

Gerald Showalter (Ball State University, USA) spoke about the growing trend among cruiseship operators to stop only at private islands, in order to avoid paying port fees and as to avoid the crime and harassment that their clients may face in many ports. He pointed out that this practice is controversial, as it results in minimal interaction between tourists and residents, reduces economic benefits of tourism to residents, and could potentially create environmental problems in visited islands. Finally, Pauline Sheldon (University of Hawaii, USA) introduced a relatively new tourism bulletin board called TRINET (Tourism Research Information Network) and how it facilitates research and dissemination of information among its subscribers.

Overall the conference was a success, with more than 350 educators participating in over 30 academic and research sessions. In addition, the conference featured the first ever "Educational Choices Fair" where over 500 high school and community college travel and tourism students participated in a trade show and educational program.

For copies of conference proceedings or information about future conferences, contact the Society of Travel and Tourism Educators, Joann M. Bruss, 19364 Woodcrest, Harper Woods MI, 48225, USA. □ □

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Tourism Planning and Development in Asia

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The Asian Productivity Organization (APO), headquartered in Japan, sponsored a seminar on tourism planning and development in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 23 August to 3 September 1993. The local host was the National Productivity Center of Indonesia. Nineteen Asian-Pacific countries were represented by government tourism ministry officials and national tourism organization executives. They included Pakistan to the west, the Maldives to the south, Mongolia to the north, the five ASEAN countries, and Fiji, Western Samoa, and the Cook Islands from the east. China and Vietnam, which are not members of the APO, and Singapore were the only notable absentees from the Asian region. The objective of the seminar was to "give participants an insight into the factors that have to be considered in the planning and development of the tourism industry to ensure that it is competitive, effectively contributing to national socioeconomic goals, and adaptative to changing travelers demands." Its format was the presentation of country papers, followed by a series of papers on the Indonesian experience in tourism planning and development, and field visits to theme parks located close to Jakarta.

The 19 national papers constitute a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of information on the state of tourism planning and tourism development in Asia. Each paper provided an overview of the tourism industry of the country and then focused on two or three specific issues confronting tourism planners. Thus, the challenge for Mongolia is to incorporate tourism planning

into national priorities as the country experiences the at-times painful transition from a rigid, centrally-planned economy to one where free market forces predominate. With only 25,000 overseas visitors per year, its tourism industry is embryonic. For India, the sheer size of the country and the devolution of powers to the state governments combine to make tourism planning on a coordinated national scale beyond realistic attainment. It is of interest to note that despite its size as the world's second most populous country with a greater diversity of attractions and facilities than most, it plays host to less than 2 million overseas visitors per year. Its tourism industry is less developed than the ASEAN countries. For Thailand, the major issue identified by its two representatives was the decline in the destination experienced in the past 2 years, with causative factors ranging from the uncontrolled congestion of urban Bangkok to environmental degradation of Pattaya and Phuket because of over-development, the negative image of its sex tourism, and increasingly exploitative behavior towards tourists by residents. For Hong Kong, the uncertainties created by the 1997 integration of the British colony into China as a Special Administrative Region have made medium and long-term planning for tourism development particularly difficult.

The host country, Indonesia, presented a series of papers examining different aspects of its tourism planning and development. Nusa Dua in Bali was advocated as a model for enclave development where a significant degree of control could be achieved by the introduction of conditions and standards for foreign investment. Details were provided of 11 other sites around Indonesia that have been identified for similar development and for which initial planning has commenced. Other papers covered socioeconomic impacts of tourism in Indonesia; environmental impacts; the development of theme parks and their successes and failures; manpower planning and training requirements; and assessments of sectors such as travel agencies and tour companies, hotels, and airline linkages to tourism.

Of particular interest was an outline of the planning processes that are being utilized for Indonesia's 10-year tourism development plan. Butler's (1980) tourism destination lifecycle model has been adopted as a major tool of analysis, with each of Indonesia's 27 provinces being positioned along the "S" curve. While nearing finality, the Plan is not yet available for public release, but its multidimensional, integrative approach, which embraces social, economic, political, psychological, anthropological, and technological factors, coupled with its innovative use of Butler's destination life cycle model for tourism, suggest it could be a document of considerable academic interest.

A major conclusion arising from group discussions at the seminar was a growing concern with national tourism development plans prepared by international consultants under the auspices of organizations such as UNDP, WTO and EC. They were seen as being increasingly stereotyped and remiss in providing the linkage between strategy and policy, on the one hand, and implementation, on the other. They were criticized for containing, too often, glib and grandiose policy statements such as tourism should result in optimal economic benefit to the country's economy; tourism development should enhance conservation of the country's natural environment and its historical, social, and cultural heritages, avoiding any harmful effects; an upscaling of the tourism accommodation is required; and use your international tourism to create a positive image and greater understanding of the country among its neighbors in the region. While there was nothing intrinsically "wrong" with such statements, the lack of accompanying proposals for practical application was a source of considerable irritation.

Many country representatives complained that national tourism plans were often long on platitudes and short on practicalities. The amount of time and money invested in drawing up the plan produced a poor rate of return.

Outside consultants were criticized for often being insensitive to or ignorant of sociocultural and political constraints. Because of such problems, for example, Indonesia had requested UNDP to withdraw its consultants after two years and had appointed its own national team in 1992 to revise and complete its tourism development plan. Sri Lanka had established a Working Group which had spent the last two years trying to identify and apply practical steps to implement its Tourism Master Plan 1992-2001. Other countries reported similar experiences where their tourism master plans had left them with more headaches than solutions. An exception was Western Samoa, which considered that its tourism development plan prepared by the Tourism Council of the South Pacific, was in fact strong on specific, practical, attainable objectives.

The seminar could be judged a success in terms of the exchange of information about tourism planning processes and development issues in Asia, and in creating an awareness among the participating countries of shared problems and common experiences in their attempts to manage their tourism industries. For details about this conference, contact Asian Productivity Organization, 4-14 Akasaka 8-Chome, Minato-Ku, Tokyo, 107 Japan. □ □

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