Methods of Alleviation the Poverty through Sustainable Tourism

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ABSTRACT  
Tourism is one of the major economic sectors, which contributes to the development of the world trade and increase prosperity. Despite the turmoil in the global economy, this industry has suffered very few changes. The focus on tourism for the people with difficulties remains a huge task and opportunity. Therefore, the tourism has a special position in alleviating the poverty. Many tourism jobs are accessible to the poor; they require few skills and minimal investment. In addition, jobs may require hiring a part-time or can be used to obtain additional revenue.

KEY WORDS  
Poverty, poor population, sustainable tourism, prosperity, ST-EP initiative

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1. Introduction

“Anywhere, the poverty is a threat to prosperity.”

It is observed that, internationally, the presence of numerous initiatives, strategies, policies and programs which aim to reduce the extreme poverty and its forms, because there are many phenomena of social disintegration, most of them rooted in poverty, where a decisive transformation cannot occur in a short time and this fact requires the development and implementation of many policies/programs to establish medium and long term objectives in this area.

The need for such programs is even greater as at international level, almost one billion (850 million) of people is suffering from hunger or malnutrition, from which 170 million are children. Every five seconds a child less than 5 years dies and annually the total is about 30 million people, who die from malnutrition. However, statistics show that in the past decade it has decreased the number of persons below the poverty line, the only area where the percentage of people affected by poverty-Saharan Africa has stagnated as requiring, therefore, special attention and a major allocation for poverty reduction. With all these positive developments we cannot say that internationally there are a small number of people so poor and therefore the developed programs and policies in this regard should not be so necessary, because people are living with more than $1.25/day, but close to this amount, which is insufficient for a decent living. Poverty prevents over 100 million children, mostly girls, to attend school. 3 billion people receive 1.2% of global income while one billion people living in rich countries receive 80% of revenues. Add the fact that 8 million children die every year due to diseases caused by poverty, 150 million children suffer from serious forms of malnutrition and 100 million children live on the street.

In this context, tourism has a special position in reducing the poverty:
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Size and sector growth.} In many countries, tourism acts as an engine of development through tourism revenue and creating jobs directly or indirectly in other sectors;
  \item \textbf{Relative importance of tourism in developing countries.} In many countries in developing or less developed, tourism is the most viable option for sustainable economic development and, in some countries, the main source of foreign currency. Some of these revenues go to different groups from a society and if tourism is properly managed and focused on reducing the poverty, the poor can benefit directly as the companies are employing them to supply goods and services to the tourists. Tourism in recent years was characterized by two main trends:
    \begin{enumerate}
      \item Strengthening the traditional tourist destinations such as Western Europe and North America;
      \item A strong geographic expansion.
    \end{enumerate}
    Thus, there has been a substantial diversification of destinations, significantly increasing the number of tourists arriving in many developing countries. In 2010, arrivals in developing countries registered 47\% of the total of international arrivals; tourism became a major player in the economies concerned. Tourism is the main source of currency for the world's 48 least developed countries. Tourism generates 45\% of the total services exports of developing countries export and the main branch of one third. In some developing countries, especially in small island states, tourism can represent over 25\% of the GDP.
  \end{itemize}

\textbf{2. Major Initiatives at International Level on Poverty Alleviation}

A major initiative and long-term implications for poverty reduction is the "\textit{Millennium Declaration}" adopted at the Millennium Summit "UN role in the XXI century" in September 2000 by 191 countries of the world including Romania. This document defines the framework of the United Nations agenda for the XXI century in regard to peace, security and development. The Millennium Declaration goals and targets give governments the ability to better monitor human development, to enhance the mobilization of national resources and strengthen partnerships for development. Today, the \textit{Millennium Development Goals} is the internationally frame, established to monitor the progress in development. Leaders of many countries, rich and poor, pledged to meet eight key points that are intended primarily to reduce the extreme poverty worldwide by the end of 2015. Name the Millennium Development Goals directly related to the time they were made (in 2000, beginning a new millennium) but also they are practical matters including the development targets for monitoring the progress undertaken by the general term, year 2015.

The question "\textit{We all want a better world, but how can we have it?}" gave rise to the "Millennium Development Goals" program that identifies the main challenges for poor countries and seeking solutions to each of them. The program includes eight goals aimed at social problems facing the world.

This campaign runs on seven world regions, namely Africa, Asia, Europe, Arab Region, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Oceania.

The Millennium Declaration is the only global development agenda on which there is an agreement at the highest level between most countries. The adoption by each country related targets of the Millennium Development Goals, specific national context, to set up a mechanism to monitor the progress at national, regional and global.
Among the eight Millennium Development Goals first and most important is to **reduce the severe poverty** that includes the **following targets and indicators characterizing the state to achieve the proposed target:**

![Image of a plate with food]

Source: www.onuinfo.ro

**Figure 1. The Symbol of the First Millennium Development Goal-reducing severe poverty**

**Target 1.A** (global): Halve, between 1990-2015, the number of people whose income is less than $1 per day.
- Indicator 1.1 - Percentage of population whose purchasing power is less than a dollar a day.
- Indicator 1.2 – The poverty rate disparity.
- Indicator 1.3 – The proportion of the poorest fifth in national consumption.

**Target 1.B** (global): Achieving the total framing and productive employment and ensuring a decent work for all, including women and youth.
- Indicator 1.4 – The increase in GDP per person employed.
- Indicator 1.5 – The number of employees rate of total population.
- Indicator 1.6 – The proportion of employees and whose purchasing power is less than a dollar a day.
- Indicator 1.7 – The proportion of families of persons active in the total number of employees.

**Target 1.C** (global) – Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the percentage of people suffering from hunger.
- Indicator 1.8 – The incidence of short stature in children less than five years.
- Indicator 1.9 – The proportion of population with a minimum consumption of calories in a diet that provides the necessary of energy.

To track the progress of countries and regions of the world in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it was created a website (**http://mdgs.un.org**) which provides fresh information on the evolution and current state of indicators that characterize each target proposed documents to provide data on the state of realization as well as activities and projects undertaken to strengthen capacities used to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, documents can be found detailing the status of the development of relevant indicators in each of those who passed in 2000, but also by regions and countries.

In turn, the poverty causes the emergence of other major problems such as the lack of access to education, a decent life, to travel to a place in society, the group of friends, reducing the prestige acquired at a time at a job, even a modest home for fun, the occurrence of hunger, malnutrition, etc.
Therefore, after analyzing the current state of completion of the first major objective of the Millennium, compared to the onset year, 2000, namely reducing absolute poverty, we can identify three major causes of poverty:

1. Increase the prices of basic products (indirect effect of oil);
2. Insecurity and vulnerability of jobs in a large proportion of the world;
3. The large number of international conflicts resulting in a large number of refugees.

Many countries of the EU countries, including the Great Britain have recognized and subscribed to the Millennium Development Goals. The UK government is determined to accelerate the progress to achieve objectives before the deadline set in 2015. To this end, they initiated partnerships with members from the private sector, civil society and religious groups. Also, the UK joined to eight government agencies working in health, major donors and several partner countries to launch a new international partnership in health. Funds allocated by the British Government to achieve these goals are increasing. By 2010, the Department for International Development budget amounted to 7.9 billion pounds and Official Development Assistance has reached 9.1 billion pounds. The department concerned will spend £ 8.5 billion for education by 2015 and health; will provide 1 billion pounds by 2015 Global Fund for combating AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Norway is another example of a country that is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Developing trade and private sector is essential to create profits, to ensure jobs and economic growth. Therefore, the support for development in these areas is an important element of poverty reduction. Norwegian efforts in this direction include measures to increase imports of products from LDCs and investment promotion. The Norwegian Government gives also priority to agriculture in development cooperation, as this is the most important economic activity in LDCs.

Since the principal objective of the eight Millennium Development Goals is to reduce the number of those who suffer from hunger and poverty by half by 2015, there were made many efforts to be aware of this goal. Therefore it was launched a separate campaign on eradicating poverty, creating a separate site, even with this title: http://www.endpoverty2015.org. The slogan of this campaign is "We are the first generation that can eradicate poverty".

This campaign is an efficient one leading to the reduction of the total population of poor countries considered. Moreover, the Millennium Declaration signatory countries have made concrete commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which, most times they have carried out.

The reasons for this campaign is unique and so important are the following:
- It represents a partnership between the major economic actors involved in the world. The poor countries have pledged to improve policies and increase government accountability to their citizens. The rich countries have pledged to provide resources to accomplish these goals. Since the commitment to achieve the goals coming from the highest political levels, for the first time, all governments have committed to achieving them, including trade and finance ministers have a decisive role in this respect. And major international financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, regional development banks were involved in achieving these objectives;
- The world has never been as prosperous as now. Hundreds of billions of dollars being spent in Iraq have shown that there are possibilities in the future. It is estimated that it takes about 50
billion dollars annually, additional support for the Millennium goals. Rich countries have given substantial support to the domestic agricultural producers, totaling $300 billion annually;

- The supporting performance objectives are monitored. These are not just statements of intent as monitoring the mechanisms which have been implemented in the form of national reports on MDGs and the Secretary General report to the General Assembly. The civil society organizations around the world have created their own set of reports to ensure that governments are supported at the highest performance standards. Over 60 country reports have been made at a national level;

- Objectives can certainly be achieved. Some specialists consider that they’re not the goals of the millennium but they are minimum targets. The individual goals have been reached by many countries in a time of only 10-15 years;

- The Millennium Goals have gathered for the first time a vision representing a global partnership through which the responsibility is shared between all countries. The developed countries have a prime responsibility for achieving these objectives. They need to help the poor countries to actually change the commercial laws.

This campaign has weaknesses such as:

- The Millennium Development Goals does not involve other commitments or transparency, participation and human rights, which are not easy to be measured, but they are essential, including to achieve these goals;

- while the first seven goals reflect an international consensus, objective 8 (global partnership) involving commitments from rich countries was only discussed;

- Even if targets were set globally, they will become real if they are adopted and adapted to local relevance.

The Millennium Goals cannot be achieved by the United Nations, they can only create a platform through which these governments to commit but cannot force Member States to achieve these objectives. Only citizens and elected national governments can lead the world to its promises. Internationally, the campaign has initiated a network of civil society in a Global Coalition against Poverty.

In conclusion, if the governments involved will promises, some of the poor, such as Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Bangladesh, are on track to achieve some of the MDGs and Ghana is likely to achieve poverty reduction next year.

3. European Union Guidelines in Combating Poverty

In order to eradicate the poverty, the European Commission presented a set of common principles to guide the EU countries on developing strategies to combat poverty. Recommendation is based on three key issues:

1. adequate income support;
2. inclusive labor markets;
3. Access to quality services.

The national governments will be encouraged to consider and develop the common principles, based on these strategies for 'active inclusion' to intensify the fight against the exclusion from society and the labor market. It is estimated that often current systems do not work against poverty. Social exclusion is the result of numerous problems, ranging from the lack of employment or insufficient skills to poor housing, social isolation or family breakdown. The need
for an integrated approach gave people a genuine way out of poverty. This means reintegrating as many people in the labor market, ensuring at the same time, and equally the access of people incapable of working, to have a decent life.

Almost 16% of Europeans are at risk of poverty - a figure that rises to 19% among children - while long-term unemployment remains at 3% and 15% of young people leave school early. Despite the proven effectiveness of social transfers in reducing poverty (in the absence of such transfers, the poverty would rise significantly from 16% to 26%), a significant percentage of those targeted by welfare systems do not benefit, in fact, of them.

The commission forwards a Recommendation on 'active inclusion' in order to improve the efficiency and minimum income schemes to support the efforts to combat poverty, made at national level. It aims to reintegrate the labor market all those who work and ensuring at the same time, the necessary resources to a decent life for people unable to work. The common principles set by the Commission were formally discussed by national governments in the Council for Employment and Social Policy, in December 2008, which has made conclusions on the followed actions.

Since its establishment, the European Union has extended not only its size, the accession of new Member States, but also areas to develop a common European policy.

The EU internal single market created a system of laws and regulations that guarantee freedom of movement of persons, goods, services and capital. He developed a common policy for trade, agriculture and fishing. It has also taken steps to implement a policy for regional development. In 1999 the single currency, Euro, was adopted by 15 Member States. The EU has strengthened its position in the common foreign policy, justice and home affairs. With almost 500 million European Union produces over 30% of world GDP, becoming a leading player in the world. Treaty establishing the European Economic Community which provides a common market based on the principle of free movement (of goods, services, capital and people), led to the gradual coordination of Member States policies and the further development of the common European policies.

Among the 28 common European policies is not one that specifically relate to poverty eradication. However, the Development Policy is references in the fight against poverty. Thus, the policy of EU development and humanitarian aid are based on trade. The development policy was established as an expression of the desire of the European Union to act as major global players, by helping the less developed countries to fight poverty and integrate into the world trade. To support the policy development, the EU has reduced or eliminated tariffs and quotas on imports of products of 49 least developed countries. The trade agreements between the EU and ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) have been considered a model of how developing countries can open their markets to products from these countries. However, ACP trade continued to decline, so that the European Union began to focus on the financial and technical assistance to improve the physical and social infrastructure and to develop the productive capacity of less developed countries. Most of the EU financial support in the form of reimbursable loans and European Investment Bank provides loans long term partners outside the EU, particularly developing countries. In 2006 these loans amounted to 5.9 billion euro.

The aid from the Union is coordinated with the aid provided by each Member State and other international donors and focuses mainly on:

- Improving the relationship between trade and economic development;
Integration and regional cooperation;
Support for healthy macroeconomic policies;
Development of transport infrastructure;
Food security and sustainable rural development;
Institutional capacity building.

Therefore, the EU places great emphasis on reducing poverty as in Europe we generally don't find alarming statistics on poverty, as happens in Africa. It may be noted that the EU devotes significant funds to reduce poverty in other countries outside the European continent like Africa, Asia, and Pacific.

Of course that we meet Europe's poorest countries or regions such as Moldova and other former Communist countries on which the EU has stopped giving substantial aid.

4. The Relation between Tourism and the Poverty Phenomenon

Tourism gives value of common attractions located in the developing countries and hot, gentle climate, cultural heritage, outstanding landscapes and abundant biodiversity. It represents a strong market and labor bidding, consisting, traditionally, in small and medium enterprises. Many jobs are specific to women, youth, disadvantaged groups and minorities. Travel and tourism industry are closely related and determine the development of other branches of the downstream and/or its upstream such as agriculture, handicrafts, transport services etc. Participating in tourism receipts for more economic exchanges determines the economic development.

The tourism consumption requires the presence of the same place at the same time of the producer and consumer. The interaction between tourists and poor communities can make many practical and intangible benefits and care for cultural and environmental values.

On the other hand, there are also some negative aspects of tourism which are closely related to poverty alleviation and require particular attention:
- Unpredictability and fluctuation of tourist demand. Tourism is very sensitive to socio-economic events, political and environmental. In the absence of insurance and social security, the poor are vulnerable to such phenomena. On the other hand, tourism demand quickly change their behavior when circumstances change;
- seasonality of tourism demand requires good integration between tourism and other economic activities to provide sufficient sources of income throughout the calendar year;
- The life support systems impact on tourism. These include water, soil, food, energy and biodiversity. Their accessibility for the poor can threaten the competition created by using the same tourism resources. Degradation of cultural, environmental etc. can have lasting effects;
- Weak links with the poor. The nature of the tourism investment and the lack of poor's employment can cause higher costs. Tourism should not be regarded as a response to eliminate poverty but can bring a major contribution.

The increasing the proportion of the economic benefit of the poor includes:
- the increased size and performance of tourism as a whole by increasing the number of visits, visitors, average length of stay, average expenditure/tourist;
- The increase of the costs which reach to the poor, through specific actions to help and enable them to participate in tourist activities, as an indirect benefit.

All these actions should be combined with the local work with those communities which engage the poor to understand their needs and creating accessible opportunities.
Principles underlying poverty reduction through tourism¹:

1. all aspects and forms of tourism can and should focus on reducing poverty;
2. All governments should consider poverty reduction as a key objective of tourism development and to consider tourism as a possible tool for reducing poverty;
3. competitiveness and economic success of the business and tourist destinations are critical to alleviating poverty, without which the poor cannot benefit;
4. all tourism businesses should focus on the impact of activities on local communities and seek that the poor benefit through their own actions;
5. tourist destinations should be managed so that poverty alleviation be the central goal around which to be developed strategies and action plans;
6. a deep understanding of how tourism works is required, including how the proceeds are distributed and who benefits from them;
7. planning and developing tourism in a destination must involve a wide range of interests, including the participation and representation of poor communities;
8. all potential effects of tourism on the lifestyle of local communities should be considered, including present and future effects on natural resources, local and global;
9. the attention should be directed to the viability of all projects which involve the poor, giving them access to new markets and maximizing their opportunities to benefit from the connections made with the tourism enterprises;
10. Contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation must be monitored effectively.

5. The ST-EP Initiative of Tourism International Organization

Following the Earth Summit, conducted in 2000, the United Nations has identified poverty as one of the biggest challenges of the world and established among the Millennium Development Goals the extreme eradication of poverty by 2015.

The World Tourism Organization responded to the challenges and opportunities by launching the ST-EP Initiative (Sustainable Tourism eradicate poverty) which was presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development Earth (Rio +10) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. Despite the special position of tourism in alleviating poverty, often poor segments of the population in developing countries and least developed did not benefit from the economic impact of tourism.

The ST-EP initiative promotes poverty reduction through training assistance in sustainable development projects. The program focuses on stimulating long-term work’s WTO to encourage sustainable tourism and carry out specific activities to reduce poverty, which determines the development and creates jobs for people living on less than $ 1/day. UNWTO ST-EP initiative seen as an effective tool which makes a tangible contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. Tourism can play a significant role in particular for severe poverty reduction objectives 1, 3- promoting gender equality and empower women, 7-ensuring environmental sustainability and 8-creating a global partnership for development.

In 2005, at the UN World Summit held in New York, WTO governments set meetings with UN agencies, leaders from various industries and civil society on how tourism can contribute effectively to achieving the Millennium Goals. These discussions culminated in the adoption of the

¹ http://step.unwto.org/en/content/tourism-and-poverty-alleviation-1
www.hrmars.com/journals
"Declaration on Tourism Recovery for Millennium Development Goals," a statement which caused a significant recognition of tourism as a major force for socio-economic development as an effective contribution to the Millennium Development Millennium. Declaration calls for governments, bilateral and international development agencies, corporations and civil society to join efforts in supporting the tourism sector to mobilize the additional resources, giving priority to tourism in assistance programs on the development of poverty reduction strategies, promoting public-private partnerships and good governance.

Once the ST-EP Initiative was launched in 2004, projects began in late 2005 with a training project for local guides in Ebogo village in Cameroon. Since then, it rapidly expanded its portfolio of projects, which includes over 95 projects a total of 33 developing countries, ranging from the development of ecotourism products in Guatemala, together with local communities to develop and promote the program in Nepal "great Himalayan trail "created to enhance the impact of tourism on local economy.

All the beneficiaries of the ST-EP project are recipients of official development assistance of which half are less developed countries. The projects are in close contact and collaboration with the national tourism authorities, local administrations, NGOs and tourism firms from the beneficiary countries.

ST-EP Initiative organizes seminars regularly to share the concern for the poor, to create capacity development with public and private sectors, NGOs and local communities.

Since 2004, WTO has organized over 20 regional and national training seminars in the field of tourism and poverty alleviation, with a total participation of over 2,000 officials. In addition, the WTO organized a ST-EP Forum which was held during the International Tourism Fair in Berlin, promoting the ST-EP initiative at the international conference, all in order to disseminate the experience gained and lessons learned from working with organizations and individuals.

Also, the ST-EP Initiative conducted several researches and published reports to highlight the importance, impact and contribution of tourism to the poverty reduction, together with recommendations on how these effects can be maximized:

- Tourism and poverty alleviation (2002);
- Tourism and poverty alleviation. Recommendations for Action (2004);
- Tourism, microfinance and poverty alleviation (2005);
- Poverty alleviation through tourism: a compilation of best practices (2006);

ST-EP implementation of various activities is not possible without the contribution of some countries and institutions. Government of Korea was the pioneer partner in launching the ST-EP Initiative, being the host of ST-EP Foundation in Seoul. Since then, a significant progress has been made in strengthening and expansion of public-private partnerships for ST-EP initiative. In addition, it was supported by various world governments, development agencies and other organizations to extend the ST-EP initiative to support tourism and to work for the benefit of the poor. To this end, several projects can be mentioned:

- Implementation of the Tourism in Vietnam;
- Law on financing sustainable tourism in Bhutan with the Italian Government;
- Creating a network for responsible tourism in Mali to support the Italian Government;
- Road coffee in Quiche-Guatemala.
In order to provide practical benefits to the poor, it appears the need to associate the investments with the increased income of the poor and the quality of life of these people. **ST-EP initiative presents seven different mechanisms by which the poor can benefit from tourism**. These mechanisms have become an important philosophy of the initiative, being widely disseminated and incorporated into the ST-EP projects, studies, seminars, training courses, and conferences.

1. **Engaging the poor in tourism enterprises.** The relationship between tourism enterprises and employing local people is a symbiotic one, where both parties have considerable benefits. Thus, the poor are encouraged to develop their skills, thereby increasing the quality of services; many social and cultural barriers are removed.

2. **Supply of goods and services to the tourist enterprises by the poor or by the enterprises which employed the poor.** One of the fundamental conditions to eliminate poverty is especially the tourism supply, as much as possible from local sources. In this way a great share of the tourist receipts will return to the local community which involves the poor in the supply. Such a measure will support the traditional forms of rural activities, will enhance the quality and identity of the local tourism products and will help to establish stable business sources.

3. **Direct sale to visitors, of goods and services, by the poor (informal economy).** One of the main ways through which people get revenue from tourists is that the direct marketing of goods and services such as fruits, handicrafts, etc. guided tours. Where the poor are involved in the informal economy it can be a direct route to success in providing income to the poor, giving visitors at the same time, positive experiences. Tourist information on local products is as important as educating people so that their products meet the needs of visitors.

4. **Creating small tourist enterprises, micro or community-based or joint-venture with the poor (formal economy).** This involves the establishment and management of several tourism enterprises by the poor formal, involved either individually or at Community level. These structures may include accommodation, restaurants, transport companies, entertainment, guide services. The advantages of such locally formed enterprises are those which place the power and control in the hands of local people, and can guarantee long-term investments.

5. **Redistribution of tax revenues from spending tourists or tourism enterprises.** Through this mechanism, a large part of revenue from tourists can be used to reduce poverty which has the advantage that all the poor can benefit from tourists without being directly involved in this sector. Application of this mechanism depends on the programs and national priorities. Transparency is essential regarding the local charges and the consultancy of private sector in order to avoid the taxation of tourism industry and charging tourists too high.

6. **Grant support and support voluntary tourists or tourism enterprises.** Various studies have revealed that many tourists are willing to give something back to the area you have visited when they were received and treated with hospitality. Many travel companies sponsoring local development based initiatives in areas where they operate. Local NGOs can contribute to the local development by collecting and providing donations. A tangible involvement of local community is more likely to attract sponsorship and support from visitors.

7. **The infrastructure investment stimulates tourism, from which benefit the poor, directly or by encouraging other sectors.** Tourism development, particularly in a new area or rural

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6. Conclusions

In conclusion, all initiatives since 2000 when he signed the "Millennium Declaration" and have established eight Millennium Development Goals, were subordinated to this campaign, all agencies involved working together to reduce poverty by half by 2015.

In order to increase the contribution of tourism to alleviate poverty are essential the following:
- Involvement of private business. They can benefit from various facilities in order to provide various benefits to the poor;
- Ensuring that tourist destinations are competitive and sustainable.

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