

Speech in Honour of the TO DO! Winners by Hans Ulrich Schudel (SST)

For the award ceremony "TO DO! 2010 –
Contest Socially Responsible Tourism"

on 11 March, 2011, 4.00 pm, at roof garden
foyer, ICC Berlin



(Check against delivery)

Dear TO DO! Winners, Your Excellencies (ministers, ambassadors, members of parliament), Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just a week ago, we saw in the newspapers the photo of a young demonstrator in Tunisia. With both hands, she held up a poster saying something like: "We've had enough, we intervene!"

We are currently witnessing an unusual development. In various countries, in particular in parts of the Arab world, in Northern Africa and in the Middle East, people take to the streets and raise their voices: because they want to have a say, because they want to shape their own future and take part in decision-making, because they want to have a future at all. In other words: Because they demand their involvement – their: **PARTICIPATION**.

This "... we intervene" by a young woman in Tunisia only means that the people want to be asked at last; that large parts of the population are no longer willing to accept everything. That it is no longer acceptable if the state, the regime, "those up there", may simply do as they please without being questioned. What makes this serious: The men and women who demand their civic participation these days are ready to risk their lives, in Tunisia, in Egypt, and dramatic ways in Libya.

While today the people in these countries fight for their political participation and often for their fundamental human rights, for their involvement in the restructuring of their societies, their governance systems – i.e. participation on a large scale –, there is also another angle to participation, a smaller one, perhaps a local one. Once an order has been established, participation remains important. It is not sufficient to cast a vote in elections once in four years. This is also reflected in people's protests in Germany, e.g. against mega-projects such as "Stuttgart 21". If the people affected raise their voices, it does not matter

whether it is about a dam or the exploitation of oil reserves, gold mining, deforestation, or the rigorous development of tourism. What matters in terms of participation is whether the population affected agrees to the new development at all, and if so, whether the people get a chance to be involved in the respective processes.

As you will have noticed, I am from Switzerland. In my country, people's participation has strong institutional roots. We are in a position to express our opinion in our community, in our canton and at the national level through referendums on various important or less important issues. This may sometimes become preposterous, e.g. when a majority of voters (which helps us build the bridge back to the Islamic world) introduces a constitutional ban on minarets. This much of participation may be a little cumbersome at times, but not for love or money would I want to miss the possibility to be involved in developing the society in which I live.

But why are we now surprised at the current protests and uprisings across the Mediterranean? Do we in Europe or in the so called old democracies have an exclusive right to take to the streets and to demand our rights to be involved in the development of our societies – or, again: to participate? Why are we astonished to see that this can suddenly happen elsewhere, too? Did we perhaps not look closely enough at these countries for too long? I am afraid so.

The ITB veterans among you surely remember (which Klaus Betz told me) that in the late 1980s, here at ITB, the "Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz" (Vigilant Goans Army) made their voices heard, demanding that tourists from Germany should stay at home, as with their lavish life style in the luxury hotels they use so much water that there is not enough left for the local people. It took years until the tourism industry understood such conflicts of interest and took them seriously. But in most cases and for too long such problems have been addressed rather as environmental issues. Hardly anybody seriously considered that the exploitation or over-exploitation of resources in tourist destinations can lead to social tensions. With a few exceptions:

In the mid 1990s, a group of people gathered around the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung), who found it was high time to deal with the social and ethical questions in tourism. They were development experts, researchers, ministers, journalists, government officials and – yes, we should mention that – farsighted representatives of the tourism industry. Just take a look at who continues to be involved in the TO DO! jury (please refer to your documents or to the TO DO! website for details).

The Institute for Tourism and Development, which has been organising this TO DO! contest for many years, has clearly stated in as early as 1995: "The future of

tourism will eventually depend on whether it develops in a way that is socially sustainable for the population in the destinations." This was at that time the key statement from which the TO DO! contest was developed. It was the call for sustainable and participatory tourism development. And today everyone talks about *social responsibility*. Yesterday, ITB saw its third CSR-Day (Corporate Social Responsibility Day), and worldwide more and more organisations work towards socially responsible tourism. "Fair Trade in Tourism", for example, or "responsible tourism" and – if I am allowed to mention this – not least the Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism, which I am representing here, and which contributes a prize money for the TO DO! winners.

Today, 16 TO DO! contest rounds later, it is clear that it was the right decision to work towards socially responsible tourism development from the start. At the beginning, one could say: "There is still a lot TO DO!" – that's how the contest got its name. Today we know: A lot has been done. All the TO DO! winners to date are testimony to this, but also those from Guatemala, Tajikistan and Thailand, who are going to get their awards in a couple of minutes. What is interesting is that all the three award winners this year had been forced to start from scratch after a crisis – but did not start with the old means and in the old style. They practiced from the start what is not at all to be taken for granted yet: They involved the people and did not take decisions without consulting those who are most concerned: the local population. They made the participation of the affected population, which is so important to us, the main component of their projects. They provide examples and models for us which we would like to support with our contest. They make us believe in the future, also in the future of tourism. And they strengthen us in our conviction that changes are possible, involving the people concerned, for a better world, locally and globally.

And now I am particularly pleased that we can move on to handing over the awards. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your kind attention. And now I finally have the pleasure to congratulate the winners of the TO DO! contest 2010: Congratulations!

English translation: Christina Kamp