

# Sustainable Tourism Development: Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow

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## **Abstract**

Sustainability is possibly the most important issue facing the tourism industry in the twenty-first century. Fortunately, the tourism sector is in a unique position in the contribution it can make to sustainable development as a result of interest and publicity created when the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 declared that: "2017 is the United Nations International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development". This declaration set the agenda for many new initiatives in sustainable tourism research to take place as well as providing increased venues for discussing sustainable tourism development. It is well recognized in the tourism community that we have a finite earth that must be conserved, protected, and nurtured and that we all have a stake in assuring that future tourism growth be of high quality and sustained for future generations to enjoy. This is an acknowledgment that sustainable tourism is a part of an overall shift that recognizes that orderly economic growth, combined with concerns for the environment and quality-of-life social values, will be the driving force for long-term progress in tourism policies for development. Defining attributes of sustainability in the context of innovative directions of sustainable tourism development is currently taking place. The tourism industry has been inundated with multiple definitions of sustainable tourism concepts depending on which individuals or groups are involved. At the global level the most accepted definition of sustainable tourism comes from work conducted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. This interest coupled with the dynamic growth in global tourism is challenging the very roots of sustainability in the tourism industry. What hasn't been thoroughly researched is viewing sustainable tourism from a historic perspective. Many great worldly travelers, as for example, the ancient worldly traveler and travel writer Herodotus, while not using specific terms highlighting sustainable tourism, identified and wrote about aspects of travel that included references to "culture, history, and heritage" all of which fit modern day definitions of sustainable tourism. This paper will discuss a few of the components of sustainable tourism through the eyes and travels of four "worldly travelers" from time periods that include: "Ancient History", the "Medieval "Period ", the "Industrial Revolution", and ending with the "Modern Era". While none of these worldly travelers used the term "sustainable tourism" in their travel notes, they all wrote books about their travels that fit the perspective of contemporary components of sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism development, United Nations, United Nations

World Tourism Organization, International Institute for Peace through Tourism, World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism statistics, definitions of sustainable tourism, cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism, responsible tourism, worldly travelers: Herodotus, Marco Polo, Charles Darwin, Charles Lindbergh, climate change

## **Introduction**

### **“2017 is the United Nations International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development”**

United Nations

In 2016, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly delegates voted to declare “2017 is the United Nations International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development”. The official conference related to a discussion of this declaration has been organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the International Institute for Peace through Tourism. These two organizations have chosen September 17-21, 2017, Montreal, Canada as the date and place for the conference. World leaders and influential individuals in the travel and tourism industry will gather to address the contribution of sustainable tourism development with reference to key global issues of sustainability and peace. The world conference will also highlight special “success stories” that promote “best practices” in sustainability and the possible role that tourism can play in harnessing its economic benefits and at the same time create an opportunity for an environment that is sustainable. This paper provides a glimpse of insights into sustainable tourism development from a historic perspective to future directions.

According to research conducted by Oxford University's Business School for the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), domestic and international travel and tourism, taken together, amounted to \$7.6 trillion in 2016, accounting for 10.2 percent of the world's Gross Development Product and generating more than 292 million jobs (one in 10 of the world's total employment).<sup>1</sup> The WTTC is the forum through which the leaders of 100 of the world's foremost travel and tourism companies meet to discuss and formulate global travel and tourism policies and practices aimed toward the balanced economic growth and sustainability of a healthy tourism industry. In addition, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) noted that international tourism arrivals in 2016 amounted to 1.235 billion.<sup>2</sup> UNWTO is the United Nations agency charged with the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism policies worldwide, with a diverse stakeholder membership consisting of entities representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations, and local tourism authorities. The WTTC and UNWTO work cooperatively to lead and develop global responses to major tourism issues, including the need to protect world socioeconomic and environmental resources.

The tourism industry is increasingly more conscious of the need to maintain the social, cultural, environmental, and economic attributes that are basic to its positive development. To ensure that this happens, the global travel and tourism community will need strong leadership and effective international sustainable tourism policies. The Secretary General of UNWTO, Dr. Taleb Rifai noted in 2015:

“More than one billion tourists travel internationally...Such a dynamic, billion-strong sector is a staunch reminder of our shared responsibility and primary challenge of sustainable tourism – to realize the tremendous benefits that the global tourism sector can bring to destinations and host communities worldwide, while safeguarding our fragile natural assets, social values and cultural heritage. When tourism is managed responsibly, it can contribute significantly to inclusive socioeconomic development and the promotion and protection of natural and cultural resources. In this respect, each tourist can play a key role in championing sustainable tourism.”<sup>3</sup>

An organization that works in tandem to support the objectives of the UNWTO is the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT). The IIPT is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to fostering and facilitating tourism initiatives which contribute to international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of the environment, the preservation of heritage, and through these initiatives, helping to bring about a more peaceful and sustainable world. Louis D'Amore, IIPT President and Founder has this to say about sustainable tourism development:

“The growth of international travel is one of the most significant social phenomenon of modern times; from 25 million international arrivals in 1950 to more than 1.2 billion in 2016 and projected growth to 1.8 billion international arrivals by 2030. Most of this growth is occurring in regions of the world that currently have an 'ecological deficit'. For tourism to be sustainable in the twenty-first century, it will become increasingly imperative that travel and tourism leaders encourage a shift in further growth to regions of the world that have an 'ecological surplus' and these are the same regions of the world where tourism can best contribute to poverty reduction. The important role of tourism in contributing to mutual understanding and collaboration among nations will also take on greater importance and for this reason, IIPT has launched a 'Travel for Peace Campaign' as a flagship project of its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year.”<sup>4</sup>

From a private sector perspective with respect to sustainability in the tourism industry, President and Chief Executive Officer David Scowsill of the WTTC had this to say:

“As our sector continues to expand, we need to ensure that this growth is sustainable and inclusive. What are the challenges for the long term

sustainability of our industry? It is about looking after the environment, it is about engaging with the communities that host us, and yes it is about holistic business models which combine 'people and profit.' According to our own data, our sector will create 26 million more jobs over the next ten years. Without the right people to fill these jobs we will not be sustainable, not as businesses, not as destinations and not as guardians of our planet. Travel & Tourism is a dynamic industry, we are resilient, adaptable and growing."<sup>5</sup>

International tourism, like many other industries, is faced with an impending dilemma as to whether it can maintain its dynamic growth rate without damaging or destroying the natural and built environments, both of which must be conserved and sustained if future generations are to enjoy the same benefits of travel and tourism as today's do. The travel and tourism industry both has an impact and depends on global sustainability of economies, ecologies, nature, cultures, and the built environment.<sup>6</sup> Over many years, the issues concerning sustainable tourism have been well researched. The academic community has weighed in with valuable research and knowledge to better explain the intricacies of sustainable tourism. No one has said it better than Tracey Berno and Kelly Bricker, in an article titled "Sustainable Tourism Development: The Long Road from Theory to Practice" where they noted that:

"The concepts of sustainable tourism, as difficult as they are to operationalize, do encourage consideration of long-term perspectives, foster notions of equity, encourage the critical evaluation of tourism, promote an appreciation of the importance of inter-sectoral linkages and facilitate cooperation and collaboration between different stakeholders. This represents significant progress towards sustaining tourism as a whole, as well as a progression towards more conscientious forms of tourism that sustain and maintain the attributes (social, cultural, environmental and economic) on which the tourism industry is predicated..."<sup>7</sup>

These statements by some of the top policy and academic leaders in the global tourism community represent a solid international perspective with respect to sustainable tourism development.

## **Background**

"We have not inherited the earth from our ancestors; we have only borrowed it from our children."

Anonymous

Sustainable tourism is arguably the fastest growing segment of contemporary tourism directions. Its best practices development incorporates two complimentary tacks: the "natural environment" (ecotourism, geotourism, adventure tourism, agritourism, responsible tourism and rural tourism) and the "built environment" (history, heritage, culture, arts, and unique structures). There

is an expected overlap in this confluence – both within the basic concept of sustainable tourism and a crossover in the various elements of its development. Such an approach should include a harmonious relationship among local communities, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, academic institutions, and governments at all levels in developmental practices that protect natural, built, and cultural environments compatible with economic growth. The question is how one defines “sustainable tourism”. There are numerous definitions of sustainable tourism depending on which organization or individual seeks to understand the study of sustainable tourism. Following are three different approaches to understanding sustainable tourism.<sup>8</sup>

Over 26 years ago David Edgell first became interested in what would become the study of sustainable tourism when he wrote the book *International Tourism Policy* (Edgell, 1990). He stated in the opening paragraph of that book:

“International tourism in the twenty-first century will be a major vehicle for fulfilling people’s aspirations for a higher quality of life, a part of which will be through facilitating more authentic social relationships between individuals and, it is hoped, laying the ground work for a peaceful society through global touristic contacts. International tourism also has the potential to be one of the most important stimulants for global improvement in the social, cultural, economic, political, and ecological dimensions of future lifestyles. Finally, tourism will be a principle factor for creating greater international understanding and goodwill and a primary ingredient for peace on earth. This supports the author’s view that the highest purpose of tourism policy is to integrate the economic, political, cultural, intellectual, and environmental benefits of tourism cohesively with people, destinations, and countries in order to improve the global quality of life and provide a foundation for peace and prosperity.”<sup>9</sup>

Fifteen years later the UNWTO defined sustainable tourism as follows:

“Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established among these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.”<sup>10</sup>

This universal general definition of sustainable tourism is the one most often cited in publications along with its explanations and guidelines describing its principles and practices.

In the book *Managing Sustainable Tourism: A Legacy for the Future* (Edgell, 2016) Edgell conveniently divided sustainable tourism into four component parts: cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism, and responsible tourism. He

briefly described these specific components of sustainable tourism followed by references to a few of the great worldly travelers that, through their travels and publications, fit the categories described.

### **Sustainable Tourism Defined: Cultural Tourism, Geotourism, Ecotourism and Responsible Tourism**

“I propose to construct a new chart for navigating, on which I shall delineate all the sea and lands of the Ocean in their proper positions under their bearings; and further, I propose to prepare a book, and to put down all as it were in a picture, by latitude from the equator, and western longitude”.

-Christopher Columbus-

This article presents a chart that formulates a composite blueprint for discussing sustainable tourism by including four major elements of sustainable tourism: cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism and responsible tourism.

#### **Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism like other aspects of sustainable tourism is defined differently depending on the organization or the country involved. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defines cultural tourism as: “To create a discerning type of tourism that takes account of other people's culture.” In the United States in 1995 then President Bill Clinton held a special White House Conference on Travel and Tourism in which one outcome was the following definition of cultural tourism: “...travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage, and special character of a place.”

After researching many of the differing definitions of cultural tourism this author settled on the definition used by the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation which refers to “cultural tourism” as “cultural heritage tourism” and defines it as: “...traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.”<sup>11</sup> Basically then, cultural tourism is a subset of “sustainable tourism” that encompasses the lifestyle of the people based on their history, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life.

#### **Geotourism**

Geotourism, like cultural tourism as utilized in this paper, is another subset of “sustainable tourism”. There are also several definitions of geotourism but this paper utilizes the definition developed in 1997 by Jonathan Tourtellot, Senior Editor of National Geographic Traveler, and his wife Sally Bensusen and the one used by National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations(Center). It simply says: “...tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.” From 2004-2010 this definition was the basis for the six criteria the Center used to measure the sustainability of several thousand destinations throughout the world. These six criteria are:

1. Environmental and ecological quality.
2. Social and cultural integrity.
3. Condition of any historic building and archeological sites.
4. Aesthetic appeal.
5. Quality of tourism management.
6. The outlook for the future.

Each destination evaluated based on these six criteria received a “rating” score this was then published in National Geographic Traveler magazine. This approach put considerable pressure on destinations to be concerned about their sustainability.<sup>12</sup>

### **Ecotourism**

The genesis for ecotourism rests with the Mexican architect Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, who coined the word in 1983.

“Ecotourism is tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects found in these areas. Ecotourism implies a scientific, esthetic, or philosophical approach, although the 'ecotourist' is not required to be a professional scientist, artist, or philosopher. The main point is that the person who practices ecotourism has the opportunity of immersing him or herself in nature in a way that most people cannot enjoy in their routine, urban existences. This person will eventually acquire a consciousness and knowledge of the natural environment together with its cultural aspects that will convert him into some body keenly involved in conservation issues.”

There are other definitions of ecotourism and most researchers today generally accept the definition of ecotourism as set forth in 1990 by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), which defines ecotourism as “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” TIES developed a set of principles to help better explain ecotourism as follows:

- Minimize impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental , and social climate

The TIES definition and principles and the explanation of ecotourism by Hector Ceballos-Lascurain provide wide latitude for expressing differing and



expanding views on the practices of ecotourism. The definition relates positively with the earlier cited definitions for cultural tourism and geotourism.<sup>13</sup>

## **Responsible Tourism**

The fourth main component in support of the concept of sustainable tourism as dealt with in this article is a relatively new term referred to as “responsible tourism”. The fundament for the term responsible tourism was educed from an initial “White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa” (May 1996). After numerous meetings, discussions, reviews, suggestions by international tourism specialists and others, a “responsible tourism” definition and policy evolved. Responsible tourism was first described as “...tourism that promotes responsibility to the environment through its sustainable use; responsibility to involve local communities in the tourism industry; responsibility for the safety and security of visitors and responsible government, employees, employers, unions and local communities. ” In 2009, the City of Cape Town's Responsible Tourism Policy provided a broader explanation of responsible tourism:

- Minimizes negative economic, environmental and social impacts
- ? Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities
- ? Improves working conditions and access to the industry
- Involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances
- ? Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, embracing diversity
- ? Provides more enjoyable experiences for tourism through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues
- ? Provides access for physically challenged people, and
- ? Is culturally sensitive, encourages respect between tourists and hosts, and build local pride and confidence<sup>14</sup>

While the above description is not yet universally accepted, it continues to gain adherents as more information becomes available. Certainly the definition and explanations of responsible tourism complement the earlier components of cultural tourism, geotourism, and ecotourism.

## **A Foundation for Sustainable Tourism**

The previously described four components of sustainable tourism: cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism and responsible tourism help build the foundation for protecting the natural and built environment in tourism development. Sustainable tourism is a very positive response in a tourism industry that sometimes ignores any venture or destination that does not have immediate dollar signs to invigorate its development. So often the economic impact of tourism development trumps other concerns such as the impact of a



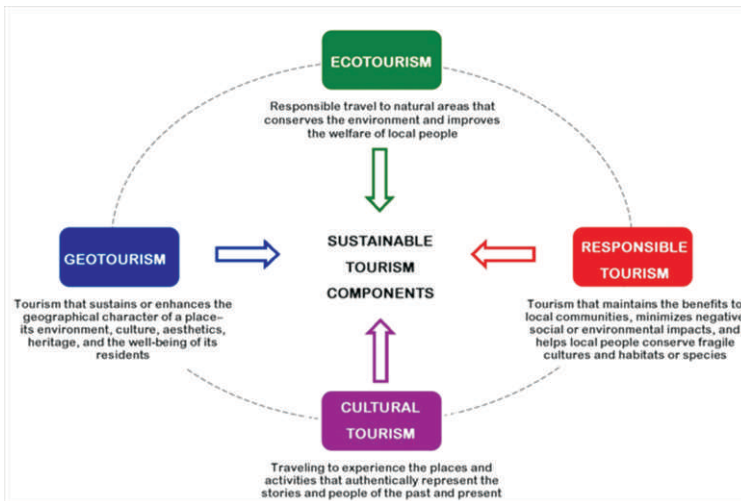
project on the environment or its impact on social cultural concerns for the citizenry of the local community. More and more, communities are beginning to realize that if they manage tourism sustainably, they can reap the economic rewards, conserve the environment (natural and built), and improve local social conditions. This movement can yield peace of mind that sites of historical significance, traditional culture, and native species will be available for present and future generations to enjoy.

Tourist destinations that encompass sustainability in their tourism products add a special dimension to economic growth and quality-of-life benefits for the community. Unspoiled natural ecosystems, well-maintained historic emplacements, protection of cultural heritage sites, lead to satisfied visitors. To make this happen, there must be efforts to inspire businesses and people to accept good practices, whether they choose to enhance the natural scenic beauty of a destination or enrich the built environment. The chart below depicts the four component parts: ecotourism, geotourism, responsible tourism, and cultural tourism collectively resulting in a composite definition of sustainable tourism as discussed earlier in this paper.<sup>15</sup>

### The Worldly Travelers and Sustainable Tourism

“The end is not apparent from the very outset.”

-Herodotus, The Histories, 440 BCE-



The above chart depicts the relationship of cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism and responsible tourism to “sustainable tourism”.

To better understand the historic background of the four components of sustainable tourism described above—"cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism and responsible tourism"- it is helpful to note that certain worldly travelers throughout the history of travel were practicing a few of the attributes of sustainable tourism long before it became a popular topic in the new millennium. More than any other society in the ancient world, it was the Greek travelers who sought special opportunities to visit and appreciate other cultures. One particular Greek, Herodotus, is anointed as the cultural traveler in the ancient world.

### **Hero Dotus: The cultural traveler in the Ancient World**

As noted in the chart above cultural tourism was defined as "Traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present." No one in the history of early travel better illustrates the practice of cultural travel than the great worldly traveler, Herodotus (484-425 BCE). He grew up in Halicarnassus in Caria (now Bodrum, Turkey) a former colony of Greece which had been overtaken by Persia during the Persian-Greek Wars. His first major travel adventure was his visit to Athens, the intellectual and cultural-heritage capital of the city-state in Greece. His fascination with Athens would last a lifetime and was the real stimulus for his interest in international travels. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, he toured Phoenicia (Lebanon), Egypt, Cyrenaica (Libya), Greece, and areas around the Black Sea and in the process recorded the history, culture, customs, traditions, religions, geography, and the practices of the people living in those areas. His favorite country of interest in his travels and explorations with respect to cultural travel related to his curiosity in learning about the history and culture of Egypt. Herodotus was somewhat of a unique worldly traveler, who kept detailed notes of what he heard, saw and the places he visited. He was fascinated with the Great Egyptian Pyramid at Giza and the culture and religion of Egypt. His publication of his book *The Histories* defined him as the first "travel writer" the "Father of History", and certainly the greatest traveler of his era. Up until Herodotus wrote his book *The Histories* (440 BCE) there was very little understanding of the cultures of the countries surrounding ancient Greece.<sup>16</sup>

### **Marco Polo: The Cultural/geotourism Worldly Traveler of the Medieval Period**

The Medieval Period or Middle Ages of Europe covers the fifth century to the fifteenth century, a time period that saw many changes in society and political structures, as well as producing many worldly travelers making new discoveries throughout the world. Within this period were the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery. One of the most interesting worldly travelers of this era, and a person that would change the future of travel, was none other than the famed Marco Polo. As noted earlier, "cultural tourism" was defined as "Traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent stories and people of the past and present" and "geotourism" was described as "tourism that sustains or

enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.” No traveler's travel experiences in the Medieval Period better fits both of these definitions and descriptions of cultural tourism and geotourism than Marco Polo.

Marco Polo (1254-1324 CE) grew up in the progressive city-state of the Republic of Venice, a European maritime power, the epicenter of commerce and a trade leader with the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic world. Marco Polo, known for his travel and adventures in China, began his travels at age 17, accompanying his father and uncle, both of whom were highly experienced merchants and travelers. Their travels from Venice to China, and their return to Venice, would take 24 years. Marco Polo made notes of all the adventures they had, countries visited, and the cultures and environments encountered along the way. His considerable interactions with the Great Emperor of China, Kublai Khan, the ruler of the largest empire in history, and his notations of their conversations, gave the world a rare glimpse of the culture and geography of China. During his difficult travels, he was beset with strange customs and languages (to him), chaotic travel conditions due to the many conflicts and wars taking place along the travel route and the problem of finding succor in the places visited. To pursue the wonders of the world during that particular time period, Marco Polo was willing to travel by foot, horseback, camel, donkey, carriage and boat under some of the most arduous circumstances imaginable. However, he brought back with him copious amounts of information that revealed new inventions, different customs, geographical descriptions and nuances of other cultures in his considerable travels. When he returned home to Venice, after 24 years of continuous travel, he wrote the book *The Travels of Marco Polo* (1300 CE). This book made him an instant celebrity.<sup>17</sup>

### **Charles Darwin: Ecotourism During the Industrial Revolution**

Marco Polo's travel experiences and his book set the stage for a better understanding of some of the fundamentals of sustainable travel. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were many worldly travelers who understood the broad underpinnings of cultural travel and aspects of geotourism and ecotourism in traveling to other lands. As noted earlier, The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” At this time, there were professors of naturalism at universities teaching the principles and practices of travel to natural areas and the need to conserve the environment. One of these naturalists whose travels and writings made him famous was the Englishman Charles Darwin.

About the time Charles Darwin graduated from Christ's College specializing in the natural sciences and geology, the British Navy was looking for a crewman with the title of “naturalist” for a circumnavigation of the globe on His Majesty's Ship called the *Beagle*. Darwin's professor at the College was asked for a

recommendation and he recommended the young Charles Darwin for the voyage that began sailing on December 27, 1831. The trip was planned as a two-year voyage to map the east and west coasts of South America and to note the natural history of the places visited. However, due to storms and other delays, the voyage was extended into a five-year odyssey with many adventures along the way. Darwin had no real experience in sailing or practical knowledge about natural history. However, he had with him books written by the greatest naturalist of South America at the time, Baron Alexander von Humboldt. From such readings and experiences during the voyage, Charles Darwin ended up being an excellent naturalist practicing ecotourism principles before they were popularized in the twentieth century.

One of the places Charles Darwin visited at great length was the Galapagos Islands, a territory of Ecuador over 600 miles from the mainland of Ecuador. He found that each one of the islands was unique, with different but limited plant life, birds, and reptiles – and especially numerous land iguanas. It was Darwin's study of bird life, in particular finches, which eventually led him to his theory of evolution and his famous and controversial book *On the Origin of Species* written many years after his travels. Three years after his voyage on the Beagle, Darwin wrote an account of his travels, based on his abundant notes, titled *The Voyage of the Beagle*. This book made him a very popular author and impacted heavily on his later work: *On the Origin of Species*. The Voyage of the Beagle made Darwin famous at age 29. Later in life he wrote "*The voyage on the Beagle has been by far the most important event of my life and has determined my whole career...*"<sup>18</sup>

A review of Charles Darwin's travels, research, and writings would strongly suggest that he might be called the father of "ecotourism", at least within the context of Mexican architect Hector Ceballos-Lascurain's definition of ecotourism. Charles Darwin certainly traveled to "...relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural aspects found in these areas. Ecotourism implies a scientific, esthetic, or philosophical approach..." In addition, the statement that an ecotourist "...will eventually acquire a consciousness and knowledge of the natural environment together with its cultural aspects that will convert him into somebody keenly involved in conservation issues ..." fits Charles Darwin's life, travels, and career as a naturalist.<sup>19</sup>

### **Charles Lindbergh: Responsible Tourism in the Modern Era**

The last of the four components of sustainable described and discussed earlier is "responsible tourism", defined as "Tourism that maintains the benefits to local communities, minimizes negative social or environmental impacts, and helps local people conserve fragile cultures and habitats or species." As a special worldly traveler, who later in his life understood and practiced "responsible tourism", was the world famous aviator Charles Lindbergh. His story is an

important one in terms of promoting “responsible tourism” before there was such a term.

Charles Augustus Lindberg II, born February 4 1902 in Detroit, Michigan, is known the world over as the first aviator to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. By the time Lindbergh was ready to attempt a solo flight across the ocean in 1927, six well-known pilots had already died in similar attempts. However, the news about other pilots losing their lives attempting to fly across the ocean did not diminish Lindbergh's desire to do so. His solo flight across the ocean in an untried aircraft took thirty-three hours and thirty minutes with many close mishaps in bad weather and no radio communications or other devices to guide him. He became an instantaneous world hero who made many celebrity trips throughout the world. At the time, Charles Lindbergh became a strong advocate for bigger and faster aircraft that could handle an increased amount of passengers.

Then almost overnight, during the early 1960's, Charles Lindbergh's whole attitude towards advances that were being made in aviation changed. He began to regret the impact of aviation on the environment. He noted that “The primitive was at the mercy of the civilized in our twentieth-century times...and nothing had made it more so than the airplane I had helped develop. I had helped to change [negatively] the environment of our lives.”<sup>20</sup> This troubled him a great deal. Ironically, it caused him, the person who all his life had supported technological improvements in civilian aircraft, to oppose the supersonic passenger jets being developed by the airlines. He went on to say, “I realized that if I had to choose, I would rather have birds than airplanes.” Much of his travels from then on were related to protecting nature and environments and a concern for the welfare of local people in primitive surroundings. Among other lifetime concerns, Lindbergh's *Autobiography of Values* (published in 1977 after his death) gives certain references to his interest as a staunch environmentalist and a strong advocate of many of the principles of “responsible tourism”.

In 1962 Lindbergh became connected with the World Wildlife Fund and its parent organization the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Increasingly, he found that the views of the IUCN in terms of nature and the environment matched his own. He became deeply involved in most issues on the environment and in trying to save animals such as the great blue whales and other species. Because Lindbergh was so well known the world over, he used his popularity to proselytize for the causes that he supported to heads of governments in many different countries. He supported the Nature Conservancy, and other conservation groups and assisted in conservation plans for the U.S. National Park Service. In light of Lindbergh's contributions in promoting the benefits of positive social and environmental impacts on local people and in the conservation of fragile cultures and species, he was certainly an excellent representative of “responsible travel”.

## **Finding a Way Forward for International Sustainable Tourism Development**

"I do not tell half of what I saw because no one would have believed me."

*-The Travels of Marco Polo, 1300 CE-*

The potential that tourism holds for positive economic, environmental and social benefits for tomorrow will depend on the decisions being made today.

"The key issue is understanding how to develop, market, and manage tourism in a sustainable tourism manner without compromising the ability of future generations to enjoy the benefits of tourism. If current leadership in the tourism industry can communicate sound policies that will encourage stakeholders in the industry and communities where destinations are located to accept positive sustainable tourism practices, then we can expect to see benefits for all concerned parties. This may require policy directives, and in certain cases moral suasion, to push governments, the private sector, and tourism organizations toward practices and behavior that will protect the natural and built environments."<sup>21</sup>

The natural and built environments in the twenty-first century are being bombarded with many new impacts that have not yet been adequately addressed. Two such controversial issues that demand new research efforts include the repercussions on sustainable tourism development of climate change and global warming. While the scientific community and international leaders may disagree on the causes and solutions with respect to climate change, there is no question that climate change has already affected our environment. Climate change has powerful effects on the tourism industry. Weather conditions and climate changes have a direct impact on the traveling public. If that impact takes place on the natural environment, it may cause erosion of the coasts, damage to coral reefs, and the melting of ice and snow found at high altitudes. The tourism industry is a major culprit in terms of contributing to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions, particularly those derived from the transport and accommodation of tourists, and increased facilities that add pollutants at many destinations.

While the discussion in this paper about the four components of sustainable tourism: cultural tourism, geotourism, ecotourism, and responsible tourism provide limited guidelines and examples of sustainable tourism development, it is imperative that new research be forthcoming to set a foundation for the critical evaluation for sustainable tourism development. The challenge will be to operationalize future management plans at the local level to sustain and maintain the attributes of social, cultural, environmental and economic on which sustainable tourism is predicated. Managing sustainable tourism development depends on forward-looking policies and principles, good strategic planning, innovative marketing concepts, and sound management philosophies that include building a harmonious relationship among communities, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations and governments regarding developmental practices that protect the natural and built

environments while being compatible with economic growth. Quality-based leadership, a synergistic approach of addressing the issues, a strong international sustainable tourism policy, dynamic strategic planning, and good management will be the hallmarks crucial to economic prosperity, sustainability and quality-of-life opportunities for communities and global destinations in the future.

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