



**Seminar on Ecotourism and Protected Areas in Africa:**  
Contributing to community development and conservation

**Maputo, Mozambique, 5-7 November 2008**

**TECHNICAL NOTE**

**I. Background**

Africa's natural resources, landscapes, wildlife and protected areas form the very basis of its dynamically growing tourism sector in most of its countries. The management of tourism in protected areas represents great challenges and opportunities at the same time.

On one hand, the seasonality of tourism activities can cause high concentration of visitors in fragile areas, inappropriate development and management of tourism facilities can harm the environment, inadequate coordination with local communities can cause conflicting situations and pressures from other types of land use and economic activities can affect the quality of the natural attractions. Further challenges come from the large size, fragmented areas and transfrontier regions of many protected areas.

On the other hand, ecotourism, if adequately planned, managed and monitored can bring income and job opportunities in remote rural areas where few other options exist, and can be harnessed to generate much needed revenues for the maintenance and conservation of protected areas. National Parks and other protected areas are iconic places of Africa and can serve as motors of economic development in broader regions in support of poverty reduction objectives and the Millennium Development Goals through the wise use of tourism activities.

The potentials and challenges of ecotourism have been recognized internationally through the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE), the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, and a number of related international processes and events. Ecotourism remains a key area of the work of UNWTO, and it is also one of the priorities in its Special Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa. The first Regional Preparatory Conference for the IYE took place in Maputo, Mozambique at the end of the year 2001. After 7 years it will be an interesting opportunity to return to Maputo, upon the kind invitation of the Ministry of Tourism of Mozambique, and discuss on advances on this subject through this Seminar to take place in November 2008.

## **II. General and specific objectives**

The event will be focusing on the contribution of ecotourism to community development, poverty reduction and financing of protected areas, as well as related social and environmental issues, offering a forum to address the following questions, among others:

- How can policies and destination plans create enabling environments to support the development of high quality ecotourism products, community enterprises and services and other poverty-reduction mechanisms recommended by UNWTO, as well as revenue generation for protected areas, and transfrontier conservation areas?
- How can partnerships be established between protected area and tourism authorities, tourism companies and local communities, and what mechanisms make them function effectively?
- What actions and support mechanisms are needed to build up local supply chains for tourism, linking local services and products and spread the benefits of tourism activities in broader regions, surrounding protected areas that are already established destinations?
- What consultation, coordination and capacity building processes can be applied to empower local communities in decision making processes regarding planning and management of tourism in and around protected areas?
- What is the role of community-based tourism organizations in strengthening small community businesses, and how these can be supported?
- How can tourism be used to develop innovative and creative financing mechanisms for the conservation of protected areas, how these funds can be retained and best used at the sites, and what policies are needed to make these happen?
- How can ecotourism activities be effectively linked with other forms of tourism (like conventional beach tourism) and special events (like the FIFA World Cup coming up in South Africa in 2010).
- How can the overall socio-economic impacts of ecotourism be evaluated and monitored, and how this information can be best communicated to policy-makers and managers?

## **III. Participants**

This seminar is addressed to representatives of national and local governments, National Park authorities, accommodation providers, tour operators, travel agencies, local communities, academics and researchers, hotel and tourism associations, and Non-Governmental Organizations related to ecotourism and conservation.

## IV. Seminar Agenda

This event will provide opportunities for countries in the region to present experiences and examples, as well as analysing the case of Mozambique and the Great Limpopo National Park, in order to reflect and discuss on the opportunities and challenges of ecotourism, related policy issues and management techniques. The Seminar is aimed at providing a practical experience for policy makers, managers, operators and development organizations involved in ecotourism, through dynamic exchanges and concrete examples.

### Preliminary schedule:

#### **5 November:**

- Registration
- Opening
- Keynote technical presentations by UNWTO
  
- **1<sup>st</sup> session (morning): Creating the enabling environment for nature conservation and ecotourism development: coordinated policies, plans and actions between stakeholders**
  - Introduction by UNWTO expert
  - Case study presentations by countries and organizations of the region
  - Discussions and debate in plenary
  
- **2nd session (afternoon): Reducing poverty and providing community benefits through building up local supply chains**
  - Introduction by UNWTO expert
  - Case study presentations by countries and organizations of the region
  - Discussions and debate in plenary

#### **6 November:**

- **3rd session (morning): Supporting nature conservation through tourism: developing creative financial sources and mitigating environmental impacts.**
  - Introduction by UNWTO expert
  - Case study presentations by countries and organizations of the region
  - Discussions and debate in plenary
  
- **4th Session: (afternoon): Monitoring tourism development and operations: supporting decision making through accurate information on tourism impacts and policies.**
  - Introduction by UNWTO expert
  - Case study presentations by countries and organizations of the region
  - Discussions and debate in plenary

**7 November:**

**5<sup>th</sup> Session: The case of Mozambique and the Great Limpopo National Park**

Morning:

- Presentations by a panel of officials, experts, tourism operators and community representatives and other organizations involved in tourism activities at the GLNP.
- Debate in Plenary

Afternoon:

- Thematic working groups, debates on the Seminar topics: analysing issues and developing recommendations for the case of the GLNP
- Presentation of working group results in plenary, conclusions and recommendations
- Closing session