



South Africa: The need for a legal and sustainable Tourism Policy

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Abstract

Tourism has increasingly become a key source of income for both developing and developed economies. One of the greatest challenges in developing a tourism economy is to motivate the tourist to choose an identified destination of interest and then, ideally, to improve the re-visit rate and/or leverage other sites for the tourist to visit the region. Visitors seem to have focused on the destination as a day trip or short stay format. The attractions included the main geographical feature of the destination. However, the most appealing aspect seemed to be the fuller experience which that trip offered. The research presented suggest that strategies for enhancing visit/re-visit behavior must firstly incorporate the wider experience whilst then stimulating the fuller range of human senses. Thus, countries must have all-inclusive, clear and effective public policies developed which are prescribed and which can also inform all their activities in relation to the sustainable development of tourism.

Keywords: Destination, freedom of expression, policy, sustainable performance and tourism market.

Introduction

Tourism has become an important economic activity to most economies as evidenced in 2002 where international arrivals to destinations for the first time in history reached the 700 million mark (WTO, 2003). The topological diversity of South Africa offers unique experiences for tourists that are not generally available at other tourist destinations, thus, South Africa is well placed to generate economic benefit from this diversity. However, maturing tourism growth rates may well cause many destinations to increasingly covet the success of countries like Australia in securing a share of this slowing market (Ritchie & Crouch, 1993).

Psychological, economic, demographic, media factors along with previous experiences have been shown to contribute to the forming of a conceptual framework about the destination (Ankomah, Crompton & Baker, 1996; Court & Lupton, 1997; Crompton & Ankomah 1997; Botha, Crompton, and S-S Kim (1999). Furthermore, once a destination is visited, tourists have first-



hand experiences upon which they can base their decisions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction about that experience and whether they would choose to return to that particular destination.

Satisfaction with a destination visit or holiday is a post-consumption process (Fornell, 1992), where the tourist's assessment takes place after the experience (Peterson & Wilson, 1992), therefore, satisfaction measurement surveys provide feedback from an actual experience-feedback that can assist providers improve their service (Danaher & Haddrell, 1996). Feedback received can also form the basis for conducting a strategic gap analysis where the service provider can measure their perceived performance (Krishnan & Gronhaug, 1979) not only against the service receiver's perceptions, but also compare the attributes of one destination with another (Kotler, 1994; Peters; 1994). Evidence suggests that when tourists have a more enjoyable experience than expected they are more likely than others to plan a return in the future. The relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty has been well demonstrated (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993).

If service and facilities are no longer differentiators to the travelling public, then, how can destinations differentiate their products? Firstly, destinations can be differentiated on the basis of the quality of their physical environment (Hassan, 2000), by better marketing strategies (Buhalis, 2000) and through effective branding. However, one needs to understand the nature of destinations. Destinations can be well –defined geographical or political locations possessing unique character or just an amalgam of tourism products and services, which are consumed under a brand name (Buhalis, 2000). Gartner (1989) identified several attributes of a destination, including historic sites, cultural sites, nightlife, liquor, outdoor life, natural environment and receptiveness among others, as contributing to the attractiveness of tourism destination.

It is only recently that destinations have been described as perceptual concepts interpreted subjectively by different consumers, interpretations that depend on cultural background, purpose of visit, educational level and experience (Buhalis, 2000). Culture, political dimension, history and custom of a destination can provide a rich experience for tourists (Prentice, 1992). Formica (2001) argues that further study on destination attraction is necessary to better understand the elements that encourage people to travel and that attractiveness can be measured by performing an inventory of existing tourist resources and facilities at the destination. If this view holds, then it can be concluded that the more resources a destination has to offer the more attractive it is. The attractive power of a destination depends also on how these resources are valued and perceived by tourists. This is a challenge in transforming tourism into a sustainable economic, carefully arranged and strategic activity for South Africa. Therefore, the government, private and local host community initiatives, have to be included.

The concept of destination

Destinations are places towards which people travel and where they choose to stay for a while in order to experience certain features or characteristics –a perceived attraction of some sort. The Oxford dictionary defines a destination as “the place to which someone or something is going or being sent.” A destination refers to an area, country, region or city that offers a business and/or leisure attraction. Destinations are formed up by individually produced tourism amenities and services (accommodation, transportation, catering, entertainment, etc.) and a wide range of public goods (such as landscape, scenery, sea, lakes, socio-cultural surroundings, culture, people, general ambience or atmosphere, etc.) All these elements are branded together under the name of the destination. In fact, destinations exploit local public goods: - specific local resources while



private entities provide the necessary complementary goods and services which are required to assist travelers. This implies that in most countries public official tourism boards are responsible to promote the destination area, becoming a destination manager. One of their main roles is “to develop appropriate offerings and brand destinations for the right target markets”. Gretzel claims that sites should be marketing instruments as well as provide information to potential travelers. Due to these facts each destination’s managers should also perform market research to uncover travel motivations to that area (Gretzel, 2006). Addressing both objectives (brand destination image and market segmentation research) is not an easy task because there are endless variations between the two main classifications of travel activities: namely business and leisure trips. Additionally, there is not a unique pattern relating to modern travelers, this is because they combine pleasure with business in order to achieve time and cost advantages. Furthermore, different visitors use destinations for different purposes and even the same travelers may have different expectations at different moments of time and at the same destination.

Nevertheless, according to their attractiveness or potential use of public local resources, most destinations can be classified in one or several categories, which include *inter alia*, Urban, Beach/Sea; Alpine/Mountain; Natural/Adventure/Eco- Touristic: Rural; Wellness; Religious; Third World; Exotic and Exclusive; Gastronomic; Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Expositions, Sports, Fiesta/night life, Thematic Parks or Shopping. Following a different perspective, it is also argued that destinations can be classified on a continuum between a status and a commodity area (Fornell, 1996). Status areas create irreplaceable experiences and expectations, increasing the quality of travelers in terms of their capacity and willingness to pay for the tourist experience. Meanwhile, commodity areas are easily substitutable and thus, only attract very sensitive to price travelers. As in any other mature industry, tourism destination should differentiate their products from other competing destinations in order to improve their image, customer loyalty and economic benefits. If the achievement of differentiation is not possible via tangible public local resources, then a destination’s image should be centered on intangible and emotional aspects. In fact, despite destinations have been traditionally regarded as well-defined geographical areas, it is increasingly being recognized that a destination can also be based on an intangible perceptual concept. Destinations are interpreted subjectively by consumers, depending on their travel itinerary, their cultural background, the purpose of their visit, educational level and personal or other people’s experiences. Therefore, a good knowledge and approximation to the potential consumers is essential.

Tourism consumers may be categorized under the following classes: families with children, young couples (romantic) or elderly, disabled people, executives or groups (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). There may be a relationship between the classification of target travelers and the destination typology, so a given destination attracts a given target market due to its local public resources or to the offer of complementary private sector industries.

Rationalisation of Acts

Immediately after the advent of constitutional democracy in South Africa in 1994, the legislation enacted prior to that year remained in force. However, many pre-1994 provisions do not comply with the country’s new Constitution. This discrepancy is exacerbated by the fact that some older provisions were enacted to promote and sustain the policy of apartheid. Statutory provisions usually become redundant as time passes (Law Commission for England and Wales *Background Notes on Statute Law Repeals* accessed on 20 February 2016 [http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/docs/background notes](http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/docs/background%20notes)). Generally, the redundancy of legislation is not signaled by a single occurrence; rather legislation is simply overtaken by social



and economic changes. A statutory provision may be identified for repeal because the grounds for which it was passed have lapsed or is presently remedied by another measure or provision. The statutory law revision primarily targets statutory provisions that are obviously at odds with the Constitution, particularly section 9.

A law or a provision in a law which appears on the face of it to be neutral and non-discriminatory, but which has or could have discriminatory effect or consequences, has been left to the judicial process. When the interim Constitution came into force in 1994 and the final Constitution in 1997, the former homelands were accepted as part of one united democratic South Africa. In the interest of legal certainty, given the different applicable laws in the homelands and other parts of South Africa, the final Constitution provided that any law in force when the new Constitution took effect remained in force as it was consistent with the Constitution and had not been repealed or amended (*Khohliso v S and Another* 2014 ZACC 33).

It is therefore important that complete synergy exist between a country's tourism strategy and that of all applicable laws. Law should not only offer complete "Peace of mind" to the tourist but also enhance and support the flow of tourist to the country.

Tourism: A product in information markets and the role played by the web

Tourism, the result of destinations' marketing offers, is an unusual product, in the sense that it exists only as information at the point of sale and cannot be sampled before the purchase decision is made. As a result of its intangible and informative content, the potential visitors' decision to purchase the destination, that is, to visit it, is based on the information made available" and on the expectations that may arise. Tourism is an information-based business. The touristic product is an intangible "confidence good, and an a priori comprehensive assessment of its qualities is impossible" (Ankomah, Crompton & Baker, 1996) or at least it is very difficult. This implies, that in addition to a correct definition of the destination and market segmentation, clear information has to be provided. The image of a destination is based in common beliefs and past experiences with the destination or with the companies involved in the region (i.e., airlines, hotels, tour operators); descriptions by friends and relatives; word of mouth and electronic peer groups; press reports, advertising and marketing campaigns; information on the World Wide Web (www) and website image. These expectations may be based on true or imaginary representations of the destination but have to be delivered in the adequate and legally defensible manner.

The right image for destinations must be developed through an adequate provision of ex-ante information. It will also determine the ability of a destination to satisfy visitors, as far as they may have developed realistic expectations. In fact, as in any other service provided, consumer satisfaction with the tourist product depends on the assessment of the perceived overall experience of the destination versus the anticipated expectations and perceptions. As it is pointed out by Rita: "from a managerial perspective, the World Wide Web is a powerful tool for assisting Destination Management Organizations to perform their three major functions: information provision; marketing and promotion activities; and market research" (Buharis, 2000). For consumers, the web has allowed for an improvement of information –it has reduced costs and achieved a solution to some market imperfections based on uncertainty- though it has also led to over information. Within the context of tourism, trip planners searching for information seek to reduce the perceived risk embedded in travel product and service purchase. The content of tourism destination Websites and its interactivity with the potential tourist is particularly important because "they directly influence the perceived image of the destination and create a virtual experience for the consumer" (Buharis, 2000). This experience is enhanced when other tourists'



experiences are provided in the web site. Interactivity between the destination website and the tourist is essential because “the more information seekers perceive to be involved with a tourism destination Website, the more likely they are to form a favorable first impression toward the Web page and toward the destination” (Court & Lupton, 1997).

This implies that destination websites should provide a clear and sound brand image of destination; address the effective target market and produce accurate information. This way, destination web sites reduce the transaction costs encountered by travelers when selecting their destination. This reduction in transaction in transaction costs creates value for consumers. “In electronic information networks like the Internet, value creation is grounded on either increased effectiveness in the supply chain or new customer values in the products and services delivered”. “Value – added services give access to various forms of information about the tourism products offered on a website and may be related to content (e.g., access to the site, searchable data bases...), and to context (e.g., multimedia product presentation)”. The information of the product core of a destination comprises at least six components, namely: Attractions (natural, manmade, artificial, purpose built, heritage, special events); Accessibility (entire transportation system comprising of routes, terminals and vehicles); Amenities (accommodation and restaurant and catering facilities, retailing, and car renting and other tourist services); Available packages (pre-arranged packages by intermediaries and principals); Activities (all activities available at the destination and what consumers will do during their visit); Ancillary services (services used by tourists such as banks, telecommunications, post, newsagents, hospitals, etc.).

A well-designed web site with broad yet accurate access to information and complementary touristic services may be perceived as convenient for the customers because they get access to all they need at one and only one Web site, thus reducing their search costs (initial search, primacy to choose among different websites and desire to navigate). As a result, service aggregation in a website is a value-added service to be offered on tourism destination websites. Service integration implies the access to a bundle of information and services complementary to the core product. Web information should therefore focus on those activities that form part of the Six A’s framework, (Court & Lupton, 1997) on the provision of a clear image of the destination, in its own definition as a different experiential status or commodity area on its target market and on the interactive audiovisual mechanisms to attract potential tourists.

According to the information content of websites, sites move through different stages of development: from inceptions (promotion); through consolidation (provision) to maturity (processing). “This evolution occurs as new and additional layers of complexity and functionality are added to the site” (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). For destination websites, this addition of layers is synonymous with the destination moving from a static Internet presence through increasing levels of interactivity to a dynamic site incorporating value chain integration and innovative applications that add value to travelers through information management and rich functionality and access to technologically advanced on-line booking services and interactivity. An advertisement which makes derogatory statements about an individual or company may give rise to a defamation claim. Therefore it is important to understand the limits of freedom of expression in a marketing context. Marketers need to take particular care that their marketing activities do not fall foul of the laws of defamation.

The extended model of Internet Commerce Adoption (eMICA); adapted from Burgess and Cooper (2000) proposes three stages, each one with its own layers. The stages evolve from the promotion of the organization to the commercialization of its products. For tourism destination websites the three stages adapted from commercial websites are according to figure 1 below:



Figure 1: The extended model of Internet Commerce Adoption (eMica) (adapted from Burgess and Cooper, 2000).

STAGE 1	
Basic information is provided	Basic tourist product catalogues
Low interactivity	Hyperlinks to further information and online enquiry form are a requisite
STAGE 2	
Medium interactivity	Higher-level product catalogues
Customer Support (e.g. FAQs, sitemaps)	Industry –specific value added features are presented
STAGE 3	
High interactivity	Chat rooms, discussion forum
Multimedia	Newsletters and updates

The exercise of freedom of expression under section 16 of the Bill of Rights is also subject to the rights of others (Constitution, 1996). These rights include the right of privacy, any interference with that right must not be necessary in a democratic society. In relation to material which might infringe the privacy of individual, for example a TV campaign featuring images of people going about their everyday business of pictures containing of celebrities without their consent may infringe their privacy and other rights.

There must be a balance between the right to dignity, including reputation, and the right to freedom of expression. Both rights are now given special protection in the Bill of Rights, and the question is whether a class of people (members of Government) have to lose the right to the protection of their dignity and reputation in the interest of public information and debate.

Complexity of the tourism market

The economic analysis, planning and management of the touristic activity requires more than one scenario to be constructed in order to face the growing uncertainty of a global economy and effectively regain the competitive edge of the tourism industry in the world market. It requires us to identify and discover which sector, region or market segment is going to face and reverse the crisis, as is demanded by the joint forces of both the government and society. The perspective for touristic markets is not totally defined in the short term, considering long term scenarios, the complexity of the tourism market will demand more and new attention to new efforts, comprehension and benefits from the tourism sector. The frameworks and the economic development strategies based on sustainable development criteria are a clearer option, defined and are socially viable for certain realities that have similar conditions for its implementation and consolidation.

Media has a pervasive power for good or bad. One of the financial resources of each country is the tourism industry. Many countries in Africa are currently investing in tourism with the aim of increasing annual tourist flows but the majority of them are negatively symbolised at source markets as countries with negative media presentations, even though the country possesses many beautiful features.



The country is gifted with an exclusive amalgamation of natural and cultural heritages, impressive scenery, suitable climate, rich flora and fauna and acknowledged archaeological sites. Previous research has indicated that in South Africa, tourism in Africa as such, is perceived as being riskier than any comparable region on earth except the Middle East. It further indicates that negative country images might result in negatively biased destination perceptions and could negatively impact on their competitiveness and thus limit growth and sustainability.

When we assess role of the press in promoting the potential of the country in South Africa it is still poor. Freedom of the press is a method of achieving a more adaptable and hence a more stable society, of maintaining the precarious balance between cleavage and necessary consensus (Baker,1978). Tourism becomes a large global industry expanding rapidly not only in developed but also in developing countries. Tourism impacts upon the sustainability of national and international economies and the environmental and socio-cultural resource base (UN.org, 2008).

It is not without significance that section 16 of the South African Constitution, after stating that 'everyone has the right to freedom of expression', includes 'freedom of the press and other media' under the general rubric of freedom of expression, and places these facets of the right on an equal footing with the 'freedom to impart information and ideas, freedom of artistic creativity, academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.' The press should not be placed in a privilege or superior position to that of the individual on the basis that the press constitutes an essential bastion of free expression in a democracy (Section 16 of the Constitution of South Africa).

However, complaints have been coming from tourist destination countries on supportive measures to develop tourism potential areas. Developing the tourism sector means not only getting foreign currency only, but also building the image of the country. So protecting external media influences is vital and this can be done through the integration of the media with the tourism sector.

Molina and Sergio (1999) agree that there is no doubt that tourism around the world is facing increasing uncertain times; the dynamic changes in tourists' preferences, the greater degree of information and alternatives of travelling plans were some of the diagnosed symptoms that claimed the planners and managers of tourism activities' attention; specialization and shrinkage of the touristic market demanded promotion winning formulas, planes offering guarantees effectiveness. Forced by these circumstances, government officials, tourist organisations as well as touristic entrepreneurs, became busy looking for answers which should be strategic actions to comply with these imposed demands.

Characteristics and responsibilities

Quality tourism can be described as tourism which is developed in an integrated area where ecosystems, cultural expressions, services and tourism entrepreneurs, positive experiences among tourists and local residents, results in shared prosperity, higher levels of satisfaction of visitors and more income for those involved in tourism activities. In a significant way of hosting communities to take better advantage of tourism in their ongoing fight against poverty, generating conditions to develop permanent assessment, rational use and conservation awareness of existing resources. Tourism development involves changes of attitude, responsibility and awareness, new lifestyles, legal protection and human advancement.



Aiming to reach sustainability means an integrated holistic effort in which all participants are present: hosts, government, business entrepreneurs, natural and cultural resources and also in a related equal importance measure in which all human groups think, decide, compromise, act and assume related responsibilities.

In the context of this conceptual framework, considering theoretical principles is important as is, trying to make an effective and operative message toward reachable objectives; sustainable tourist development is identified as a quality change process resulting from the political will and the essential participation of the local people, it takes the institutional and legal framework as well as the planning and management tools, to a tourism development level, based upon a balance between the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, and the economic viability of tourism and also social development equity. Tourism can contribute to its own resilience and to the global economic recovery by pursuing a climate neutral strategy, as well as innovation in the use of cleaner energy and more efficient resource usage. Combining these strategies and approaches contributes to the reduction of poverty, and hopefully leads to social and economic development within the carrying capacities of ecosystems. However, a strong leadership and a shared purpose are needed to guide the identification and realization of these opportunities.

Sustainable performance for tourism policy development

The development of sustainable tourism policies could be a useful way of encouraging new forms of business, increasing employment and promoting the conservation of landscapes. Sustainable tourism and ecotourism are widely recognized as means of enhancing local development as well protecting natural environment and traditional and cultural heritage in international resolutions (European Commission, 2007).

An attempt to measure sustainability has to face some conceptual challenges:

The concept of sustainability is not univocally defined. The principle of sustainable development was first coined in the *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common future* (WCED), widely known as the *Brundtland Report*. "Sustainable development" is defined in the *Brundtland Report* as: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Another definition that can be given to sustainable development is that which allows one or an organisation to perform activities that can safely be performed indefinitely. (Fitzmaurice, 2010). This supposes that the activities will be performed in the environment, and that it will be possible to continue to perform these activities in the environment indefinitely. Sustainable development should in other words, be understood in two contexts, the first having to do with people's needs and the second dealing with the technology and social organisation which will ensure the environment's ability to meet the needs of present and future generations (Bouillon, 2003). The findings of the *Brundtland Report* (1987) include the recommendation that the environment should be re-examined in the context of developmental issues.

Sustainability is not a universal concept and it may be influenced by local environmental, social and economic contexts which may require more attention to be paid to specifically the challenge of a mid-long term process of local levels of development and quality life. What local government is, requires that one must consider its kinetic, formative environment as described in the sciences of geography, political science and public administration, as well as its static, legal structures. These can be seen as the corner posts of local government. (Meyer, 1978). Du Plessis defines a



government as a group of institutions or people that governs a state. (Du Plessis, 2009). This means that the government dictates the general direction of public affairs (Du Plessis, 2010). Local government then is the sphere that is closest to the people. Its closeness to the people gives rise to the need to apply the principle of subsidiarity to it. De Visser defines subsidiarity as a general principle that says that "governance should take place as close as possible to the citizens" (De Visser, 2008). This thought translates into the protection of lower levels of government against undue interference by national or provincial government. It also translates into a preference for placing functions and powers at the lowest possible levels of government" (De Visser, 2008). Therefore, when applying the principle of subsidiarity, the implementation of building regulations should be delegated to municipalities in order that this function could be fulfilled by the sphere of the state that is close to the people and to where development takes place.

Local government in South Africa has been reformed in many respects. A total number of 283 municipalities make up the local government sphere (Constitution, 1996). The constitutional mandate of local government is to focus on "developmental local government", (Du Plessis, 2010) which is described in the *White Paper on Local Government*, 1998 as being committed to "work with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives" (White paper on Local Government, 1998).

The characteristics and functions of local government emphasises the idea that local government can play an important role in relation to the environment as one of the pillars of sustainable development and therefore in sustainable tourism development. Du Plessis defines local environmental governance as a specific form of governance as:

"The management process executed by local government and communities to holistically regulate human activities and the effects of these activities in their own and the total environment (including all environmental media, and biological, chemical, aesthetic, cultural and socio-economic processes and conditions) at local levels; by means of formal and informal institutions, processes and mechanisms embedded in and mandated by law, so as to promote the present and future interest human beings hold in the environment. This management process necessitates a collection of legislative, executive and administrative functions, instruments and ancillary processes that could be used by local government, the private sector and citizens to pursue sustainable behaviour within the community as far as products, services, processes, tools and livelihoods are concerned, both in a substantive and procedural sense." (Du Plessis, 2009).

The above-mentioned definition of local environmental governance highlights the principle of sustainable development, as it states that present and future processes must be promoted and that local authorities should govern people and processes in the environment in a sustainable manner. Local government therefore has a role in environmental governance in South Africa, which can be seen in the Constitution (Constitution, 1996). We need to find new and innovative methods for measuring local levels of development and quality of life, overcoming the evaluation of mere economic indicators and to evaluate progressive evolution in policies by adopting instruments that enable decision makers to investigate the effects of the strategy adopted for local development and to compare the situation before and after its implementation.



The legislative authority of the municipality is vested in the council of the municipality and the municipality may exercise its legislative authority within its boundaries (Section 11(1) and (2) of the Systems Act). The municipality exercises its legislative authority by passing by-laws and taking decisions in promoting *inter alia* a safe and healthy environment (Section 11(3)(m) of the Systems Act). The Constitution and the Systems Act give municipalities the power to draft and make by-laws that relates to a safe and healthy environment (Section 11(3)e). Nothing precludes a municipality from drafting a by-law on compulsory local standards towards "green building" in the area. In fact, a by-law would be the only legal instrument at the disposal of a municipality to *enforce* requirements (compulsory requirements) in relation to energy efficiency.

The crucial role of a tourism policy in enhancing tourism activity within South Africa

Sustainable practices in tourism throughout the country, needs to be promoted to foster growth and innovation in the tourism industries and practices. The importance of the successful drafting of tourism policies is a crucial step in the effective implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives. The environmental and socio-cultural spheres were exacerbated by the region's high level of vulnerability, often due to the risk of natural disasters, limited natural and human resources and a high level of trade dependency, which created additional pressures to maintain the sustainability element in the region's tourism practices.

One of the principal objectives of establishing a tourism policy is to guarantee and safeguard the effective standardization of processes and practices within the tourism industry in which the policy is implemented. This standardization fosters uniformity and consensus regarding practices which can result in increased sustainability and overall improvement in the quality of the tourism product. Furthermore, an appropriate use of environmental and human resources should take place as a result of the implementation of a tourism policy.

The objectives of sustainable development can be divided in three categories: the economy, the (social) community, and the environment. Each of these categories relates to certain objectives, and in the process of attempting to achieve these objectives they almost inevitably have a negative influence on one another. Sustainability demands that a balance be struck between social and economic development and the environment (Bouillon, 2003). In the context of the tourism environment sustainability would thus typically demand a balance between social and economic development (development among people and economic growth which necessitates *inter alia* the construction of housing and infrastructure) and the protection of the natural resource base (comprising of *inter alia* water and air) that is by default necessary to be able to construct and develop in the tourism environment.

One of the objectives of sustainable development is to improve the standard of living in a sustained economic development fashion (Section 2.9 *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* 1992). Sustainable development is ostensibly concerned with the environment and therefore when implemented, it finds its application in local legislation designed to ensure that the sustainability objective is met. Of particular reference here, is the notion of studies in public health, which are relevant to a consideration of sustainable development due to the fact that one of the objectives of sustainable development is the promotion of public health for all in society irrespective of socio-economic status. Sustainable development is particularly



important in the African context if one considers, for example the fact that Africa has economic uncertainty, intractable conflict, rising prices for food and oil and the effects of climate change on agricultural land which are all problems that need to be addressed urgently. (UN Non-Governmental Liaison service 2008 <http://www.un-ngls.org/article.phpid>).

High-level sustained, inclusive and clean economic growth must be promoted in African countries and this is also one of the main focus areas on the continent (Economic Commission for Africa 2011 <http://www.uneca.org/era2011/chap6.pdf>). However, there is an absence of meaningful diversification and transformation in many African countries which are heavily dependent on the informal sector for employment and meaningful output. In order to promote economic growth, structural economic transformation is needed which involves a process of continuous technological innovation, industrial upgrading and diversification and also the improvement in various types of infrastructure and institutional arrangement which constitute the context for business development and wealth creation (Economic Commission for Africa 2011 <http://www.uneca.org/era2011/chap6.pdf>). The natural resource wealth of Africa is often associated with distorted incentives to diversity, a problem compounded by the challenges of an increasingly inadequate water supply, climate change, and an unsustainable demand for fossil fuels which must be addressed at the consumer level in developed as well as in developing countries (Drexhage and Murphy 2010 "Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012" 2. Also see Economic Commission for Africa 2011 (<http://www.uneca.org/era2011/chap6.pdf>).

One of the priority concerns in the drafting of sustainable tourism policies is to ensure the adequate involvement of the local community in tourism activities, and to also guarantee that increased socio-economic benefits can be generated as these relate to increasing employment and entrepreneurship, creating opportunities for local business and preserving the local heritage and culture and thus sustainability is enhanced.

Conclusion

In the 2030 Agenda, all UN member states pledge to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within their own countries and also regionally. The least developed countries require support while the wealthier nations also face challenges of sorts such as inter-alia reducing their excessively high and globally unsustainable resource consumption. Thus the design, trade, financial, and development policies must be crafted in a manner which does not discriminate against the developing countries. Tourism stakeholders need to take note of development and sustainability goals based on the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2015 the 2030 Agenda was adopted, with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its principal core (United Nations, 2015). This agenda combines social, economic and ecological concerns and considers their many often, multi-faceted interdependencies requiring careful legal consideration as well as a consideration of the wider social aspects. All role-players especially governments need to be promoting sustainable and legal tourism development. As the region seeks to maintain its status as one of the world's leading tourism destinations, it is important that all countries in the region have a comprehensive, clear and effective public policy developed that is enforced and which can suitably inform its activities relative to the sustainable development of tourism. Transforming tourism into an economic, prioritized and strategic activity for our nation, through actions in regions and localities, is a very important challenge that has yet to be met by all participating economical agents such as government, private and host community enterprises,



therefore, as a condition for success in these efforts, wider social contexts with intelligent and honest perspective possibilities have to be included so that we transform tourism meaningfully.

It is firmly believed that it is possible to transform tourism based on the knowledge, and understanding gleaned from researchers, planners, and managers in touristic related activities. Furthermore, we maintain that there are real opportunities to participate, advance and promote this and other growth and development alternatives, so as to take a path toward sustainable tourism and make a difference to tourism as a vital sector of economic growth in South Africa and in the SADC region as a whole.

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