programme initiated by the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), national partners such as the National Council of YMCA (NCY) in Sri Lanka, the Asian Research Foundation in Thailand and the Dhyana Pura Tourism School in Indonesia conducted “train the trainers” workshops on pressing concerns, including the protection of children against sexual exploitation, coastal protection, land rights, and the impact of tourism on local communities. Experience has shown that existing problems are exacerbated in the aftermath of disasters. As the impact of climate change can already be felt in some of the regions, the organisations involved are planning to continue their training programmes on disaster preparedness, with a focus on adaptation to climate change.

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(195 words, 16 lines, September 2009)

### **(Mis-)calculated Emissions**

By recommending the flight emissions calculator of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is losing credibility. This is argued by a group of NGOs, including EED-Tourism Watch. In an open letter of 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2008, the organisations voiced their concern about UNWTO’s decision to ignore the so-called Radiative Forcing Index (RFI), a numerical multiplier, when

calculating the emissions caused by aircraft at high altitudes. As Sabine Minninger reports in the German edition of TourismWatch 52 (September 2008), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has calculated the RFI in aviation with a range of 1.9–4.7, taking into account the fact that the impact of aircraft emissions on climate change is not due to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions alone. In response to the NGO letter, UNWTO clarified that they had “decided to support the ICAO Carbon Calculator, while looking forward to scientific advances that will allow a better measurement of the impacts of aviation on climate change”, which led the NGOs to conclude that by disregarding the current state of scientific knowledge, the UNWTO is instigating “green washing”.

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(183 words, 16 lines, September 2008)

### **Book Reviews**

#### **ITB Congress 2008: "Trends and Issues in Global Tourism 2009"**

The volume "Trends and Issues in Global Tourism 2009" is based on panel discussions and presentations made at the ITB Congress "Market Trends & Innovations" in March 2008, which had a focus on climate change. The book presents the concept of “zero footprint“, which it says would work only if it included compensation (thus showing that, in fact, it would not work). Planting trees is presented as a way of compensating for the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of long-haul flights – ignoring that trees do not absorb CO<sub>2</sub> on a permanent basis and that the greenhouse effect of aviation goes far beyond mere CO<sub>2</sub>. The book shows that it might not be climate change that will lead to more energy efficiency and innovative solutions in aviation, but rather rising kerosene prices.

**Trends and Issues in Global Tourism 2009. By Roland Conrady and Martin Buck (Ed.). Springer, Heidelberg, 2009. 278 pages. ISBN 978-3-540-92198-1.**

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(159 words, 12 lines, September 2009)

#### **"Climate Change and Aviation: Issues, Challenges and Solutions"**

Aviation is one of the fastest growing drivers of climate change. In “Climate Change and Aviation“, Stefan Gössling and Paul Upham have brought together a wide range of academic perspectives on the issue. What makes aviation particularly relevant, apart from its growth, is not only its estimated contribution to climate change, but also the fact that air travel is particularly damaging to the environment and that it is a privilege of the rich. The actual emissions of a flight remain difficult to calculate. They depend not only on the route travelled, but also on the operating conditions, such as load factor, the atmospheric conditions, flight speed and altitude. The impact is attributed not only to CO<sub>2</sub>, but also to other greenhouse gases, and to contrails and cirrus clouds the effects of which have not yet been sufficiently researched. In any case, an important conclusion is that a reduction in aviation will yield far more benefit in terms of mitigation than the mere CO<sub>2</sub> emissions suggest.

**Climate Change and Aviation: Issues, Challenges and Solutions. By Stefan Gössling and Paul Upham (Ed.), Earthscan, London/Sterling, 2009. 386 pages. ISBN 978-1-84407-620-8.**

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(195 words, 15 lines, September 2009)

## **“State of the World 2009: Into A Warming World”**

In the run-up to the climate summit in Copenhagen, the new Worldwatch Report “State of the World 2009” gives an overview of the political challenges in dealing with climate change. The technologies and human capacities are available, it says. What is lacking is the political will, which is a “renewable resource“. By the end of the century, global average temperatures may be up to six degrees higher than at the beginning of industrialisation. The report proposes a broad "joint venture" for climate and energy security between industrialised countries and emerging economies. Another important focus is on adaptation to climate change and the strengthening of community resilience. As far as the world’s poorest people are concerned, adaptation cannot just be about maintaining the status quo. There is a need for sustainable improvements in living standards and it must be ensured that the situation of the poor is not further impaired by climate change.

**State of the World 2009: Into a Warming World. Worldwatch Institute, 2009. 262 pages. ISBN 978-0-393-33418-0.**

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(177 words, 15 lines, September 2009)

### **Upcoming International Events**

#### **International Day of Climate Action on 24th October, 2009**

The campaign "350.org" has called on people around the world to organize an action on climate change on October 24<sup>th</sup> and feed it into the global network on the 350.org website. The actions should send a clear message to world leaders: "The solutions to climate change must be equitable, they must be grounded in science, and they must meet the scale of the crisis ", the campaign website says. The figure 350 stands for 350 ppm. According to scientists, this is the safe upper limit for CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

**Further information: [www.350.org/de](http://www.350.org/de)**

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(99 words, 7 lines, September 2009)

#### **"Climate Justice and Tourism" in December 2009 in Copenhagen**

At a parallel event at the climate summit in December in Copenhagen, tourism NGOs from the global South and North want to promote the debate on "climate justice and tourism". The panel discussion will be organised by EED – Tourism Watch in cooperation with the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), Friends of Nature International, Respect, and others. It will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2009, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at DGI-byen, climate forum 09 (Tietgensgade 65. 1704 Copenhagen V, [www.dgi-byen.com](http://www.dgi-byen.com)). Stefan Gössling, a representative of the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), and Mamadou Mbodji (Friends of Nature Senegal) will be among the speakers. The event will be moderated by Imtiaz Muqbil.

**Further (updated) information: [www.tourism-watch.de](http://www.tourism-watch.de)**

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(121 words, 10 lines, September 2009)