


Conference on Sustainable Tourism

For the Netherlands Antilles

Sint Maarten & Saba, 11- 13 June 1997

Proceedings of the Conference



★ Environmental Section
Dept. Public Health and Environment,
September 1997

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**Declaration on Sustainable Tourism
for the Netherlands Antilles**

Declaration on Sustainable Tourism For the Netherlands Antilles

The Experts on Planning, Tourism Development and Environment from the Central Government and the five Islands of the Netherlands Antilles, from the Netherlands, Aruba and regional organisations,

Gathered in a Conference on Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles that was held in Sint Maarten and Saba from 11-13 June 1997,

In their effort to secure a sustainable tourism development for the Netherlands Antilles in which the economic and social needs will be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems,

Have formulated and agreed upon the following points of departure for a National Policy on Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles:

- Aspects of **nature and the environment** should play a major **proactive role** in physical planning and tourism development planning for sustainable tourism;
- Evaluation of the **environmental impacts** should become a **prerequisite** for development of tourism and related infrastructural and **construction projects**;
- The most **ecofriendly ways** of international transport should be encouraged: collective transport and other ways and means of environmentally friendly 'on island' transportation should be **stimulated**;
- **Reception facilities** for waste water and garbage from cruise ships and other vessels should be set up in accordance with the international regulations (**MARPOL**) for Antillean ports;
- Island Governments should **develop ecofriendly construction** and greening criteria for tourism facilities: island hotel associations should **promote existing 'green your hotel' initiatives** amongst their members and hotels should be stimulated to participate in Green Your Hotel Programs;
- Island Governments should **stimulate** -when proven (macro) economically and environmentally attractive- the **decentralised (private) production of electricity and water and treatment of waste water** through adequate regulation and pricing;
- **Fiscal mechanisms** to facilitate 'green' construction and upgrading measures as well as 'green' water and energy production and waste water treatment should be created and applied;
- A **policy on beaches**, entailing guidelines for public use, protection of natural beaches, land and sand use and (artificial) beach construction and beach quality guidelines should be **developed** as part of the national policy on sustainable tourism;
- The protection of **valuable natural areas** should be pursued through a combination of physical planning, nature policy plans, legal protection of the areas and a properly planned management on the various islands;
- The **restaurant sector** should be persuaded not to include **endangered species** on their **menu's** and the **souvenir trade** should be **prohibited to sell parts of our natural heritage**;
- **Tourists** should be **informed** about the beauty and vulnerability of each islands' **biodiversity and environment** and about the consequences of what they consume and buy in terms of endangered species (**CITES**);

- Environmental theory and practice should become a major theme in the training programmes of the tourism sector;
- Environmental education together with tourism awareness should become an integrated element within the education system at all levels on each island
- A monitoring network for potential environmental disasters -such as the pink mealy bug- should be set up;
- Maintaining our cultural integrity should go hand in hand with environmental issues when planning for sustainable tourism;

Follow up:

These points of departure will be further developed into a Policy on Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles, which will be presented to the Island Territories before the end of 1997. The policy will describe the intentions of the Central Government regarding Sustainable Tourism Development and indicate the ways the Island Territories can be assisted in establishing and implementing their islands' policies on sustainable tourism development.

Sint Maarten, June 13 1997.

Programme

Program for the Conference on Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles 10-13 June 1997, Sint Maarten & Saba

10 June 1997, Sint Maarten

Arrival of participants

- 20.15 Arrival of LM 207 for participants from Curaçao. Transfer from Juliana Airport, St. Maarten to Great Bay Hotel.
- 21.00 Informal welcome drink at Great Bay Hotel, Philipsburg, hosted by the Department of Public Health and Environment, Environmental Section

11 June 1997, Sint Maarten

- 08.30 Registration of participants in Great Bay Hotel.

Opening session in Great Bay Hotel

- 09.00 Welcome: William Marin, Commissioner for Environment, Sint Maarten.
- 09.20 Opening: Daniel Hassell, State Secretary for Economic Affairs.
- 09.40 Keynote: Sarah Wescott-Williams, Commissioner of Tourism, Sint Maarten: 'St. Maarten, one sustainable destination.'
- 10.10 Keynote: Hendrik Oosterveld, Dep. Director for Nature Conservation, LNV, The Netherlands: 'Where do we go next year'.
- 10.30 Coffee break

Workshop for sustainable tourism planning

- 11.10 Chair: Louis Brown
- 11.10 Ruud van Zonneveld
- 11.20 Discussion and recommendations.
- 12.30 Lunch in Great Bay Hotel, hosted by the Island Government of Sint Maarten.

Afternoon session in Great Bay Hotel

Workshop on sustainable transportation

- 13.35 Chair: Don Werdekker
- 13.35 American Airlines: 'The hub and the environment'.
- 13.55 Eugene Holiday, WinAir: 'The spoke and the environment'.
- 14.15 Michel Deher, Avis: 'The future of the rented car'.
- 14.35 Raymond Helligar, R&J Tours, 'Be eco, take a bus'.
- 14.55 Discussion and recommendations.
- 15.35 Coffee break

Workshop on sustainable cruise tourism

- 15.50 Chair: Marc van de Bilt
- 15.50 Marc van de Bilt, SHTA,
- 16.05 Pete Richardson, Sint Maarten Ports Authority
- 16.20 Ellis Alberic, Regie Municipale de Port de Margot
- 16.35 J. G. van Loenen, Coast Guard Netherlands Antilles & Aruba
- 16.50 Elsmaire Beukenboom, Bonaire Tourism Training Centre: 'Training of tourguides'.
- 17.10 Discussion and Recommendations.
- 17.50 Drinks at Great Bay Hotel, hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the Netherlands.
- Dinner and evening: free.

12 June 1997. Saba

- 07.30 Transfer from Great Bay Hotel to ferry.
08.00 Ferry Sint Maarten - Saba.
09.00 Transfer from Fort Bay to Eugenius Johnson Community Centre

Morning session at the Eugenius Johnson Community Centre

- 09.30 Welcome: Steve Hassell, Commissioner for Tourism and Christina ten Brink, Commissioner for Environment, Saba.

Workshop on eco tourism

- 10.00 Chair: Christina ten Brink
10.00 Tom van 't Hof, Saba Conservation Foundation: 'What is this ecotourism?'
10.20 Discussion and Recommendations.
11.00 Coffee break

Workshop on terrestrial nature and tourism

- 11.15 Chair: Glenn Holm
11.15 Jan Faber, Chairman STENAPA, Statia: 'Statia's National Parks'.
11.25 Discussion and recommendations.
12.05 Nature walk and picnic, hosted by the Saba Conservation Foundation and the Island Government of Saba.

Afternoon session at the Eugenius Johnson Community Centre

Workshop marine nature and tourism

- 14.30 Chair: Eric Newton
14.30 Kalli De Meyer, manager Bonaire Marine Park, 'Max. 10 divers per m2'
14.50 Discussion and Recommendations.
16.30 Transfer to Fort Bay.
17.00 Ferry Saba - Sint Maarten.
18.00 Transfer from Bobbies Marina to Great Bay Hotel.
Dinner and evening: free.

13 June. Sint Maarten

Morning session Great Bay Hotel

Seminar on green hotel management

- 08.30 Chair: Edward J. Dest
08.30 Willem Riedijk, Technical Faculty UNA: 'How to build an eco friendly hotel'.
09.00 Marc van de Bilt, SHTA: 'The Situation on Sint Maarten'.
09.30 Kelly Robinson, CAST: 'Also greening your hotel'.
10.00 Coffee break
10.30 Tamara Croes, 'Energy and water audit, environmental management strategy'.
11.00 Bous Schoits, Plaza Resort Bonaire/Bonhata: 'Suite 005'
11.15 Harm Streefkerk, Plaza Resort Bonaire: 'No water wasted'.
11.30 'Green' Hotel Clinic

Workshop creating awareness for sustainable tourism

- 12.30 Chair: Ruud van Zonneveld
12.30 Green awareness lunch in Great Bay Hotel, for own account.
Don Werdekker, CHATA: 'It better be green'.
Henk Eggink, LNV: 'How green is the tourist'.
Discussions at the lunch tables.
14.00 Plenary feed back from the lunch tables.

Concluding session

- 14.30 Chair: William Martin
14.30 Recapitulation of introductions, discussions and recommendations by workshop chair persons.
Presentation of the Sint Maarten Declaration on Sustainable Tourism.
Discussion
16.15 Coffee break
16.30 Closure
17.00 Farewell cocktails in Great Bay Hotel, hosted by the Island Government of Sint Maarten.
19.00 For participants with destination Curaçao, transfer from Hotel to Airport for departure on LM 208, departure time 21.00

Speeches
(in chronological order)

Opening:

Distinguished guests, members of the island and federal governments, honored speakers, organizers of the event, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to welcome you to the Conference on Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles.

Definition:

I was asked to open the proceedings on this first day of the conference, and in preparing for this address, it struck me, as a former educator, as useful to properly orient myself in the material. Specifically, I searched for the meaning of the term sustainable tourism.

The first question for which I required an answer was, "what is sustainability"? According to the dictionary **SUS · TAIN · A · BIL · I · TY** means:

having the ability or capacity to keep in existence, to provide for the support of, or to carry the weight of.

Requirements of sustainable tourism:

Transposed to the activity of tourism, sustainability requires the establishment of a balance between travel and tourism, combined with a greater respect for people and their environment.

This means that any country with the desire to apply the concept of sustainable tourism must do so by:

1. developing sustainable infrastructures (energy, water, waste, accommodation and transportation), instead of systems that destroy the environment or are incapable of supporting the industry in the long-term;
2. In addition, there must be the creation of more efficient financing mechanisms to enhance public and private interests, instead of financing schemes that bankrupt an economy or cheaply barter a nation's patrimony for short-term profit;
3. Finally, to attain a sustainable tourism, a nation must be able to balance tourist satisfaction with community involvement, employee concerns, and environmental needs.

It is quite a challenge, but one that, at least for St.Maarten, must be met and soon!

You may well ask yourselves why the Commissioner charged with Environmental issues would make such a statement about tourism development.

That is not hard to explain.

Tourism is the business of St.Maarten, but it is also everyone's business. It is not an industry that stands alone. On our island, tourism touches everything and everyone, whether directly or indirectly.

Not unlike our regional neighbors, tourism is St.Maarten's mainstay economic activity. Only last week the president of the Central Bank stated that the economies of the Netherlands Antilles must seek to improve this industry for the future well-being of the country.

It will come as no surprise to most of you, that tourism is an important economic activity for the whole world.

Let me illustrate this with some statistical data.

- Since the 1950's, tourism has been growing at a rate of 10 percent per year.
- In 1993, this industry grossed an estimated \$304 billion.
- In 1994, travel & tourism represented 10% of total consumer spending.
- Over \$11 billion was spent in the Caribbean by visitors.
- The industry employs one out of every 13 workers worldwide.
- Travel & tourism is a major generator of tax payments. Every one percent increase in the travel and tourism industry generates 1 million new jobs, an additional \$10 billion in Global National Product, and several billion dollars in tax revenues and investments.

Tourism paradox:

Unfortunately, tourism historically also exacts a high price, particularly if it is not properly planned and managed. During the Sustainable Tourism Conference of 1995, held at the

Punta Cana Beach Resort, Dominican Republic, Jean Holder, Secretary General, Caribbean Tourism Organization, remarked that tourism is often described as an industry that destroys the resources on which it depends for its very existence.

For St. Maarten, tourism represents the good, the bad and the ugly. Because of a lack of timely planning in the past, we often hear more these days about the bad and the ugly, than the good.

It is not my intention to lay blame or culpability on anyone for the problems we must confront.

Rather, I wish to challenge all present to set themselves the goal of seeking workable and creative solutions that will allow all island destinations, including St. Maarten, to attain sustainable tourism.

Future:

Why you ask?

By all accounts, tourism will remain the essential economic activity in the region – and in some countries, the only viable economic activity. Bluntly put, some of us will have no choice but to adapt lest we fade away. We must develop solutions that will make tourism sustainable, in other words, allow this industry to co-exist harmoniously with our environment, our culture, our heritage and our people, while providing a competitive hospitality product that is sought after by the consumer.

As I stated before, this is quite a challenge. I do not pretend to have all the answers, but in closing, I wish to leave you to your task with some words of advice.

- Sustainable development is not a quick fix solution to our problems. It literally took decades for us to arrive at the point where we are now, and it will undoubtedly require years before we have addressed all the problems to our satisfaction. Important is that we understand the need and make a start!

- *More importantly, to attain sustainable development we will have to let go of our old ideas and definitions about development and growth. More is not always better. Bigger is not always beautiful. Numbers do not always tell the whole story.*
- *We need to decide for ourselves what we want in terms of a quality of life. We need to re-educate ourselves about what it is to be a St.Maartener, a Caribbean man or woman. We must build a St.Maarten that we can proudly pass on to the next generation. Only after this, can we be able to welcome visitors to our shores and share with them our treasures.*

I wish you all a productive conference. I thank you for your attention.

Daniel Hassell, State Secretary for Economic Affairs

June 11, 1997

Ladies and gentlemen,

This Central Government has made sustainable development a central theme of its governing program and this was reconfirmed in the Policy Document "Outlines of the Environmental Policy for the Netherlands Antilles (1996 - 2000), which was accepted by the Council of Ministers in September, 1996.

As a result of this we are gathered here today to hear from you, involved in the tourism sector, how you view the development of this sector over the coming years. Your input is of utmost importance as the Minister of Environmental Affairs and her Department cannot achieve this without the input and co-operation from the various ministries and, most importantly, from you all involved in this sector.

In the before mentioned Environmental Policy document, the theme "Tourism and the Environment" was selected as one of the five priority areas that the Government wishes to concentrate upon in the coming five years, together with areas of "Waste and waste water", oil and the environment", "nature management" and "environmental awareness".

Sustainable tourism development is about guided economic growth. Growth guided by the principle of the "carrying capacity" of nature and the environment in general, because we must determine how far can we develop without disturbing the basis of our lives and, most importantly, how will it affect our children and future generations.

Sustainable development is about setting limits, which at times may seem very controversial and hard. We have examples already throughout the Dutch Caribbean where the discussion on setting the sustainable level of tourism focuses on the number of hotel rooms. In some cases increasing the occupancy rate will already lead to undesirable developments, which may be qualified as non-sustainable, let alone adding more rooms. As these developments are accompanied by the often stated arguments of we are loosing our "character, nature, culture, etc..", will this trend result in a halt in the development of tourism??

Certainly not, as the key word here ladies and gentlemen is "quality improvement". Improve the quality of the existing product, while being guided by the limits set by nature, the environment and more so our culture.

Invest in the environment, clean and re-use your waste water, select and recycle your waste and thus bring the dumped volume down, save on energy by installing low energy and self-adjusting air-conditioning, which operate on coolants that do not harm the ozone layer, focus more on drought resistant plants in your hotel gardens, which in turn should make the hotel property even more attractive to the visitors.

As visitors in general are becoming increasingly conscious and demanding when it comes to nature and the environment, it can be expected that the level and effort put into sustainable tourism, will also eventually be the deciding factor how and where these visitors choose their holiday destination.

A very positive development presently in this area is the fact that the Council of Ministers of Holland is looking into the possibility of making a considerable amount of funds available to be spent on environmental projects in the Netherlands Antilles. These "Green Funds" are sources from private parties and the incentives are tax related, as no taxes are paid on interest accrued from the so-called "invested green capital", which normally would be 50%.

The "Green Funds" are managed by well established and reputable private and commercial banks, which will select feasible projects in the environmental sector e.g. financing the cost of switching a 150 room hotel from electric to solar water heating - Positive features are that the switch should yield a good return on investment (e.g. cost in savings), an interest rate around 4,5% and an adequate repayment term.

This Green Funds program has been so successful that enough suitable projects in Holland can no longer be found and they have started to look elsewhere, like the Netherlands Antilles for example, and this can indeed become a good source of investments in a sustainable future. Even nature conservation projects can be financed through these funds, subject of course to certain criteria and conditions.

With regards to the Ministry/ Department of Economic Affairs an example of our input via other sectors which are directly interrelated with achieving sustainable development/ tourism are as follows:

- 11.13.96 the Council of Ministers decided to transfer the accountability of EFZ/EEZ (Economic Fishery & Exploitation Zone) of the Neth. Antilles from the Ministry of General Affairs to Economic Affairs.

- A moratorium with regards to fishing on the Saba Bank was extended from 21.01.96 to 12.01.99, with fishing allowed only by residents of Saba, Statia and St. Maarten under conditions safeguarding the Saba Bank coral reefs and the diverse species of fish and sea-life. The foregoing has been published in the Law of the Sea bulletin.

- Structured co-ordination with the Fishery committee, Coast Guard, Maritime Affairs is in place and is directed by the Department of Economic Affairs with all requests for fishing licenses in Netherlands Antillean waters being directed to this department to be dealt with in the fishery committee.

- Technical and financial assistance is now available from instances, such as FAO (Fishery & Agriculture Organisation) of the United Nations and WECAF (Western & Central Atlantic Commission) in support of achieving sustainability.

Issues such as the souvenir craft and transport (small business programs) as well as energy (alternate sources e.g. wind/ thermal) are issues receiving priority attention. Instances like FAPE and the University of the Neth. Antilles are involved in this area.

With regards to the aspect of tourism promotion itself our natural attributes can play a role, particularly as a multi-destination package (refer exhibit A & B) Ladies and gentlemen, sustainable tourism as it relates to sustainable economic growth must not be the end, but rather the means to an end, which is real progress and an improved quality of life for our people collectively. In other words sustainable tourism should not occur at the expense of destruction of the environment and the deterioration of the quality of life. In this light and particularly as food for thought during this conference, I refer to a quote from Caribbean literature which is quite relevant in this context (refer exhibit C).

Ladies and gentlemen, in the coming two days you will be discussing the framework of a Government Policy on sustainable tourism. Some islands have already made substantial advancements in this area and must be highly commended for this.

On behalf of the Central Government and especially on behalf of the Minister of Public Health and Environment, Mrs. Beatriz Doran-Schoop, I wish one and all a very successful conference, which should leave us with a clear view of where we should go and how we should get there.

I thank you.

Sarah Wescott-Williams, Commissioner of Tourism, Sint Maarten

11 June 1997

Sint Maarten: One Sustainable Destination

"Sustainability is a difficult concept for mankind to embrace", a direct quote from none other than Mr. Jean Holder, Secretary General of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation during the recently held Tourism symposium on French St. Martin.

Paul Hawken describes sustainability as "... an economic state where the demands placed upon the environment by people and commerce can be met without reducing the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations.

His economic golden rule for the restorative economy is : " leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life or the environment, make amends if you do."

There has very seldom been a session, small or big, national or international, dealing with tourism, that the matter of economic diversification for tourist destinations, which rely solely or primarily on tourism, has not been an issue.

Notwithstanding a genuine commitment by these tourist destinations for economic diversification, the attractions of the ever expanding tourism trade and other prohibitive factors, especially for small economies, are cause for tourist destinations to continue putting their eggs in the tourism basket, while seeking to strengthen that basket.

If one considers the stunning forecasts for tourism growth world-wide as well as its present significance for the economies it serves, it should amaze no-one that tourism will remain for many destinations the proverbial goose which must lay the golden eggs.

Travel and tourism have for the last forty years or more grown at a rate of 10%.

It is therefore no wonder that sustainability for the Caribbean has become practically synonymous with tourism and it now encompasses all tourism related activities.

The common denominators in all of these activities are paradoxical, because while preservation and moderation are the key factors, the consumer is the benefactor. Yet to preserve any asset, consumption has to be regulated.

We would be amiss to see the impact of tourism solely on the environments of the destinations. The populations of these destinations are equally vulnerable.

The impact of tourism on the Caribbean region is daunting. Estimates of stay-over visitors are in the range of 14 million and of cruise passengers in the range of 9.7 million on an annual basis.

Their spending e.g. in 1994 in this region alone amounted 11.6 billion US dollars.

The Earth Pledge Foundation in a report on Sustainable Tourism reports that sustainable tourism assumes travel and tourism is expanding throughout the world and that efforts must be undertaken to minimise the industry's potentially adverse economic, environmental, and social impacts.

Sustainable Tourism therefore according to this report, encourages balanced travel and tourism and heightened respect for people and their environment through development of sustainable infrastructures (energy, water, waste and transportation), efficient financing mechanisms designed to enhance public and private interests, as well as a balancing of tourist satisfaction with community involvement, employee concerns and environmental needs.

A tall order in any case, and in the particular case of the Caribbean, a very tall order!

The now infamous reference to the Mediterranean Sea as a "diluted sewer" by the Financial Times is a case in point.

Global employment in the tourism industry, is estimated to reach the million mark by the year 2005.

The Caribbean region relies on tourism for approximately 25% of its export earnings and can be considered the world's most tourism dependent region.

From a competitive perspective more so than a preservative one, countries started to branch out their tourism product into areas which would clearly distinguish them from the pack.

No more sea, sand and sun or rather in addition to sea, sand and sun. Ironically, the abundance of even these core assets is being threatened through the great demand imposed by visitors and residents alike.

It was not merely the tourists you attracted, the market and niches you could penetrate, but also what you could attract them to. The once domineering aspect of hotel accommodations became just another element in the total product.

Competition too, seems to have gone global.

Former tourist generating countries have become competitors for their own and foreign travellers.

Yes, we still clamour for the cruise tourists, the co-operate tourists, the honeymooners, the marine tourists and several other lucrative markets, but we also lure our visitors with promises of eco-tourism (natural environment), cultural tourism, dive tourism, green tourism and other tourism diversification.

The transition from competition to preservation was a gradual one, as globally we became more aware of the need for preservation of every asset of this planet on which we live. The ecological vulnerable Caribbean had to take notice as well, for its very survivability.

How do you sustain an industry on which you rely for economic survivability, when this could easily become the destruction of every other life line?

Environmental social, cultural, all life lines which are greatly and adversely impacted by too many wanting to enjoy a good thing.

I therefore consider sustainability paramount to survivability, although the latter is much more dooming by its very implications. Sustainability suggests using and giving in use without depleting, giving in return or replenishing.

A few standouts in the realm of sustainability are population, resource scarcity, and environmental degradation.

For the survivability of the Caribbean, in economic and human terms, the Caribbean waters and land mass (our sea and sand and hills and fields) must be sustained, because other resources we hardly possess.

Does sustainability allow development?

St. Maarten has been a front runner in Caribbean Tourism, offering a top quality product in terms of investor friendliness, Caribbean climate and hospitality.

In a very short time, this sleepy island was transformed into a major tourist attraction and the feverish demand for the product greatly impacted the destination.

Since the demise of the salt trade, which was precipitated by the abolition of slavery, St. Maarten had been just one of the Caribbean islands, basking in its colourful past and unsure about its future.

Tourism signalled a total and dramatic turn-about.

The tourism industry also attracted persons from far and near in search of tourism-generated employment. Population growth exploded. From 2731 in 1960 (according to a census in that year) to 34,568 in 1996, registered population. In 1994, the not registered persons amounted to approximately 11,000.

An island no larger than 37 square miles in its totality can not but be seriously affected with a visitors' population, which since 1986 had surpassed the 400.000 mark in visitors' arrivals and in 1994 had peaked at 647.721.

In that same year of '94, cruise visitors numbered 718.553.

In 1989, Mr. M.P. Sypkens Smit wrote that St. Maarten's assets at the beginning of this island's tourist trade were; a skilled labour force, plans for a vigorous development of the infrastructure, political stability and various tax advantages - a favourite climate for investments, and the trump cards for tourism he wrote, were: a wonderful climate, beautiful beaches, friendly people and last, but not least tax free articles.
(Source: Beyond the Tourist trap.)

After the devastation caused by the hurricanes in 1995, tourism on St. Maarten is once again on the rise, and for economic reasons St. Maarten still is an attraction for workers from the region and further.

We must therefore in our approach towards sustainability keep in mind that the number of consumers of our product will continue to grow. Notwithstanding this demanding increase, we look at our initial attractions as a destination and come to the realisation that several of these are still very much in tact. In fact, resources we did not recognise as such at the advent of the tourist industry are surfacing gradually, but firmly. The cultural past of this island is rich. If only we, the people of this island ourselves would realise how rich indeed and act as custodians of our cultural heritage, comprising the natural and cultural landscapes that we inhabit, the artefacts and objects created, the stones of our past - our history.

How widely known is it e.g. that this island has some 15 "protected" historical sites and buildings, some in a serious state of neglect. Whose job is it to protect these?

Some viewed what I consider the political maturing of St. Maarten as a hindrance to progress, a nuisance to development. There was however, a deeper significance of the transformation that was taking place locally in the early eighties, People were becoming aware of their direct environment.

They realised that we were consuming without any regard for preservation and or replenishment.

People started to take stock, yes, actually take stock!

Take the waste issue, another link in the chain of sustainability and so very critical for this region. What do we do with all this waste? Where do we take it?

And back to the issue of the day:

Tourism is a business and the principals expect a handsome r.o.i.. At what cost can this be maintained?

And again, I ask the question: " Does sustainability allow development?"

Yes, it does.

But it requires an awareness of the interrelatedness of everything that we do in the name of progress and development. It requires an awareness of the impact of even the smallest act we perform on our surroundings.

It requires knowledge and an understanding of our resources. What is there to sustain? And although sustainability is a global concept, in its pursuit, we must think locally. Many things we have in common. There is much we can learn from each other's experiences and mistakes. But all of these have to be translated to our immediate surroundings first.

The partnerships for a sustainable development must start right here. In our homes, in our schools, in our businesses, government.

We have been endowed with all the natural ingredients for sustainability. The challenge at hand for this naturally sustainable destination is for all actors, while in pursuit of their own goals and objectives, to point their noses in the same direction.

Persuasion alone might not be sufficient. And in regulating you run the risk of over regulation. Where do the you draw the line? Answer the question first: "What is your future worth?"

Hendrik Oosterveld, Deputy Director Nature Management, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the Netherlands.

11 June 1997

Where do we go next year?

Mr. State Secretary Hassell, Commissioner Wescott, Commissioner Bennet, Commissioner Marlin, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here on Sint Maarten today for the workshop on sustainable tourism in the Netherlands Antilles. First I want to thank Mr. Marlin very much for his welcome-words on Sint Maarten on his "friendly island".

Since last Wednesday I am visiting the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba to discuss matters on nature management and signing of co-operation agreements between the Department of VOMIL of the Antilles and VROM in Aruba and my Department of Nature Management of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries in The Hague. And I had the chance to see already some nice elements of your beautiful natural resources.

Tourism and the relation to nature and environment is one of the five priorities of the nature- and environmental policy of the Netherlands Antilles. And it is clear to see why. There are many natural values on the Antilles. And tourism is of tremendous importance for the economy of all Antillean islands. On the other hand however, there is much concern about the vulnerable natural assets. Keeping these assets is of high importance to keep the economic base of the islands in the future.

Situation in the Netherlands

In this presentation I will first discuss the process in the Netherlands regarding to sustainable tourism and the goals of the Dutch government.

Since the fifties and sixties welfare has increased considerably in the Netherlands. And so did the number of holidays. The possibilities for recreation grew more and more and the travels got longer and further away. After recreation the word tourism came in use, pointing at the fact that it became a real industry. Nowadays not only holidays in France and Germany are popular, but also the unknown and unspoilt destinations far away on earth are getting very popular in our country. The lust to see more every year is growing fast. Outgoing tourism is now a big growing economic sector with a lot of business for airline companies, bus and train companies, tour operators and so on. It's one of the biggest economic sectors in the world and every years growth on destinations far way is 15%. Mr. Marlin already spoke about it. For many people the basic question when returning home after their holiday is "where do we go next year". Many of the companies bring quite a lot of tourists to the Antilles also. I saw in the, by the way, very well prepared conference documentation, that there are thousands of tourists every year. So there is a big relation between the outgoing tourists from the Netherlands and the tourist sector here in the Netherlands Antilles, although the Americans here are by far more outnumbering the Dutch.

"Are we going too far?"

But not only tourists and touroperators are discussing this item. Also the Advisory Council on Nature Management, a former advisory Council for the Dutch Government, decided to find out how far the tourists were going. The Council published a report, titled "are we going too far?".

It was concluded that there was a strong growth of outgoing tourism from our country and this caused more and more negative impact on the environment by increase of air-pollution, use of unspoilt beaches by new hotels, pressure on sensitive nature areas and so on. Especially the calculation that one return flight from Amsterdam to Athens (about same distance from Curaçao to Miami I think) per person costs as much energy as heating a house for a whole year, caused a lot of discussion. But besides the growing mobility and the negative impact on nature and environment, the Advisory Council also concluded some positive effects of tourism. Nature areas now often get legally protected into National Parks. Special arrangements are made to guide tourists and give them information. Guides and park rangers can be paid with money from entrance fees or taxes. This all together benefits nature and the local economy.

Groeneveld workshops

After publication of this report, our Ministry organised a workshop in 1995 -the Groeneveld One workshop- about nature and outgoing tourism. For the first time the government discussed possible actions towards sustainable tourism with all parties involved. One of the results of this workshop was the establishment of a platform in which tourist companies, the transport sector, the government, nature and environmental groups and consumer organisations would work together. This platform started several new activities.

In 1996 a second conference was organised by this platform. The tourist sector and others discussed ways to promote real steps in developing sustainable tourism to the Alps and the Mediterranean, the two main tourist destinations in Europe, where a lot of Dutch tourists go. As a third step in this process, we can see now this conference in the Netherlands Antilles. It is a next discussion moment dealing with destinations far-away.

Programme on International Nature Management

In the meantime the Dutch Government had published a document about their international nature management policy. This "Programme International Nature Management", or PIN, was written after hearings with all parties involved and approved by Parliament in 1995.

In my opinion there are two topics in this document of main interest regarding this conference.

1. First of all, the relation nature and tourism is one of the main "integration-themes". It is realised that nature is essential for sustainable tourism. Else tourism will, as commissioner Wescott already said, "kill the goose that lays the golden eggs". The Dutch government states it will promote sustainable tourism and will involve all parties concerned. The aim is to reach agreements on how to limit the damage by Dutch tourism on nature abroad, including reduction of the pressure on the environment by transportation. Together with some concrete actions, these agreements can result in a code for tourism and the natural environment. And I think that it is very important that during this workshop, parties involved should discuss the elements for such a code of conduct for the Netherlands Antilles as well.

2. A second theme in the PIN- Programme, I would like to mention "Partnership for nature". This partnership for nature is the philosophy that nature is not only the responsibility of the government, but for society as a whole. This means that care of environment and nature cannot just be realised by only the government. It needs active contributions from the different sectors like the tourism sector. This responsibility of the sector is one of the key elements for future discussions. And also co-operation is the key-word for solutions. Not only rules or regulations, but support of each other in search for concrete possibilities for improvement. Important to mention as is that it is not only the tourist sector where we follow this approach. Also for instance in relation with agriculture and for instance the water-engineering sector, we have reached kind of agreements for co-operation on a more sustainable use of natural values and biodiversity.

Initiative group

Starting from these ideas, and as a result of the two mentioned Groeneveld workshops, the previous mentioned "Platform on nature and tourism" has changed into the "Initiative group on Outgoing tourism and natural environment". This initiative group plays at the moment a very central role in the discussions in the Netherlands on nature and tourism. The initiative group is chaired by the tourist sector itself, by ANVR, the Dutch association of touroperators. The consumer organisation ANWB (with 3 million members the biggest association in the Netherlands) is keeping the secretariat. Further on there are representatives of the different Ministries, the transportation sector like KLM and bus companies, the nature-organisation IUCN and the Alps-platform in Holland (promoting sustainable tourism in the Alps). Several members of this initiative group are also present here today at this conference

It is still a search together on what impulses can be made for sustainable tourism. Some concrete initiatives are already being set up. I will mention just a few:

- More sustainable holiday-packages towards the Alps-mountains, including use of bus transportation instead of private cars and planes.
- Several awareness and information programs about the natural values in and around tourist spots.
- Initiatives to set up product information in brochures about energy use of the holiday-packages and the environmental statistics of hotels. More and more hotels will be selected by the touroperators, keeping in mind the environmental achievements.
- A green brochures from the touroperators with information to the public about all nature and environment aspects around travelling. For instance that taking the souvenirs of endangered species is forbidden.
- International agreements about spreading the holiday seasons to prevent too much tourist pressure in peak periods.
- Co-operation of tourist and nature organisations in bringing together information about nature areas and their sensitivity for use.
- Support in organising wider discussion, like this conference on St. Maarten and Saba.

But besides some concrete steps, I am very pleased to see that the Initiative Group has created already very much enthusiasm among all its members: touroperators, nature organisation, government, and so on. Stimulating each other and getting wider support in everybody's own organisation is already one of the reached goals in about a half year work!

Value of nature

Exchange of each others experiences made me already clear that there are many types of tourists nowadays. Mass-tourism to sun and beaches exist, but also trips for special interested travellers to destinations where they want to see something different. I also hear signals that the tourist want more and more quality in this competitive world. And they want a clean and green environment, where there are interesting things to discover. It gives the tourist destinations a lot more value where people also want to pay for.

Value of nature is also what interested me a few weeks ago in the newspaper. It told that researchers had calculated the economic value of nature of many different types of ecosystems. Value which has been build up as profits from for instance sustainable use, regulating climate, as water resources or source of biodiversity. It said that wetlands had the most economic value on earth; about 23 thousand dollar per ha. And coral reefs made some 6000 dollars per ha stated the article (but some people told me here that it will be a lot more), mainly because of recreational value. In this way the researchers made clear that ecosystems give a large input in the profit of countries. Important to keep in mind for this meeting.

Antilles, need for sustainable policy

During the week that I stayed on several islands in this beautiful Caribbean region, I saw and heard of many good examples of how sustainable tourism can work. The marine parks in Bonaire and Saba appear to be very good examples of areas where tourists can visit wonderful places and at the same time contribute to the management of the areas by paying an entrance or diving fee. Some of these parks are already self-supporting I heard and it shows that nature and economy are very much partners, which can be followed on other islands. Plans are on the way to start a new National Parks at Arikok in Aruba and I have visited this very special area last week. Regulating visitors towards the attractions on one side of this park will protect the vulnerable areas in the rest of the area. And it will be a welcome expansion of the tourist product of Aruba.

Plans are also on the way to create a Nature Park on Mt. Scenery in Saba. Protection of this kind of extremely valuable nature areas is clear for everyone and it can attract for instance many true-nature-seeking hikers, which can contribute to the management of these area.

On the other side, I discovered some wrong developments as well. On different places, even the last unspoilt beaches are given away to tourist developments. This happens even when, for instance here on Sint Maarten, there are still many empty and unused hotels after the Luis hurricane. In such a case I think restart and upgrading of existing hotels should be given first priority, above developing unspoilt areas.

On several islands the green hills which form the character of the islands for many tourists getting more and more used for buildings as well. This causes a dramatic change in the view of the islands, including erosion, pollution of the sea by runoff water etc. What I found out is that the word "development" has some mysterious meaning here. It suggests that building everywhere is always "development" and always brings profit to the island. No less is true however: only regulation of developments and giving space to nature- and landscape developments can bring prosperity to the island as a whole. In my view regulating the overall development of the islands gives at last more profit than just let happen all "developments" of individuals. It is the responsibility and challenge of all local governments to show their seriousness in this field.

Needed is regulation of tourism and building developments in a sustainable way, so that also there is not only profit on the short term, but the islands stay attractive also for tourists and gives prosperity on the long term. The making of zoning or development plans are basic needs for this. Also legal protection of nature areas and valuable landscape areas is essential. And in this way it should be considered to do Environmental Impact Assessments with new developments or do compensation work on nature when hotel developments are carried out. For this reason, I have also decided to support the development of nature plans and legislation, which is now set up on several islands. This is one of the main goals of the new co-operation agreement, which I mentioned before.

Conclusions and recommendations

I will come to the end of this presentation and I will give some statements and elements how in my opinion sustainable tourism could be implemented, regarding all these above mentioned elements.

1. First the tourist sector itself is highly responsible in creating sustainable tourism. Awareness of the public should be increased by giving information. The existing information systems can easily be expanded with information about nature and environmental impact.
2. Tourists pay more and more attention to quality. Where they stay, what they see and what they do. For the tourist sector it is essential to focus on the fact that the consumers attitude and demands are changing.
3. Local governments are first responsible for regulating developments and implement the policy towards sustainable tourism. The drawing of zonal or physical plans is needed.
4. Also needed is protection of natural areas (by legislation) and making of regulations for "wise-use" by tourists. Following the idea "the user pays", this could contribute to the management of the areas which safeguards the nature areas on the long term.
5. Co-operation and taking responsibilities are the key words. Governments, tourist sector, nature organisations. Keep the process going on after this conference, so that conclusions and recommendations could get implemented. Activities and agreements could lead to a code of conduct between all parties involved

All these elements will hopefully contribute to a beautiful, natural and prosperous Netherlands Antilles. Remember well. With your natural areas and beautiful landscapes, you have the golden eggs right in your hands. Let's work together not to crush those eggs. The question is not "where do we go next year?", but "where do we go in the future?". Thank you for your attention.

Speech Commissioner Christina ten Brink
Saba, 12 June 1997

State Secretary Mr. Danny Hassell, Fellow commissioner Mrs. Edris Bennet, Hendrik Oosterveld (nature Management) Mr. Nico Visser, Ladies & gentlemen, Good Morning.

I would like to welcome you all to this our beautiful island and do hope that the information that you receive here today would be very fruitful.

The first workshop this morning deals with Eco-tourism, a much debated form of tourism, the potential and pitfalls of which we are just beginning to understand, as you will hear from our first speaker this morning.

When you look through the table of contents of the discussion paper for this conference, it seems as if Eco-tourism is missing. Rest assured, because if you turn to chapter 7 of the discussion paper you will see a section on tourism and biodiversity.

The introduction there says: "What used to be called nature is nowadays referred to as biodiversity: the various species of plants and animals which, in their co-existence with non-living surroundings, form the ecosystems".

Should we then perhaps rename Eco-tourism: "biodiversity tourism?"

There are clearly many important contributions that Eco-tourism can make to the conservation of biodiversity. For example, long-term economic benefits from Eco tourism can only be realized if the attractions (the biodiversity) that draws the Eco-tourist, are well protected and managed.

Thus, Eco tourism may stimulate the establishment of protected areas which help to conserve biodiversity.

At the downside, Eco-tourism ventures will not succeed in the long term if they are ill-planned or if visitor use exceeds the carrying capacity of the area or attraction on which the tourism is based. These are some of the issues that we will address this morning.

One thing is clear to me. Eco-tourism is among the first to fail if it is not set up in a sustainable manner. A cruise tourist who is merely interested in a little sightseeing and shopping may still have a positive experience at a destination where most of the natural attractions have been affected or degraded.

The Eco- tourist will be extremely disappointed if those natural attractions that drew him/her to the destinations are not in tip-top shape.

Tom van 't Hof, Saba Conservation Foundation

12 June 1997

PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR ECO-TOURISM

1. Planning for eco-tourism must be integrated with other planning efforts (tourism and general development planning).
2. Tourism development must be preceded by an environmental impact assessment (EAI).
3. Social and environmental carrying capacity of an area must be determined.
4. Management plans must be prepared for areas visited by eco-tourists.

POTENTIALS AND PITFALLS OF ECO-TOURISM

Potentials:

1. Contributes to economic development.
2. Contributes to biodiversity conservation.
3. Provides for alternative, non-consumptive, resource use.

Pitfalls:

1. May exceed the carrying capacity of an area and lead to environmental degradation.
2. May cause alienation of traditional resource users from their resources.
3. May cause anger among local communities because benefits are not equally distributed.

ECO-TOURISM IS:

"Environmentally responsible travel to experience the natural areas and culture of a region while promoting conservation and economically contributing to local communities".

CRITERIA FOR ECO-TOURISM

1. Must involve travel to relatively undisturbed natural areas to appreciate, understand and learn about the natural and cultural features of the area.
2. Should have minimal environmental and social impact.
3. Should contribute to conservation of biodiversity.
4. Should benefit local communities.
5. Should be part of a planned and managed approach to tourism development.

Jan Faber, Chairman Stenapa, St. Eustatius

12 June 1997

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The following are some very important dates for the St. Eustatius National Parks.

Important dates

- 1) April 1884 First collection of *Ipomoea sphenophylla*
- 2) 21 November 1988 STENAPA founded
- 3) 29 September MV Dundalk runs aground during Hurricane Hugo.
- 4) 27 October 1994 Rediscovery *Ipomoea sphenophylla*
- 5) 6 March 1995 Re-activation of STENAPA

In October Edwin Gawlick, an employee of Statia Terminals NV accompanied Tom van 't Hof around Statia Terminals property during his environmental baseline study. I had been with Tom on all his previous hikes but missed this one since I had to go to Miami on the fateful day. On previous hikes I had asked Tom and Edwin to be on the lookout for a vine with rather distinct spatula shaped leaves. Although Edwin did not know anything about plants, or maybe because of it, he was always asking us the names of the various flowers. When Edwin spotted this rather spectacular vine loaded with purple flowers, he asked the usual question. Tom inspected the vine and immediately realised that the leaf structure corresponded to the description of the long lost Statia Morning Glory. He notified Dr. Richard Howard of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University for preliminary confirmation. He also asked me to collect further samples and conduct field observations of the plant. The rest is history.

Because of the discovery of this extremely rare endemic species, we felt that measures should be taken to protect it, in particular from the goats which had been observed eating the young plants. Since we already had an environmental organisation (although inactive), it seemed sensible to use it as a vehicle to promote the protection of the Statia Morning Glory in particular and all of the remaining nature on Statia in general. Since my particular hobby is orchids(which the goats also eat!) which I felt should also be protected, I became active in the STENAPA organisation.

Shortly after the re-activation, I was approached by Steve Wilson, at that time General Manager of Statia Terminals NV. He proposed that if STENAPA could negotiate a contract with KABNA Curaçao for the removal of the wreck of the Dundalk, Statia Terminals would do all the work and donate the fee to STENAPA.

Since at the time we had only app. 2000 guilders in the bank, that sounded wonderful. It was decided to request permission to create an artificial reef for use by our local fishermen.

We received permission to do this and the STENAPA reef was born. Even at this time there are still more wrecks being deposited at the reef. Fish life is becoming abundant with reports of groupers of a size not seen for many years. Numerous tiny lobsters have been observed indicating the use of the reef as a breeding site.

Things began moving really fast. The long dormant proposal for the establishment of a Manne Park was resurrected and STENAPA was asked to undertake this project. We agreed with the provision that STENAPA would manage the park. A delegation from STICHTING DOEN arrived from the Netherlands to discuss aspects that they might be willing to fund- The original STENAPA always had as one of it's goals the establishment of a Botanical Garden. This project was also re-initiated. Land was requested from the government for this purpose. STICHTING DOEN agreed to the funding. We are now well into phase two of this project. Phase one consisted of constructing a drive way and parking lot, building of two cisterns and fencing in the whole area.

Then in fall of 1996 negotiations were opened with Wereld Natuur Fonds Nederland for the funding of the Manne Park. We reached an agreement which resulted in the arrival of Drs. Jaap Begeman on Statia as Parks Manager.

During all this time there has been intense activity going on to introduce various pieces of environmental legislation to the government. To date we have achieved the following:

- 1) Establishment of a Botanical Garden of 13 acres.
- 2) The establishment of a Manne Park.
- 3) The endangered species protection ordinance, which does not only protect our endangered species, it also established two large nature preserves.
- 4) The long lease on a prime piece of property in the harbour area for our marine park office. STENAPA has lobbied very hard for the animal registration ordinance and has contributed significantly to this proposed legislation. We have received assurances that it will pass into law shortly. The only thing to be done is to transfer the management of the nature preserves to STENAPA.

Activities presently going on are

- 1) Construction Marine Park. All materials necessary for the construction of the buoys and the marine park office have been received as well as the patrol boat.
- 2) The Botanical Garden has been cleared of brush and small trees. A chipper/shredder will arrive shortly to take care of the debris. Material for the visitors building and the pavilion has arrived and building will start after the hurricane season.
- 3) Construction of the STENAPA reef and monitoring of the marine life is continuing.
- 4) The first new trail up the Quill has been finished and has been highly praised by both locals and visitors alike. Further trails are planned but until funds become available for more park rangers, this must wait till after the completion of the Manne Park. This is an economical factor. It is believed that the Marine Park will have a highly beneficial immediate impact on the island's economy. Until the land parks are under STENAPA's management and the loose running animals are removed these areas will not have the tourist appeal that a manne park has. Furthermore nature will take some time to repair the damage from overgrazing and the subsequent erosion before the full potential of these parks as eco tourism attractions can be realised.

But what a potential! Our marine park has already been praised for it's outstanding quality and variety of it's dive sites. With the planned construction of more artificial reefs STENAPA will be able to offer abundant marine life to our visitors and for local fishermen in those areas specially set aside for fishing. Our Northern hills are the nesting ground for the endangered Iguana delicatissima. Our island is believed to be only one of three islands in the entire Caribbean with a viable breeding population and certainly the only one in the Netherlands Antilles. These hills are also home to some of our 15 local orchids, some of which are extremely rare. Giant grotesque rock formation catch the eye and the imagination. Remains of old plantations, such as the ruins and old implements raises fascinating questions on how the old settlers ever could make a living in those hills. The steep cliff sides are in places covered with hardy orchids and provide safe nesting grounds to numerous birds. On the South side we have the Quill. This area is entirely different from the Northern area. It is hard to imagine you are on the same island. A lush secondary dry forest (NOT a rain forest!) covers the bottom of the dormant volcano with some beautiful species of wild figs. The traces of an old plantation can be found in the form of a small banana plantation and a cacao grove. Along the crater rim and down the slopes many different kinds of orchids can be found. Statia is host to at least 15 different kinds, some of them quite rare. Farther to the south we find Whitewall, a very unusual geological formation of great interest to geologist. It is a piece of the sea bottom that was pushed up when the Quill was formed as an active volcano. It is not unusual in this area to find large, perfectly formed gypsum crystals sticking out of the ground. And everywhere you go, our history speaks to us. On the Boven we find ruins cisterns and an old water trough made from stone, in the Botanical Garden we discovered what is believed to be the old Heyliger plantation- This is important since Commander Heyliger was the first governor of all three islands, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten. We actually uncovered an old grave, which was constructed in an entirely different way from all the other known graves on the island. We are waiting for experts to excavate this grave. Any artefacts found will be displayed in our visitors building. Not only on land do we find evidence of our golden age. Two historical/ archaeological sites have been designated as separate parts of our marine park. Names of dive sites such a "Double Wreck" reminds us of the dangers the men in those days were facing during our hurricane season.

Much work lies ahead of us. We need the help of scientists in all aspects of our park work, on land or in the sea. We need botanists, entomologists, herpetologists, you name it, we need it! Already this year we had two teams of scientists on the island, who were very useful. However we need a sustained effort to study all aspects of nature on our island. It has been neglected for too long in this respect. Already our new parks manager has discovered what is believed a new species of snake for St. Eustatius. We want to make St. Eustatius an outdoor laboratory, a place where nature and the environment can be studied, observed and enjoyed. Statia certainly has the potential to be THE eco tourism island of the Eastern Caribbean. The people are friendly, serious crime is unheard of and you don't need to lock your doors at night!

With the present effort underway to solve the animal problem and through the efforts of other local environmental organisations to clean up the litter in the streets and the yards, we are confident that Statia is on the threshold of being able to attract tourists and have them return time and time again.

At this point I want to thank and recommend our local government and the members of both parties for their unwavering support in environmental matters and for their diligence in getting these matters passed into law. Together, the Government of St. Eustatius and the people as represented in STENAPA have achieved our objectives at a rate which is unheard of in the Caribbean.

12 June 1997

Marine environment and tourism: Maximum ten divers per square meter

INTRODUCTION

I know that I have been asked to speak here to a broad cross section of representatives from various fields connected with tourism both from the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. Since I do not know how familiar you may be with Bonaire or with coral reef ecosystems in general I propose first of all to show you what it is we are trying to protect on Bonaire - the Bonaire Marine Park. I believe that once you have seen what we are protecting, why it should be protected speaks for itself. All that is left to me to do then is then explain to you how we can work together to make this a reality.

(5 minute slide sequence)

BONAIRE: THE ISLAND

Bonaire is a very small island in the Southern Caribbean, approximately ten times the size of Saba. It has a land area of only 288 km² of which approximately 17% is protected in the form of the Washington Slagbaai National Park. This is felt to be insufficient and via our Nature Policy Plan for Bonaire we are proposing that in total 2/3 of the island should be given protected status in shape or form.

The waters around Bonaire from the high water mark to the 200' depth contour all the way around Bonaire and Klein Bonaire have been protected since the setting up of the Bonaire Marine Park in 1979. The Park is a multi-use protected area, with two strict reserves. It caters mainly, but not exclusively, to divers - a total of over 28,000 divers visited Bonaire in 1996 alone. Also within the Marine Park there are some low impact artesinal and sport fishing activities and other water sports (windsurfing, kayaking, parasailing, water skiing etc.) and Bonaire is a popular stopping of point for sailing boats en route to the Panama Canal.

OUR MARINE RESOURCES

The Bonaire Marine Park consists of 2,700 hectares of coral reefs, sea grass and mangrove ecosystems. These ecosystems are very fragile environments, they support high biodiversity, forming complex interactive associations between plants and animals. Coral reefs particularly require very *special environmental conditions* in which to thrive. Put very simplistically they need warm water, lots of sunshine, low nutrient levels and low levels of sediment. If nutrients in the water surrounding coral reefs are at detectable levels they are already too high. All this accounts for why corals prefer the Caribbean to the Waddensee for example!

Bonaire is blessed with some of the most fragile and most beautiful of coral reefs in the Caribbean. As a SCUBA diving destination Bonaire is consistently rated in the top 10 by divers world wide and scientists agree that Bonaire's reefs are very well developed and that fish populations are exceptionally diverse. What makes our reefs so special, and also particularly vulnerable is that we have *fringing reefs* which means that the corals start right at the waters edge. This is a double edged sword as it makes them supremely accessible to tourists but also means that everything we do on the land directly and immediately impacts on our reefs.

The value of reefs lies in the way they act as a storm barrier, the fact that they support diverse fisheries, their biological value as a gene pool as well as their aesthetic and recreational appeal. Dive tourism generated an estimated \$ 34 million for Bonaire in 1996. Many excellent comparisons have been made between *rainforests and coral reefs*: Both have the highest diversity of any ecosystem on Earth. On a much sadder note the rate of loss of reefs globally rivals that of rain forest loss.

Bonaire's economic future depends on the welfare of its coral reefs - we cannot afford to loose them.

MPA MANAGEMENT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Marine Protected Areas (MPA) management in essence is about banning destructive practices, limiting extractive practices and controlling use such that it does not have a negative impact on the environment. The various broad areas of management include

- patrolling (assisting and educating park users),
- maintenance of the park's physical infrastructure (mooring system, shore marker stones, buildings and equipment),
- interpretation (provision of information and education to both local people and tourists),
- research and monitoring (to ensure that management practices are effective),
- the giving of advice and other legislative matters (issuing of permits law enforcement).

Resource management entails working with local and user community. It entails finding solutions to often complex problems and workable compromise in cases of conflict. The world around us is ever changing and management policies need to be flexible to deal quickly and effectively with altered circumstances.

"SUSTAINABLE" TOURISM

Just as natural systems need *careful management* - so does tourism ! Tourism and protected areas are natural partners: it is no exaggeration to state that without tourism Bonaire Marine Park would not exist ! Tourism can truly offer a way of utilising the natural environment in a sustainable fashion.

It is all too easy to think of tourism as involving only the visitors to a destination, but it is important to consider all aspects of tourism development:

- *impact of tourism development* particularly where this takes place in the coastal zone as it can exert a high cost on coral reefs, most importantly by increasing sedimentation. Control of sedimentation rates is a crucial aspect of coastal zone management
- *impact of running of tourist accommodation* as these are not only producers of vast quantities of nutrient rich waste water, but also require elaborate landscaping. If not disposed on correctly this nice eased nutrient load can soon reduce a coral reef to an algal wasteland.
- *impact of the tourists themselves* and their activities. Coral reefs are sensitive environments which do not tolerate the kind of physical damage which results from diver contact, boat contact or anchoring.

There are of course ways in which tourism can make a very positive contribution to nature conservation and protected areas. Tourism can help to promote conservation and help areas achieve protected status. A good example of this is the tourism driven initiative to save the uninhabited Island of Klein Bonaire. It can offer a productive use for otherwise unproductive areas. It can stimulate investment and provide employment. Perhaps most importantly it can provide a continuing source of funding for protected areas which in turn can stimulate management. The Bonaire Marine Park is a good example of this. The first attempt to run a marine park on Bonaire floundered when the initial grant funding ran out.

It is sad but true that most grant funding organisations, whilst they can be persuaded to finance the setting up of protected areas, are rarely prepared to fund the running of them. When the Marine Park was revitalised in 1991 with money from the Dutch Government (KabNA) one of the conditions attached to the funding was that the Marine Park must become self financing, within the term of the grant. This gave the impetus needed to introduce a diver admission fee, whereby anyone SCUBA diving in the Marine Park is required by law to pay a \$1 0.00 annual admission fee to the Park. This was so successful that by the end of 1992 the Marine Park was already fully self financing. It is therefore true to say that without tourism the Bonaire Marine Park would simply not exist. The message is clear: "green tourism" is good tourism.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Carrying capacity is a concept rather than a fixed number which is used to describe the level of visitation an environment can withstand without the environment suffering substantial change. Without spending a great deal of time discussing the various debates about what constitutes substantial change and how this can be measured, it is important to note that carrying capacity is influenced by a number of different factors some of which can and some of which cannot be controlled.

- *environmental factors* - factors such as the diversity of the ecosystem, its robustness or capacity for withstanding stress, the amount of space available for visitation and any natural impacts such as bleaching disease and storms. All of these play a vital role in determining safe levels of visitation all of them are also largely beyond our control.
- *how well the resource is protected and managed* - how well potential sources of "harm" are controlled such as the level of interpretational activities, level of legal protection and enforcement. These are of course factors over which we do exert control.
- *social factors* - such as the level of education of users, patterns of use etc. which are again factors over which we have a great deal of control. For example divers did not cause either of the major bleaching events which affected Bonaire in the past 10 years but they are the only group which can help to ensure the reefs recover by avoiding any and all contact with them.

Of course each ecosystem has a finite carrying capacity. For the Bonaire Marine Park this has been estimated at 200,000 dives/year or 5,000 dives per site. Using a conservative estimate of 10 dives/diver this means that in 1996 our 28,000 visiting divers did an estimated 280,000 dives - a number which clearly indicates that our reefs are near of exceeding their carrying capacity.

In terms of how to deal with this kind of situation, a number of different options are open to us. Of course managing ALL of the factors likely to have a negative impact on the ecosystem (nutrient enrichment, sedimentation etc.) is of paramount importance. Beyond this is important to involve the visiting tourists themselves - an educated tourist is a concerned tourist.

It may be appropriate under certain circumstances to create visitor hot spots or "honeypots" - concentrating visitation in areas which have hi impact tolerance such as wrecks in a reef environment. Beyond this is it important to take measures aimed at ensuring that undesirable visitor hot spots do not result. In other words it is important to "spread the load" both in time and space. The Manne Park has been following this policy for many years now. Whilst there is little seasonality in our dive tourism in the past a "hit list" of dive sites was created by travel writers which gave visiting divers the impression that if they did not dive those sites mentioned then they have not seen the very best Bonaire had to offer.

It was a pleasure to hear a travel write recently complained bitterly that despite a week spent at various island dive operations and a not inconsiderable amount of "liquid bribery" he had been absolutely unable to compile a "top ten" list of dive sites for Bonaire !

In a broader context it is vital to diversify the tourism market as much as possible or even to diversify away from tourism altogether into other low impact industries such as educational institutions or communication technology. The Tourism Corporation Bonaire has been working successfully at shifting attention away from Bonaire's reefs as the sole source of tourism dollars for several years in a row. They have had some surprising successes in attracting a growing honeymoon market and also in making considerable headway into the "adventure" travel market.

During the planning process due consideration needs to be given to utilising limited access in terms of airlift, room availability and dive site closure to ensure that our reefs are not dived to death.

THE WAY FORWARD

- It is important not to overlook the "product" in the universal scramble to attract tourists and to truly realise the duty of care: we must take on whenever we bring visitors to our shores. We must ensure that we promote only environmentally sound construction and landscaping practices which will not harm our fragile ecosystems.
- Equally we need to promote environmentally sound management practices and "green" both our existing and all new tourist accommodation
- There is a need for education which goes beyond our islands - if tourists arrive uneducated then we are faced with an impossible task. This means enlisting the support of dive magazines, tourist offices, travel operators and airlines - in short everyone involved in the industry.

The fragile natural treasures which make our islands so special will not survive into the future without our help - the time for lip service is over.

Our motto on Bonaire is simple.- "Bonaire needs tourists..... who care !"

Willem Riedijk, Technical Faculty UNA, Curaçao

13 June 1997

Ecohotels between fact and fiction

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking in the environmental TOOL-kit by the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), again and again, I thought this is a trap. Everything they want to know is in there. Naturally I could find some omissions here and there but nothing spectacular and especially nothing which would justify my lecture to you. So here I stand being honoured by the invitation to speak for such a select public and being grateful to Mr. Nico Visser, who wrote an excellent report on sustainable tourism, to offer me this dangerous occasion. Having said that, I am satisfied that I found elements which might be innovative to you not only in the technical sense but also in a more strategic way.

My most fundamental problem however is the fact that I know something about sustainable building technology in moderate climates through one of my Ph.D. students. He is defending the first thesis about sustainable architecture in the Netherlands at Delft University of Technology in November next. It contains new material. My actual problem is how to translate this material into the cultures, the structural circumstances and the technical competence of the Caribbean hoteliers. As a matter of fact this translation certainly requires more research in the Caribbean by Caribbean people

So let me start now after these defensive considerations.

My lecture to you will contain three main elements.

- Ecohotels primarily means making more money
Firstly it seems important to take a closer look at the significance of sustainable development for hotels in the Caribbean. In this part I hope to convince you that greening your hotel just means a wiser use of energy and resources, which implies that it has something to do with sustainability.
- Ecohotels as a concept of sustainability are still a fiction
In the second part I shall give you some theoretical background about technology for sustainable development and why it is essential to have precise ideas about how to choose the right technique in the framework of strategies and the infrastructure on your island and in your hotel.
- Construction of an ecohotel is possible and desirable
In the third part I shall give some new ideas about the construction of a real ecohotel. This part will contain concrete suggestions for example to design and construct the Caribbean ecohotel on an Antillean island.

Ecohotels means making more money

More than twenty years ago I was intimately involved in the production of one of the first political programs on environmental protection and more sustainable development. It was in the same period in which dr. Roefie Hueting, a student of Nobelprice winner professor Jan Tinbergen, wrote a Ph. D. study on how to bring the value of the environment into economy. Nowadays the famous professor Herman Daly, expert on steady state economics, offers solutions, but the world is still very far from a "steady state situation"

It is right to state that the environmental movement deserves recognition for bringing the environmental problem to everyone's consciousness. And the environmental problem is gaining influence on daily life and work, also in hotels.

Fuel is steadily getting more expensive, although at a much too slow rate to have positive effects on the greenhouse effect. Important natural monuments get protected, but slowly. Technologies are refined in order to be wiser with energy and resources, but only if it makes

money. This is one of the main reasons why the implementation of photovoltaic electricity generation, also important for hotels, goes too slowly.

And please do realise that if sustainable forms of energy would get the same subsidies as nuclear energy got in the past and still gets, than the introduction for independent electricity generation in hotels in the Caribbean would already be commercially attractive.

So far so good, nothing wrong with making money. So is sustainable development and the ecohotel movement nothing more than a better and healthier way to make money ? The answer is: " Yes for the time being "

But technology is a tool for people and for society always containing technical, structural and cultural elements, which are closely related and according to tested theory this relation can be described and used as a tool for development and evaluation. Politics decide about structures, such as economics, laws and infrastructure. Thus regulations and laws inhibit or stimulate the development of your ecohotel. And the local culture might be unaware of the significance of ecohotels for local employment and protection of nature. So beyond money there is room for more than technical measures, relevant to the future of the hotel. In practice local politics and local people are in fact also decisive for success of an ecohotel

Three years ago students of Vienna University of Technology in the framework of an exercise in one of my courses visited the service centres of consumer white goods with a questionnaire on the reparability of washing-machines and other household equipment. The service-organisations without exception complained about the multinational trade-marks.

The two main problems appeared to be: Growing difficulties to repair the equipment and especially the fact that the machines seemed to be designed NOT to be repairable. So what significance does greening have if it means that you have to buy new because there are no spare parts of the old equipment and / or it is difficult or impossible to repair. Always when you buy a technique, you buy the philosophy of the maker with it. It is like a genetic code. Such a genetic code compatible with the social, natural and cultural environment is what any ecohotel needs for its' proper strategy.

From this point of view I absolutely don't understand why important architectural contracts are not given to local architects, who know the climate, nature and culture important for any building. This is especially the case if there is local expertise, like in a recent big project in Curaçao. It is a real shame for the development of local expertise to use expensive foreign experts. They come and go with no special responsibility for people and the environment. The genetic code of technology is relevant for you. Not so long ago I was involved over a number of years in research on the production technology of medicines in the traditional health care system of Sri Lanka. The State Factory of Ayurveda used a bottling machine. To repair it someone had to be flown in from Germany: Most of the sustainable techniques you introduce in your hotel will ask more from your personnel and hopefully less from your guests. Any of the examples in the interesting energy audit of Ecovision demands extra attention or work and sometimes a completely new attitude.

Sustainable development and industrial strategy are only compatible if the efficiency of consumption of natural resources is raised. Last year the Secretary of the University of the Netherlands Antilles (UNA) asked for help to solve the following problem: The central chiller installation of the UNA was technically and economically completely written off, but there was no money to buy a new installation, an investment of some NAf 700.000.-. The current budget for electricity and water would however not be diminished. After some research it was found that a "state of the art" unit, would save so much money on the energy bill of Kodela, the local utility, that UNA could lease this modern equipment and own it by the end of the leasing period. A perfect example of economic motivation serving ecological goals.

Ecohotels will always make more money, because in the end cleaner production methods are cheaper than polluting or inefficient techniques. The conclusion is that within the existing economical conditions "eco" is about efficiency in terms of resources and money.

Ecohotels as a concept of sustainability

Ecohotels are a fiction from the point of view of sustainability. Naturally it is right to say that it is not your responsibility that your tourists have to fly into your Islands. But nonetheless this

is a most polluting way of bringing in our cleaner money. We all know that the energy and resources bill of tourism is not very effective in its contribution to sustainability. And sustainability and for that matter real ecohotels are certainly about the effectivity of contributing to an ecologically stable local and global situation in the coming decades. But how could you do more than making cleaner money, without losing money ?

How can you effectively run an ecohotel if your guests from the US of A demand and request a lifestyle in the hotel which makes your electricity and water bill sky-high. And it is important to state here that this is not on purpose, it is worse. There is little consciousness about the relevance and the urgency of the matter in a country which is not so wise with energy and resources. And the rest of your guests are probably also rather unconscious about the relation between their mental attitude and the quality of the ecology. Surely how can you be effective if the ultimate yardstick of an important part of your guests is that they pay, so they have a right to act as they wish ?

The effectivity of the regulations, laws and other organisational provisions are just as important as your up to date efficient techniques. In a society in which very few people are aware of the necessity to implement cleaner production techniques you run the same risk as the first environmental political programs some 25 years ago in Europe: Your guests and maybe your personnel will show a smile of misunderstanding. Or even worse. Your energy technique may be efficient, but regulations may still be ineffective: You try to save a lot on your electricity bill and consequently you fall in a category paying more per kWh. Especially if you want to produce your own energy, so utilities are key partners for all ecohotels. Now I am certainly neither cynical nor sarcastic, I am too old for that Besides I still have the ideal that sustainable development becomes reality.

It is from a conception, thus strategic point of view, essential to understand that greening a hotel, which was not designed as a ecohotel is a form of window-dressing. The massive concrete building blocks of your hotel will not allow an effective energy management from the point of view of sustainability. Although you might possess modern air-conditioning. Greening with a toolkit as published by CHA must be done, but your hotel was never meant to be a building with an ecological background.

In Europe and the USA a number of organisations, like industrial enterprises but also isolated communities have discovered the attractiveness of building your own utility. The scale of the Netherlands Antilles is such that quite a number of hotels should consider advanced forms of autonomy. Going through the catalogue of "The real goods trading company" in California confirms that you don't achieve an eco-dwelling by techniques alone. Being autonomous opens perspectives of making your hotel part of society. Now the hotels are islands of tourists, inside a relatively poor environment You all know that the Maldives managed to create wealth through a sustainable kind of monitored tourism. There, the isolation of tourists is a part of a development strategy.

Effectivity implies to act local and to be an engine for local employment and development The possibilities offered by ecotechniques to decentralise and to execute maintenance and repair / recycle locally are important and relevant for sustainable development in the region. The CHA-toolkit gives examples in which you could make money by integrating the local community into the life-cycle of the eco-mechanism of your hotel.

That is the real significance of ecohotels, making a standing and sustainable relation with the local environment. Real "eco" means being aware of the total chain of processes enabling you to run your hotel and make money on ecotourism

Construction of an ecohotel is possible and desirable but it requires a strategy

Ecotourism, ladies and gentlemen means seducing the tourist into environmentally friendly behaviour. To do this I am afraid something has to be done about the tourist and the technical and structural conditions which would enable the ecohotelier to behave like a wheel in the construction of a more sustainable society. So an ecohotel is more than just a building it should have a creative relation to the natural, social and cultural environment

My second general point is that it is imperative to design administrative rules which don't hamper the development and construction of ecohotels. The structure should be adapted in such a way that everything costing money now and later can be avoided and everything costing money now and producing money later can be stimulated with the restriction that the local society decides about priorities

Technically spoken there are three interdependent processes essential for construction of an ecohotel, resulting in an improved environmental efficiency to a possible and desirable factor 4 (Lovins and von Weiszäcker, 1996) by increased energy / resources extensivisation, life cycle management and improvement of the quality of processes.

Structurally this implies designing together with the Island Government procedures which direct ecofriendly building processes

Culturally this means that the ecohotel movement needs to develop a philosophy together with the local governments that essentially supports a sustainable society.

Coming to the construction of an ecohotel this design means in the first place:

- Hire a local architect, if necessary have him/her co-operate with a foreign architect
- Hire a local contractor, even if you they are too small, they know the place
- Please realise that industrialisation of the building process is what you need in order to be able save a lot of energy and resources
- Standardised building elements consisting of ecological materials, are repairable, and demountable. The production technology is available
- Variation in design is possible by variation of components of construction.
- The construction worker is becoming a factory worker.
- The repetition of components means cost reduction, reduction in consumption of resources and more building speed, thus more reduction of costs.
- This building method also results in endless variations in scale and design, also increasing well-being with increased employment and healthier buildings.
- Technical performance can be enhanced and precision improved by computer-aided design (CAD) and in its turn by computer aided manufacturing (CAM).
- Apply local building methods or try to understand them, because they have a message, about the relation between people, climate and physical environment
- If possible apply local building materials
- Integrate all your technical provisions like air condition, if necessary at all and reuse of water into the design of the construction elements for the building.
- A hybrid system integrating a number of forms of energy will mostly solve your (a part of) the energy-consumption
- Do not be afraid to apply for green money, joint implementation funds or even European union or united nations subsidies. It is financially essential for the industrialised world to make a success of the new, forms of energy and tropical island states are ideal to test them
- The indoor quality is your introduction to the tourist: moisture, CO2, toxic substances from building materials (!), air conditioning quality, noise reduction and electro smog are some indoor quality factors. Biological building methods offer solutions, recycling of grey water is a part of that philosophy.
- The outdoor quality represents your relation with society and nature. Good shading, the right position to the wind, possibly using cold oceanwater for your air-conditioners, the right building materials, an interesting design, ecogardening
- The most important part of your money is saved in being more precise in the first stages of your construction activities. Sustainable building techniques are often better and cheaper, but the rather conventional building contractors are just prejudiced. So convince them beforehand or don't hire them. It saves you a lot of money and it brings you a better building
- Build your hotel on an island where people are already aware of the significance of sustainability for employment, protection of nature and economy

In my lecture you found three suppositions:

Building an ecohotel is essentially not a technical problem

Co-operation with the government may overcome a kind of "eco difficulties"

The experiment of building the first ecohotel stands a better chance on a small island

My closing remark is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating: On one of the smallest islands an ecohotel could be built applying all the rules to design and construct such a building. To maximise the learning effect the process should be monitored by UNA, which has relevant know-how in the field. The ecohotelproject should be managed by CHA in order to guarantee free use of the results by all members.

Boudewijn 'Bous' Scholts, Plaza Resort Bonaire/Bonhata

13 June 1997

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

This conference may be benchmarked as a very special one. Getting to the beautiful island of St. Martin was not easy. The delegates of Curaçao and Bonaire spent about 24 hours together on our way to the island, and I have to confess, that when there is a need for a conference on nation building, one simply should book the delegates on a trip around the world on ALM.

Nevertheless, ALM treated us as they should do and the most important thing of this adventure was that due to this, Nico Visser can be proud on a very special and, even more important than that, a magnificent conference.

Distinguished guests, I just spoke to my office on Bonaire and they confirmed me that everything is all right: the sun is shining, it is about 32 degrees Celsius the wind is blowing with 4 Beaufort and the resort is occupied above expectation.

Things on Bonaire are "as usual".

Things are as usual is also applicable for the awareness of the environmental issues that we are discussing so intensively here during the course of this conference.

On Bonaire, we are all aware of the necessity of talking radical action when it comes to issues like our sewerage system, the treatment of black water, the savings on electricity, water consumptions and laundry bills. Even the matters around sustainable tourism, carrying capacity of our Marine Park, physical planning and strategical tourism planning are wildly discussed on our beautiful island. It is not limited to discussions, also tons of paper have been used to produce some hundred different reports on these subjects.

Things are as usual on Bonaire.

Unfortunately, apart from a few individual cases, until today no visible action has been taking!

There is a saying in Dutch: "als het kalf verdrongen is, dan dempt men de put". This means, for those that do not understand this language, that a disaster has to take place, before people take those measures that could have prevented the disaster.

On Bonaire things are as usual.

Our biggest problem is, that when we speak about a environmental disaster, there are no measures to be taken, because this is really to late.

Ladies and gentleman, before I go into the specifics Plaza Resort Bonaire has done with regard to environmental friendly measures, I would like to share with you the reluctance of the human being in common and the Bonairian human being in particular.

People are afraid of the new they are afraid of the future.

It is very natural that people hold tight to the past: the past is known to us, the future isn't.

We remember the good things of the past, intend to forget the bad things, but most important of all, looking into the future and especially looking into the risks of the future is to much work.

We are to busy, ladies and gentleman; our agendas are fully booked we do not have time to realise that if we, continue like this, there will be no future at all!

To create sustainable tourism needs creative thinking. Creative thinking takes time and as I stated before, we do not have that time.

I suggest that, in order to come up with creative ideas, we should go back to our childhood!

It has been proven that children think more creative than adults. As an adult, you think that your level of intelligence, your level of education and your level of experience is a very good base to create new ideas. Ladies and gentleman, we are wrong.

Having this load of, what we call, knowledge, puts a break on our creative thinking.

Isn't it so, that new inventions seem to be simple as that?
That it seems as if they were invented by children?

Don't we say afterwards, that these new inventions could have been invented by ourselves?

Dear people, a child has a solution for everything. A child will never say that something is impossible. A child will always run the extra mile to accomplish something.

We as adults take things for granted. We accept an issue as it is and we continue "as usual"

Things on Bonaire are as usual too.

With regards to our Eco suite, roomnumber 005 I can be short. The savings on our electricity and water bills turned out to be 20 %. In guilders, taking into the consideration that all rooms would have been equipped with the same energy- saving light bulbs, water saving taps and toilets as our special switches on the air-conditioning, WC would have saved 400.000 guilders on our utility bills in 1997.

The feedback of our guests is very supportive. This is understandable if you listened to my introduction: the awareness is there, they all know the future of our world is at stake.

But what if we had requested the guests to switch off the air-conditioning themselves?
Or what if we had asked to use only one reading light in stead of three?
What if we had requested them to shower only for two minutes in stead of 5?

I assume that our guests will check out immediately and would have gone to one of our colleague hotels where they could spoil gallons of fresh water, ours of electricity use and bunches of cool air!

At Plaza Resort Bonaire, we do not let go a single gallon of waste water go back into the ground and consequently into the sea. On our resort we have a waste water plant, with a capacity of 250 m³. All waste water of rooms, bathrooms, kitchens and restaurants is brought to several collection tanks. All tanks are connected to our main water that feeds the water plant in a consistent way. Not to little, not to much. Giving a overdose to the plant, would mean that the process of cleaning the water, would be damaged. By doing this, we create a water quality that is 85 - 90 % clean. The costs of a cubic meter of grey water is NA.FLS 1577.

Taking into consideration that we have over 300.000 plants on the resort a total of 70 kilometres of drip system and compared to the price of drinking water, in the two years of our operation, we have saved a total of NA.FLS 1.2 million by using our waste water in stead of drinking water to feed our gardens!

In order to prevent that that bits of nutrients, that are still present in our grey water, come: into the soil and into the sea, around the roots of the plants, we have put special devises. These small grains absorb 250 times their volume of water and this water is given to the plants on a very slow basis, so that the plants can feed themselves in a healthy way!

You can even go further if you like. There is a way to clean the water that much, that you can use it for flushing the toilets and even use it for taking a shower.

We have made a calculation and if we install a second pipeline system in order to provide our 224 rooms with special flushing and shower water, our costs per m³ would be NAFLS 4.50, still 50 % cheaper that our current water price at WEB.

The amounts of money one can save by taking simple measures as mentioned above is tremendous. It is so tremendous that even local banks have shown interest in financing water plants for our colleague hotels.

However, on Bonaire, things are as usual!

It is my personal feeling that creating sustainable tourism is a matter of priority. Since other sources of income are drying up, tourism has been and tourism will be, one of the cornerstones of the Bonairian economy. Knowing this, one should be prepared to invest in sustainable tourism.

Although it is a long time investment it is an investment with short term revenues, ecological as well as economical!

On Bonaire, things are still as usual!

The policy makers on Bonaire have been invited for this conference. Taking into consideration the problems for us in getting here, taking into consideration that they have very urgent matters to attend to, taking into consideration that next year will be an election year, taking into consideration that things are as usual on Bonaire, I still do not understand why they are not present.

On Bonaire, Ladies and Gentleman, things are as usual.

Next year and also 1999 will be election years. It seems that the government of Bonaire has put an hold on decision making. As we all know, taking wrong decisions prior to elections could result in losing votes. My message to them is, that taking no decisions is the wrongest decision they have ever taken.

In the world of today, and especially in the Caribbean, so much depending on tourism, competition is tough. With Bonaire's problems, such as lack of sufficient and reliable airift, lack of international standard hotel rooms and an insufficient average room occupancy, we are at the point of no return.

As Sales and Marketing Manager of one of the nicest resorts in the Caribbean, as vice president of the Bonaire Hotel and Tourism Association, I am convinced that investing in sustainable tourism not only makes sense, it should be a priority of private and public sectors together.

Ladies and gentleman, distinguished guests, the future of not only Bonaire, but the whole world is at stake.

The future of this world belongs to the children.

Let's be smart and create an environment that is sustainable, a world future generations can be proud of.

An island like Bonaire on which our children can say: Thanks to that bunch of people, that met in St. Maarten and Saba in June 1997, a number of steps have been taken and now on Bonaire, as a sustainable tourism destination, things are as usual!

Thank you very much.

Don Werdekker, Curaçao Hotel and Tourism Association

13 June 1997

1. Chata environmental efforts:

- limpiesa i tounsmo (clean up truck)
- fundashon korsou limpi bunita
- chata environmental committee
- ecovision pilot project: energy and water audit
- horeca ekspò korsou: ecotel 2000
- ecovision hotel action plans
- environmental code of conduct/hotel environmental statement

2. Industry awareness

- "bugging" holiday beach
- contamination Schottegat
- oil spill threat for reef and beaches
- nuisance act Isla/ construction BOO

3. Market awareness

- touroperator green seals (TUI, British Holidays)
- hotel classification (green requirements)

4. Government stimulus

- green fund: fiscal incentives (solar/wind)
- preferential utility rates (hotels & restaurants): to be conditioned

Boyston Sorton, Risdon Carrental, Sint Maarten

13 June 1997

Presentation on behalf of Mr. Michel Deher.

The future of the rented car. Not a very bright future at this time

In the 60's, a local car rental company with a young dynamic codville webster at it's head, set a standard of customer service for every one to follow.

One of those, just to mention, was to wash any cars that his men could find that needed washing, when his customers was not using them.

Customers made their car reservations 1 year in advance and knew the rental agents at the airport and supporting offices by name.

In the mid 70's, with more hotel rooms and villa's opening up and more passenger arrivals, some of the local companies bought international franchises to add better reservation service for their customers to the other personal services.

Later, quite a number of car rental permits were issued without taking the market situation into consideration, compounded by the disfiscalisation program that was introduced on French St. Martin, which was the beginning of the end, as we know it.

New cars can be rented for half of the 1970 daily rates in and out of season, with the cost of cars 4 times as much as in the 1970,s considering all other increases.

Worst of all, is the customer's nightmare that exists at the Juliana airport, which is an island wide embarrassment.

So, what is the future ???

Better government controls ???

If that is the case, were does control stop and interference to free enterprise begin???

Maybe the car rental business should be a ma & pa operation of no more than 20 to 25 cars with a very good transportation department supervision.

But will this form of car rental service be able to provide the international service that the 5 star hotel properties we are trying to attract, demand???

A very sad outlook for many, who have put a life time in what use to be a proud business and a good added service to the tourist industry.

The program that is soon to be implemented, the repositioning of the car rental booths in the arrival hall area, will be a great welcome. This will curtail the embarrassing hustling of the tourists as they get out of the terminal. This however must be policed, by the carrying out of strict security controls, or all will be for naught. The security personnel must have real authority to perform their duties, but in a professional manner.

I would like to close on this note, the environment as it is, being an urgent and pressing situation on the island, I do look forward to the introduction of electric cars, but will miss the old gasoline engine.

However, the environment will demand better management.

Raymond Helligar, R&J Tours, Sint Maarten

13 June 1997

Be eco take a bus

Please permit me to make a rapid inventory of the situation as it stand today. We have over:

- 130 Taxi on the French St. Martin.
- 200 on the Dutch Side
- 100 Buses on the French St. Martin
- 175 on the Dutch Side
- 6 Tour bus company on the French Side
- About 10 Tours Bus company on the Dutch Side

All of these business are owned and operated by local St. Martiners. Making the transportation sector number one as far as local ownership and local employment is concerned.

However before we could honestly say that we are ready their is a lot we would have to do. We will have to review our present transportation system carefully in order to answer the question.

Does it live up to our expectation ?

- Regular service
- Buses shelter in and outside of the city areas.
- Bus service in new areas
- Late hour service
- Are our buses clear to identify
- Do we have maximum comfort in these buses.

Information and education of the general public.

Bear in mind that in the Caribbean and in St. Martin in particular a car is not simply a means of transportation. but also a sign of one's social statue.

You can tell if so and so is successful by the car he or she drive. This has helped the car dealers to sell more cars on St. Martin for sure. But does it help our Eco System, our Economy or our tourist industry?

We have to face the challenge of the year 2000 educating our consumers. It is the responsibility of the transportation operators : (Bus, Tour Company and taxis) along with government both French and Dutch.

To create such condition, where the consumer (resident as well as visitors), can get at any point of the Island at any time by making use of our public transportation system.

SOME INCENTIVE FOR THE LOCAL - USER

Encourage the use of bus by providing the following

- Attractive fare?
 - Regular service
 - Comfort / safety
- Very important take them as close as possible to their destination.

SOME INCENTIVE TO THE BUS OPERATORS

- Tax refund on gasoline
- Soft loan on purchase of equipment
- Other tax brake and incentive

SOME INCENTIVE FOR OUR VISITORS

- Schedule shuttle from hotel for shopping and other visit
- Discount shopping voucher attached to bus ticket
- Special circuit
- All parking situated on the outside city areas.

The only vehicle permitted to enter shopping area will be buses and taxi.

In order to put such a plan of action in place.

We will just have to take care of our legal problem of the French side and Dutch side by setting up a joint transportation comity, comprising of members representing the professional from both side of the Island and of course representative of both the Dutch and French administrations.

These comity should be of a permanent nature and be able to gave recommendation to government, so that appropriate law be enacted.

We have given similar recommendations to the French side during the Symposium held on June 5,6 & 7 this year and they are seriously been considered for the year 2000 ST MARTIN one Island, must become a reality if we are going to survive.

13 June 1997

De valkuil van een succesvolle toeristenindustrie.

Wonen, werken, verkeer, recreatie, natuur, landbouw enz: allemaal functies die ruimte nodig hebben. Deze functies kunnen elkaar versterken maar in een bepaalde ruimte ook met elkaar in konflikt komen. In complexe samenlevingen waar ruimte beperkt is zijn overheids-interventies noodzakelijk voor een gebalanceerde coëxistentie van de verschillende onderdelen van die samenleving.

De 'physical planning' heeft tot taak deze ordening van de verschillende functies voor te bereiden. Wanneer we de zaak sterk vereenvoudigen kan physical planning vergeleken worden met een enorme 'jig-saw puzzle' waarvan eerst bepaald moet worden wat de inhoud van de verschillende stukjes is en als dat bekend is moet getracht worden de stukjes zodanig aan elkaar te leggen dat een samenhangend geheel ontstaat zonder dat (aangrenzende) stukjes met elkaar in konflikt komen.

SHEET 1

Tegelijkertijd moet gestreefd worden naar het bereiken van een zo hoog mogelijke kwaliteit van deze omgeving. Naast het treffen van fysieke maatregelen is de kwaliteit of leefbaarheid afhankelijk van een aantal factoren zoals: schoonheid, veiligheid, duurzaamheid, functionaliteit, imago, enz.

SHEET 2

Het resultaat van de inspanning op dat gebied is weer afhankelijk van de gehanteerde doelstellingen, middelen, tijdsplanning, instrumenten, activiteiten en randvoorwaarden. Veranderende gedragspatronen, behoeften of bijvoorbeeld nieuwe technologieën hebben allemaal ruimtelijke consequenties. Ruimtelijke planning wordt dus gekenmerkt door voortdurende verandering en levert geen statische situatie op.

Veel ruimtelijke processen vertonen kenmerken van de 'vrije markt' (recreatiemarkt, voorzieningen markt, woningmarkt enz.). Kennis van al deze markt-processen is een essentiële voorwaarde voor goede ruimtelijke planning.

SHEET 3

Voor elke industrie of activiteit is een 'boom' (zie schets) te ontwikkelen waaraan alle factoren staan aangegeven die gezamenlijk het gewenste resultaat geven. Wordt een van de takken afgezaagd dan gaat dit ten koste van de kwaliteit van het betreffende produkt. De overheid moet er op toezien dat de voorwaarden worden geschapen waarin private activiteiten efficiënt en effectief kunnen opereren zonder dat dit ten koste gaat van andere sectoren.

SHEET 4

Het proces van physical planning kent een aantal standaard stappen waartoe de planvorming moet plaats vinden. Het belangrijkste is echter dat de overheid een visie heeft hoe het eiland er over een bepaalde tijd uit zou moeten zien. Zonder deze visie, die maatschappelijk gedragen moet worden, is het onmogelijk iets na te streven, laat staan te plannen. Er van uitgaande dat een visie bestaat kent het planningsproces de volgende stappen.

Formulering van de doelen;
probleem-analyse;
genereren van alternatieven;
voorspellen van de effecten;
keuze van een alternatief.

Bonaire heeft gekozen voor een gecontroleerde groei met behoud van natuur en cultuur. Dit zal verder worden uitgewerkt tot een visie voor de middellange en lange termijn, waaraan een en ander in ontwikkelingsplannen zal worden vastgelegd. Een ontwikkelingsplan schept het juridisch kader waarbinnen verdere ontwikkelingen kunnen plaatsvinden en waarmee ongewenste ontwikkelingen kunnen worden voorkomen.

Daarnaast is het van belang dat de ruimtelijke regelgeving afgestemd is op andere ordenings-instrumenten zoals een beleid inzake afgifte van vestigingsvergunningen.

Valkuilen

De overheid moet er op toezien dat een succesvolle sektor niet aan datzelfde succes ten onder gaat. In de ruimtelijke planning wordt succes en duurzaamheid van een sektor bepaald door het effect daarvan binnen de totale samenleving en de doelen die voor het totaal zijn gesteld.

Het kan dus zeer wel gebeuren dat het, succes van een bepaalde tak binnen de samenleving dermate nadelige consequenties heeft voor het totaal, dat daardoor het eigen graf gegraven wordt.

Aan de hand van de situatie op Bonaire wordt dit nader toege licht:

SHEET 5

De toeristenindustrie is de economische kurk waarop het eiland drijft en het aantal toeristen dat het eiland jaarlijks bezoekt neemt nog steeds toe. Veel ondernemingen willen van deze groei profiteren en zijn volop bezig met het bouwen van toeristenaccommodaties. Deze ongecontroleerde groei is de 1e valkuil.

Er zijn zoveel units beschikbaar dat gemiddeld slechts een bezettingsgraad wordt gehaald van rond de 50%.

Dit is uit exploitatie-overwegingen een te laag rendement om de accommodaties op de gewenste wijze in stand te houden en de nodige service te kunnen verlenen. Dit gaat derhalve ten koste van de kwaliteit hetgeen weer nadelige gevolgen heeft voor tevredenheid van de gebruiker en de kans dat deze nogmaals het eiland bezoekt.

De enige remedie daartegen is het beperken van de toename van het aantal units (in bepaalde kwaliteitsklassen) tot dat een gemiddeld acceptabele bezettingsgraad is bereikt (>70%).

De tweede valkuil is de immigratie die plaats vindt als gevolg van de groei in de constructie- en toeristensektor. Het werkloosheidscijfer van Bonaire is te verwaarlozen. Alle arbeidskrachten die nodig zijn voor de expansie moeten buiten het eiland aangetrokken worden.

SHEET 6

Hierdoor ontstaat een explosieve en onevenwichtige bevolkingsgroei. De bevolking van Bonaire groeit op dit moment met 10% per jaar. Dit is meer dan het eiland kan verwerken. 60% van de instromende arbeidskrachten verdient een maandsalans van minder dan f1500,-. Zij dragen derhalve weinig bij aan de belastinginkomsten van het eiland. Ook wordt door hen zoveel mogelijk gespaard om op te kunnen sturen naar de familie in het land van herkomst (wegvloeiende deviezen).

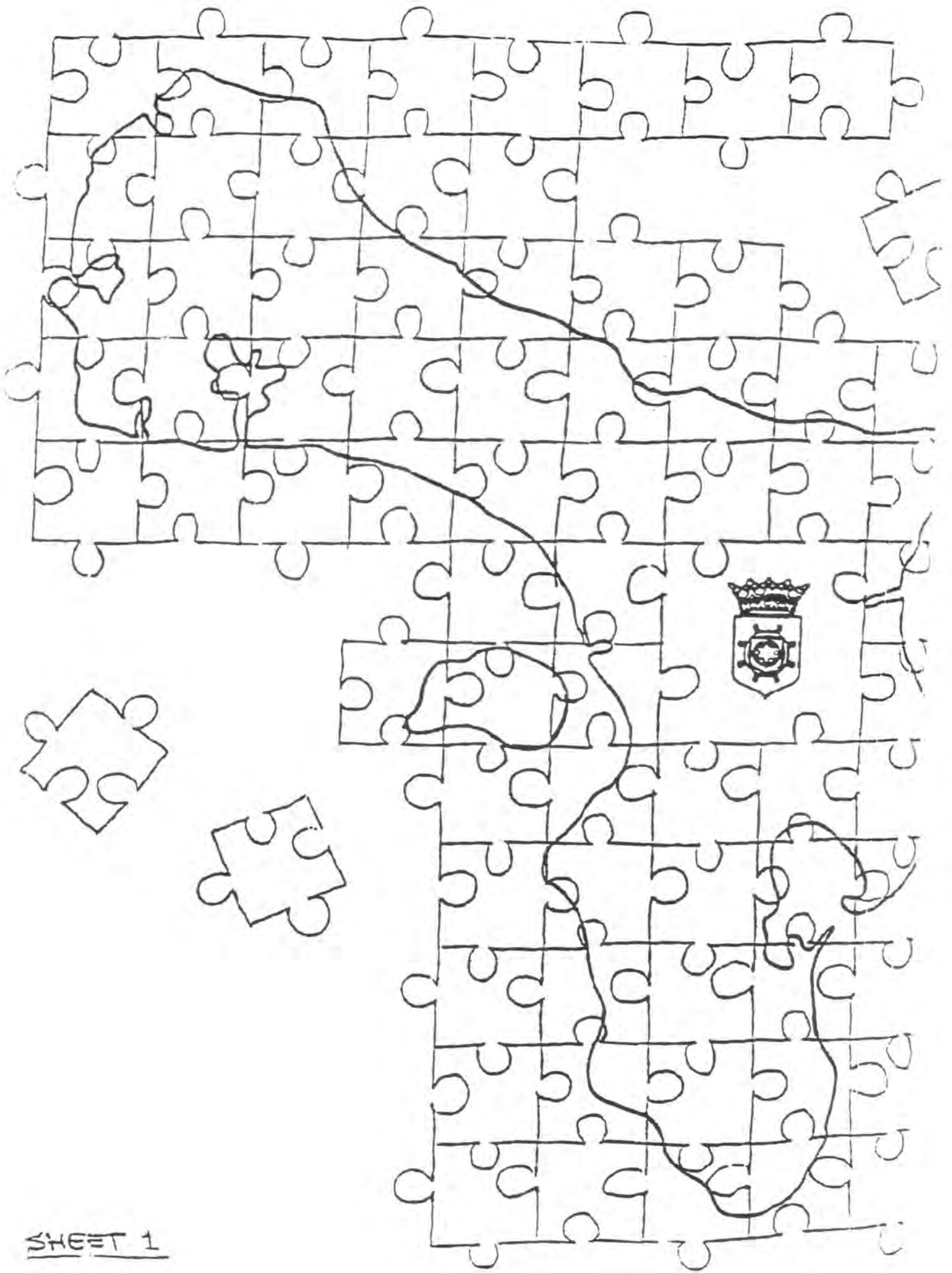
Door deze snelle bevolkingsgroei raakt het eiland in de problemen.

- Er zijn onvoldoende goedkope huizen beschikbaar. Het ontstaan van 'shanty-towns' is niet meer denkbeeldig.
- Jaarlijks komen er, 700 voertuigen bij, de wegen raken verstopt.
- Per jaar komen er 150 leerlingen bij waarvoor geen klaslokalen of docenten beschikbaar zijn.
- De gezondheidszorg is niet ingesteld op een dergelijke groei.
- Het aantal bejaarden neemt overeenkomstig toe zonder dat er adequate voorzieningen zijn.
- enz.
- enz.

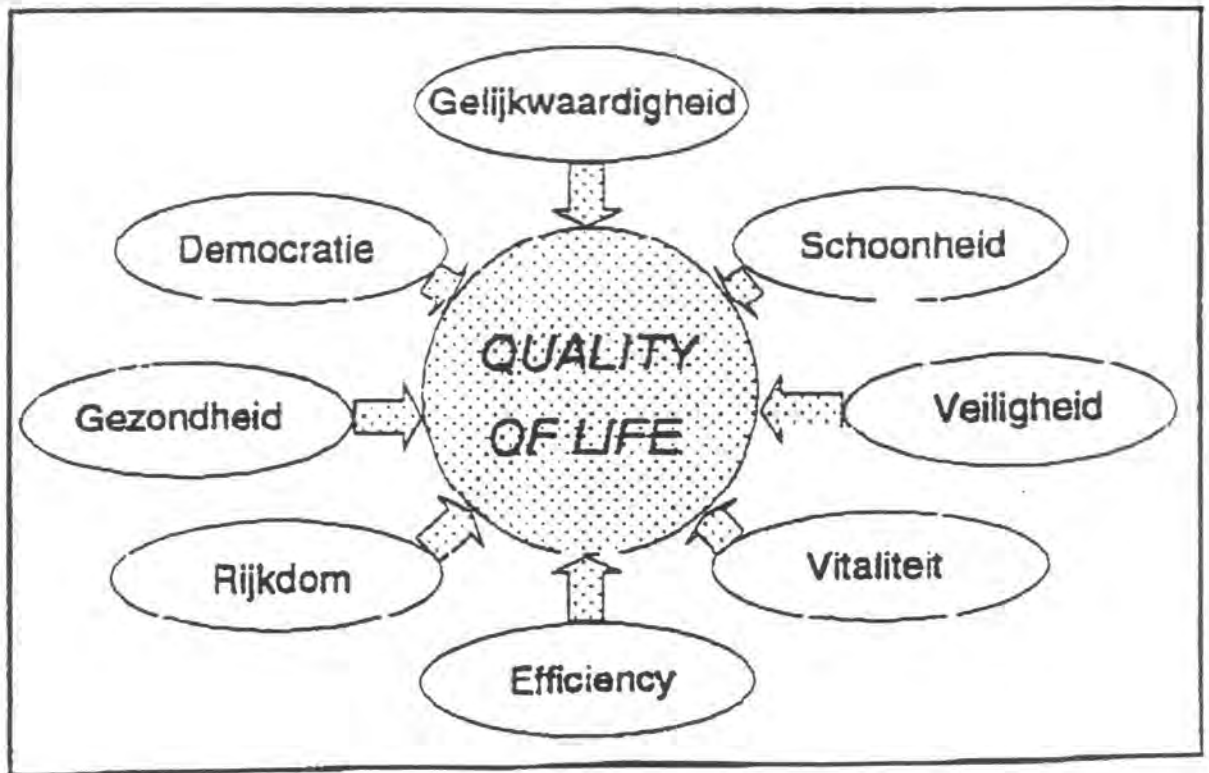
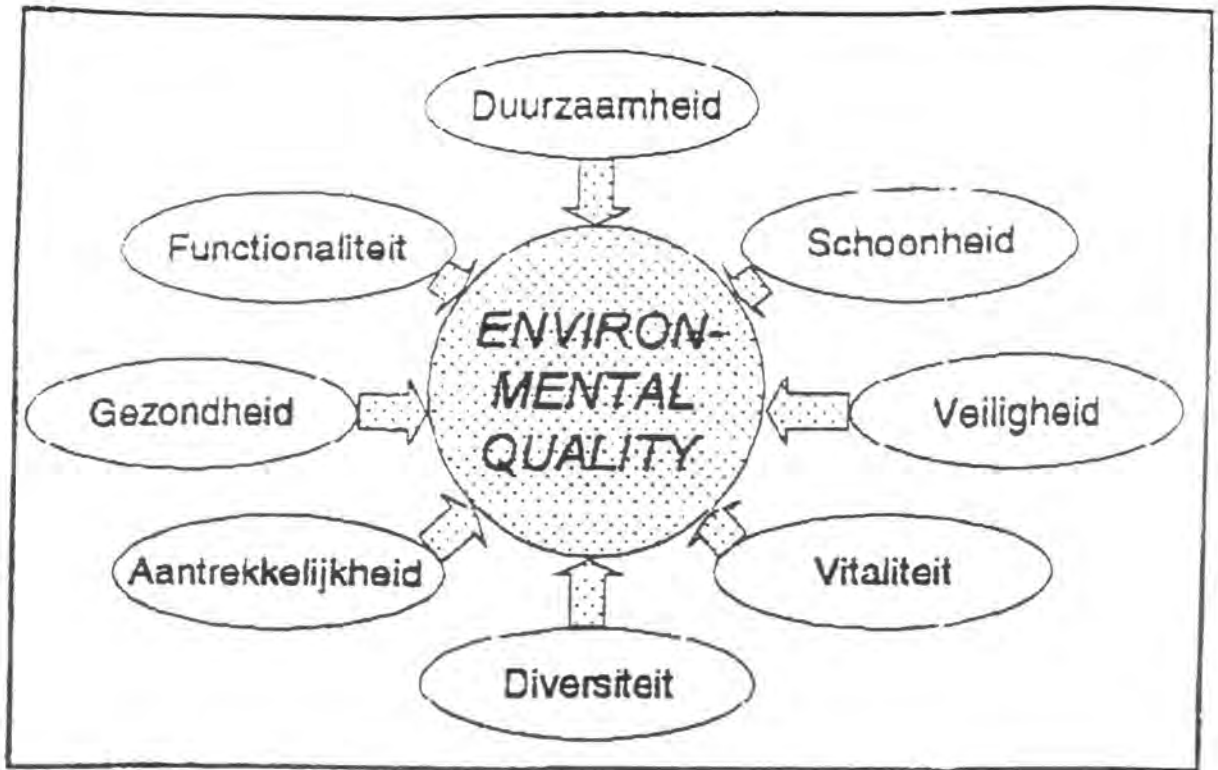
Deze zaken maken het toeristisch produkt onaantrekkelijk hetgeen uiteindelijk zal leiden tot een terugval van de toeristische sektor en daarmee de economische groei.

De boodschap is, dat het succes van een sektor afhangt van de impact op de totale samenleving inclusief het beslag op de natuurlijke hulpbronnen.

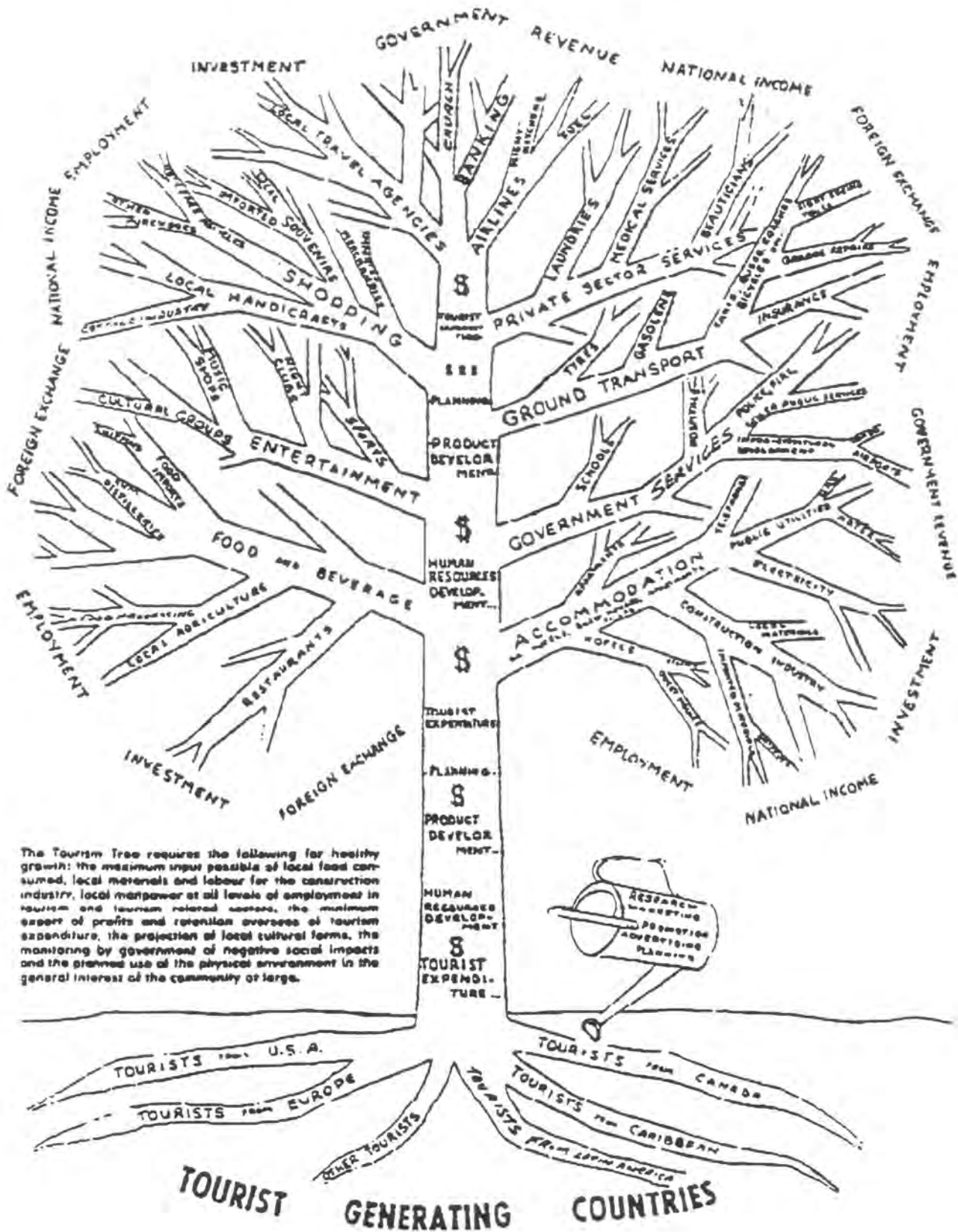
De totale samenleving dient in balans te zijn en een goede 'physical planning' is daarbij een van de voorwaarden. Het gaat dus niet alleen over de 'carrying capacity' van een bepaald waardevol onderdeel van het eiland maar het gaat om de carrying capacity van het gehele eiland, waarbij de zwakste schakel de sterkte van de ketting bepaalt.



SHEET 1



THE TOURISM TREE



The Tourism Tree requires the following for healthy growth: the maximum input possible of local food consumed, local materials and labour for the construction industry, local manpower at all levels of employment in tourism and tourism related sectors, the maximum export of profits and retention overseas of tourism expenditure, the protection of local cultural forms, the monitoring by government of negative social impacts and the planned use of the physical environment in the general interest of the community at large.

A vision of sustainable tourism in Bonaire in the year 2007

The island in 2007 has some of the best managed natural assets in the Caribbean, many say the best. The Marine Park is self-financing, well protected and indeed well loved. (It has now been in operation for over 20 years). While land side zoning introduced in 1997 has succeeded in containing urban sprawl and protecting the natural state of much of the island.

The growth in tourist accommodation on the island has been restrained, but there has been some expansion in smaller hotels, often locally owned and managed, plus a continuous programme of upgrades and occasional extensions to existing hotel properties. The island has been concentrating now for nearly ten years on maintaining the quality of its existing accommodation offer, and further expansion is not planned, even though there is a great deal of investor interest.

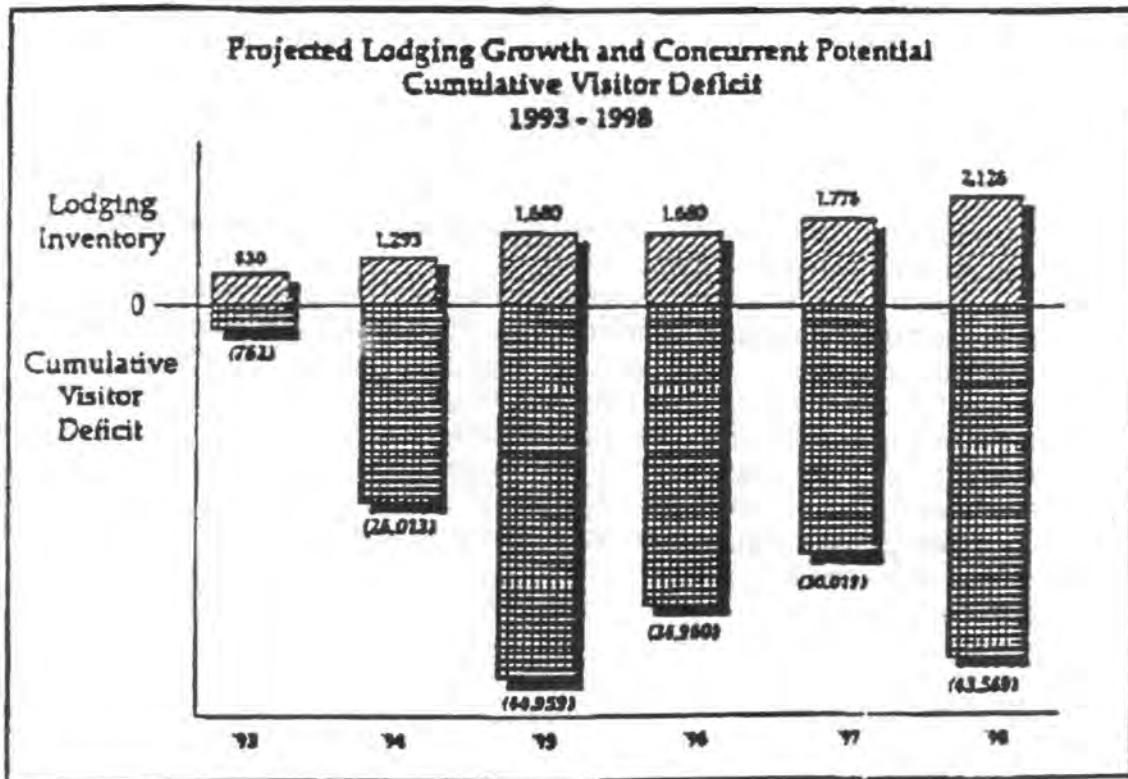
Population and employment have slowly risen, but with the steady and more controlled growth that has taken place, the crime and drug situation is now fully under control, and a range of programmes for protecting and nurturing the island's cultural patrimony have served not only to interest tourists, but also to reinforce the cultural identity of younger Bonaireans.

Incomes for Bonaireans have risen substantially, and by the year 2007 many are securing senior positions in the tourism private sector.

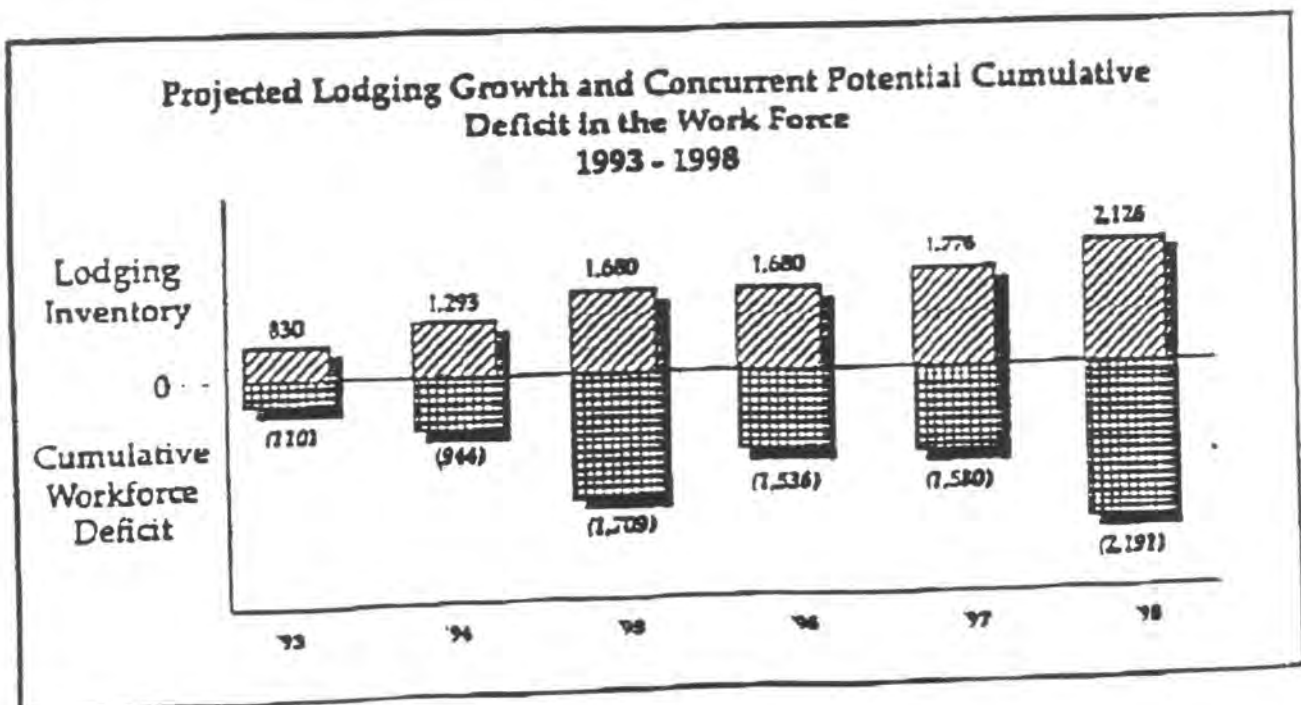
All in all, Bonaire remains in the year 2007 a great place to live in. It has a strong economy, the island is well planned, its nature is fully protected, it got its act together in time, and has managed to avoid many of the problems experienced elsewhere. Tourists love Bonaire's clean, tranquil and peaceful atmosphere. Diving is still big business, but just as many these days come to loaf on a beach, or to go cycling or hiking, explore its natural and cultural attractions, its museums and interpretation centres.

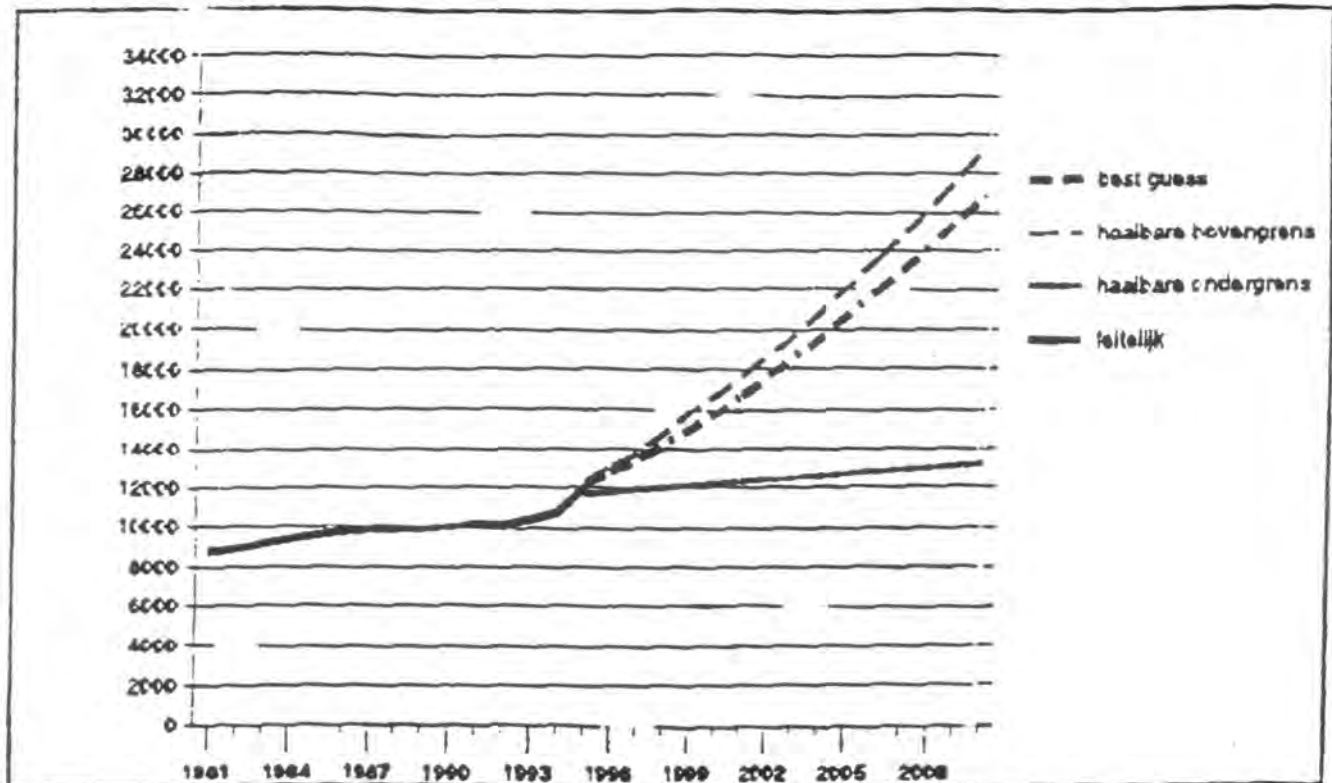
Lots of foreign investors want to get in on this carefully nurtured bit of paradise, but the Bonaireans always gently say the same thing: *Thanks, but no thanks. We like it the way it is and we intend to keep it that way.*

The graph below further illustrates the implied effects of the current lodging growth scena in terms of cumulative shortfalls in visitor arrivals.



The graph below further illustrates the implied effects of the current lodging growth scenario in terms of cumulative shortfalls in the workforce.

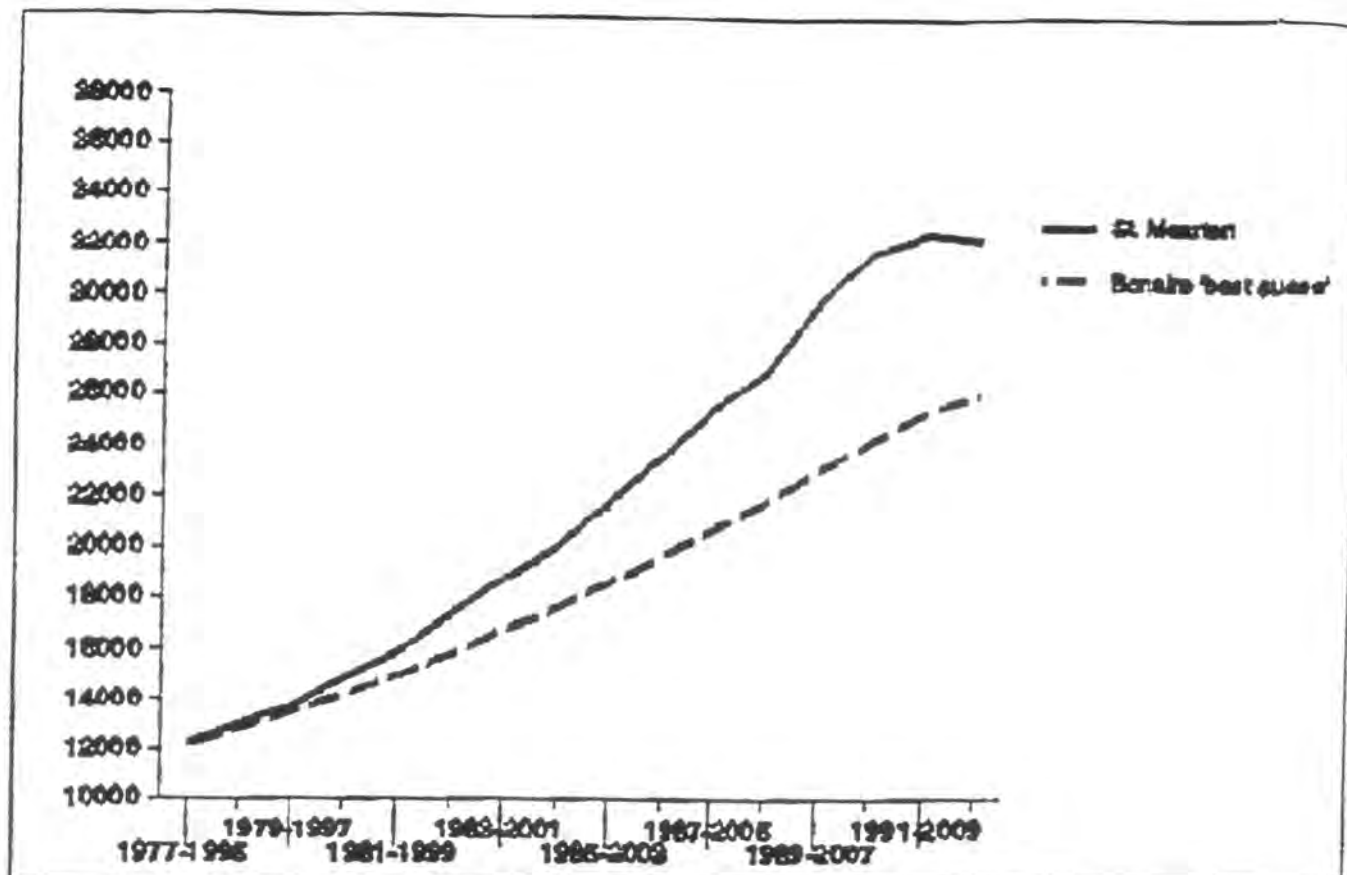




Figuur 3. Bevolkingsprognose met boven-en ondergrens van Bonaire

jaar	0-5 jaar			6-17 jaar			18-64 jaar			65-74 jaar			75 jaar en ouder		
	man	vr	tot	man	vr	tot	man	vr	tot	man	vr	tot	man	vr	tot
1995	690	660	1350	1310	1250	2560	3730	3620	7350	230	230	460	140	250	390
1996	720	670	1390	1380	1330	2710	3960	3860	7820	240	230	470	140	240	380
1997	760	680	1440	1440	1400	2840	4200	4110	8310	250	230	480	150	240	390
1998	800	730	1530	1530	1490	2980	4460	4360	8820	250	230	480	160	250	410
1999	830	770	1600	1590	1520	3110	4750	4630	9380	270	240	510	160	250	410
2000	860	800	1660	1670	1590	3260	5070	4910	9980	280	260	540	160	240	400
2001	900	840	1740	1780	1620	3390	5380	5250	10630	290	260	550	160	250	410
2002	940	870	1810	1840	1690	3530	5720	5580	11300	310	280	590	160	250	410
2003	980	910	1890	1920	1780	3700	6080	5890	11970	340	320	660	160	250	410
2004	1030	950	1980	2010	1860	3870	6450	6230	12680	350	350	700	170	250	420
2005	1080	1000	2080	2110	1960	4070	6810	6560	13370	390	400	790	170	250	420
2006	1130	1050	2180	2240	2060	4300	7200	6920	14120	400	430	830	170	250	420
2007	1190	1110	2300	2310	2160	4470	7650	7340	14990	430	450	880	180	240	420
2008	1260	1170	2430	2410	2220	4630	8090	7790	15880	480	470	950	190	250	440
2009	1320	1230	2550	2540	2310	4850	8500	8230	16730	530	500	1030	200	260	460
2010	1310	1230	2540	2560	2360	4920	8580	8280	16860	570	550	1120	200	270	470

Tabel 4. Bevolkingsontwikkeling Bonaire voor verschillende leeftijdsgroepen ('best guess')⁹



Figuur 7. De bevolkingsonwikkeling van St. Maarten vergeleken met de te verwachten 'best guess' bevolkingsprognose van Bonaire

jaar	aantal inwoners op Bonaire		
	hoog	best guess	laag
1995	12210	12130	11650
1996	12950	12780	11770
1997	13740	13470	11890
1998	14590	14220	12000
1999	15500	15000	12110
2000	16460	15840	12220
2001	17490	16720	12320
2002	18570	17650	12420
2003	19710	18630	12520
2004	20910	19650	12630
2005	22170	20730	12730
2006	23490	21870	12830
2007	24880	23060	12930
2008	26330	24320	13040
2009	27840	25630	13150
2010	29410	26920	13260

Tabel 3. De te verwachten bevolkingsonwikkeling van Bonaire¹

Elsmarie Beukenboom, Bonaire Tourism and Training Centre

Target group:	All those who have a genuine interest in becoming an official tour guide.
Time :	3 Hours per session.
Where :	Bonaire Tourism and Training Centre
Duration :	63 Sessions

Objective:

At the end of the course the participant should:

Have formed a clear understanding of the tour guide's job and be able to perform as a professional tour guide.

Course content:

Presentation skills and professional guiding techniques from the 'Caribbean Tourism Development Program'

- **Service attitude:**
 - Importance of service
 - Hospitality model
 - Communication skills;
active listening, cross cultural awareness, how to handle complaints
- **Understanding the tourism industry:**
 - Tourism definitions
 - Tourism system
 - Tourism impacts
- **Know your island:**
 - Tourism attractions
 - The Bonairean culture in relation to tourism
 - Flora and fauna
 - Geology
 - Architecture
 - Topography
 - Flag/ coat of arms/ national anthem
- **Other:**
 - First Aid
 - Crime prevention

Trainer :	Chantal Newton
Lecturers :	Various specialised in their own field
Language :	Papiamentu
Methods :	Lecturers, group discussions, role playing
Course fee :	Naf. 100.00 per person

Workshop Reports

12 June 1997, Saba

Results of Workshop on Terrestrial Nature and tourism

Recommendations of Let's Go to the Beach:

- Set aside natural beaches as protected areas
- Develop guidelines to take extra precautions on and around sea turtle nesting beaches
- User fees for beaches are acceptable related to facilities offered and used
- Develop a set of strict rules for any form of beach modification
- Environmental impact assessment should be a prerequisite for beach modification activities
- Consider the introduction of a beach quality standard for the Netherlands Antilles

Remarks of working groups:

1. There is a need for more clarification on laws on beach and coast ownership.
2. Prevent and control runoff of polluting waste at beach front
3. There is a need for legislation promoting waste management. No form of pipelines should lead directly to our waters (beach/ocean/ponds)
4. Control chemicals used for greening lawns near beaches
5. Place garbage bins strategically on all beaches (not too close to the water, accessible and permanent); organise emptying of bins well.
6. Public beaches should be accessible without admission fee. If use is made of the facilities provided by the hotel, a certain fee could be charged. Making use of these facilities must be a choice of the individual
7. The safety for the hotel guests, visiting the public beaches is unfortunately not guaranteed. There is a need for more controlled beaches.
8. One Beach Quality Standard for the Netherlands Antilles is not favoured; from the tourist point of view such a standard may be attractive. However the idea of listing the facilities that are present on the beaches is supported.
9. Any unnatural impacts on the natural beaches should be corrected, much better: prohibited.
10. Guidelines for beach management should be drawn up and executed. Monitoring is extremely important, this can be done by beach rangers.
11. Beaches should be physically open for the public as well. This means no doors or fences.
12. Guidelines for sea turtle nesting should be included in the general beach management guidelines.

Results of Workshop on Marine Nature and Tourism

Recommendations of Caribbean Cuisine: Food for Thought:

- Encourage restaurants to strike Conch from their menu's
- Take a firm step to ban catch and consumption of sea turtles and turtle products
- Prohibit lobster with eggs to be taken
- Introduce a lobster season to allow females to lay their eggs
- Set a size limit for lobster catches
- Prohibit visiting divers from taking lobster
- Promote greater variety of fish to take pressure of single species
- Monitor coastal fish stocks to remain at sustainable levels

Remarks of working groups:

1. Do not attempt to reinvent the wheel. Look at destinations that already have experience in these matters. The Bahamas model could be useful in this respect.
2. Funding and manpower must be made available to enforce fisheries legislation
3. Mention the Saba bank in this chapter, it is a good example.
4. Reinforce control of the legislation
5. Promote better co-ordination between law enforcement agencies, like coast guard and the police.
6. Advanced technology must be made available to carry out control.
7. Prohibit diving schools to take lobster.
8. Encourage conch and lobster farms
9. Make fishing regulations which include seasonality, quotations, etc.

Results of Workshop on Ecotourism

Recommendations of Tourism and Biodiversity: a Natural Partnership:

- Integrate biodiversity conservation into tourism planning
- Execute biodiversity impact assessments for tourism projects
- Draw up island nature policy plans identifying protected areas
- Set aside large and biodiverse areas as protected nature
- Determine visitors carrying capacity for natural areas
- Develop systems for contribution of visitors to biodiversity management
- Formulate management plans for protected areas
- Encourage islands to finance nature management on structural basis
- Involve tourists actively in biodiversity conservation

Suggestions from the working groups:

1. Start with educating on and creating awareness for the subject tourism and biodiversity on all levels. A start should be made with educating even the youngest children in kindergarten.
2. Educate also police officers, civil servants and inspectors about biodiversity, so they know what they enforce and why.
3. Judges and legal systems need to make nature and environment a priority. This is needed to be able to hold for instance companies responsible for their actions concerning nature and environment.
4. The Government, as well Central as Island Governments, should involve NGO's and international organisations more.
5. NGO's should be involved in the process of starting new projects and also in biodiversity impact assessments. They can function as watchdogs and catalysators.
6. Biodiversity assessment studies should be public so NGO's can comment on them.
7. Financial, technical and human resources should be made available to keep biodiversity on its current standard or to even to improve biodiversity. This in order to attract tourists.
8. When island nature policy plans are drawn up, islands must get the chance to adjust existing plans and set their own priorities.
9. Not only new projects need a biodiversity assessment study, also existing projects should be required to make such a study.
10. The National Government is responsible for creating appropriate conditions for the Island Government including institutional capacity and enforcement of regulations and if necessary providing funding to execute nature management policies.
11. Identify and make an inventory of the islands biodiversity assets.
12. Start up an Association of Tourguides, this will assist in creating the sense of ownership
13. Each island has to develop its own strategic masterplan (zoning/EOP) and the government has to follow this plan.
14. Tourists and local people should be actively involved in biodiversity and tourism through training of tourguides and an awareness program for local people.
15. Provide in a platform for community participation when drawing up nature policy plans. This to create awareness, pride and make people aware of the economic value of nature.

**Press Releases
&
Press Coverage**

Persbericht

Release datum: 10/11 Juni 1997

Start:

Duurzaam toerisme: de toekomst voor de Nederlandse Antillen

Voor de bespreking van ideeën en gedragslijnen die bij kunnen dragen aan duurzaam toerisme, organiseren de Eiland Gebieden Saba en Sint Maarten, de hotel associaties en de Saba Conservation Foundation in samenwerking met de Sectie Milieu en Natuur van het Departement van Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiene een Conferentie voor Duurzaam Toerisme van 10 tot 13 juni op Sint Maarten en Saba. Het is de bedoeling dat deze conferentie de eerste belangrijke stap in de richting van een coherent beleid op het gebied van duurzaam toerisme voor de Nederlandse Antillen gaat vormen.

Toerisme en de natuur zijn onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden: Toeristen komen hier naar toe om te genieten van de natuurlijke schoonheid van onze eilanden en verwachten dan ook een schoon milieu. Tegelijkertijd hebben toerisme en toeristen een aanzienlijk effect op dat zelfde milieu. De uitdaging van duurzaamheid is om de juiste balans tussen toerisme en milieu te vinden en te behouden.

De Regering van de Nederlandse Antillen benadrukt de noodzaak om duurzaam te ontwikkelen in het beleidsdocument 'Contouren van het Milieu- en Natuurbeleid Nederlandse Antillen 1996-2000'. In dit beleidsdocument is 'Toerisme in relatie tot het Milieu' aangewezen als een van de vijf aandachtsgebieden waarop de Regering actie wil ondernemen.

Persbericht

Release datum: 21/06/97

Start

Conclusie conferentie duurzaam toerisme Antillen :

GROEI IN KWALITEIT

De conferentie over duurzaam toerisme heeft een aantal belangrijke standpunten opgeleverd. Een daarvan is dat een ongebreidelde groei van het toerisme het einde van de natuur zal betekenen en het milieu onherstelbaar zal belasten. De deskundigen die op Sint Maarten en Saba twee dagen over duurzaam toerisme discussieerden vinden dan ook dat de groei vooral gezocht moet worden in de verbetering van de (milieu)kwaliteit in plaats van steeds maar meer hotelkamers en cruisetoeeristen.

Aan de hand van een discussienota opgesteld door de Sectie Milieu en Natuur van VOMIL discussieerden in totaal zo'n zestig deskundigen op gebied van planning, toerisme, hotelmanagement, natuur, milieu en transport twee dagen lang over het thema "duurzaam toerisme". De vele invalshoeken van dit thema, zoals goede planning, veiligstellen van natuurgebieden, het beschermen van soorten, die worden opgegeten of als souvenir worden verhandeld, het milieu- vriendelijk hotel management en de milieugevolgen van cruisetoeerisme, werden door sectordeskundigen belicht. De conferentiedeelnemers formuleerden vervolgens aanbevelingen voor het beleid van de centrale overheid. De noodzakelijke wisselwerking tussen centrale overheid en eilanden werd gegarandeerd door de actieve deelname van de Staatssecretaris van Economische Zaken Daniel Hassell en eilandsgedeputeerden en hun ambtenaren. De gemengde samenstelling van de conferentie, waarbij vooral de hotel- en toerisme sector sterk vertegenwoordigd was, stond garant voor een levendige gedachtenwisseling, die resulteerde in goede suggesties voor

Milieuprogramma Curaçaose hotels

Beurs

-Erik Raven-

9-6-97

WILLEMSTAD - Woensdag start op St. Maarten de milieuconferentie over toerisme voor de Nederlandse Antillen. Hotels lijken zich steeds meer bewust te worden van hun omgeving. Op Curaçao doen tien hotels mee aan een milieuprogramma dat begin deze maand door de hotelorganisatie CHATA werd opgestart. De deelnemers krijgen individuele begeleiding bij het nemen van maatregelen om het milieu te ontzien.

De interesse voor milieubesparende maatregelen die hotels kunnen nemen, kwam vorig jaar al tot uiting tijdens de in het ITC gehouden Horeca Ekspo. Het departement van Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiëne (VOMIL) richtte daar, in samenwerking met de CHATA, een stand in waar directies van hotels hun licht konden opdoen over milieubesparende toepassingen. Voorbeelden hiervan waren onder andere waterbesparend sanitair en een apparaat voor omgekeerde osmose waarmee hotels in hun eigen watertoevoer kunnen voorzien.

CHA

Aansluitend op de tentoonstelling maakte de Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) een inventarisatie van een groep hotels op Curaçao. Er werd gekeken op welke manieren de deelnemers, vaak met betrekkelijk eenvoudige maatregelen, het energie- en watergebruik kunnen terugdringen. Dit onderzoek kreeg begin

deze maand een vervolg met een door de CHATA en het VOMIL opgestart milieuprogramma.

"De hotels krijgen individuele begeleiding", aldus Tamara Croes van het milieu-adviesbureau EcoVision. Croes staat de deelnemers met raad en daad terzijde. Elk hotel heeft een milieucoördinator aangesteld. Daarnaast worden er zogenaamde 'greenteams' samengesteld. Deze teams bestaan uit personeelsleden van de verschillende afdelingen in het hotel zodat gezamenlijk gekeken kan worden op welke manier er water en energie bespaard kan worden.

RESULTATEN

Volgens Croes valt er vaak met kleine ingrepen al resultaat te behalen. "Bij één hotel kwam het water van de stranddouche rechtstreeks in zee terecht. Ik heb ze de tip gegeven dit water naar de palmbomen te leiden zodat deze niet nog eens extra besproeid hoeven te worden. Weer andere hotels leggen meer de nadruk op het verstrekken van informatie aan hun personeelsleden. Ik begeleid ze in hun individuele programma's."

Naast het VOMIL en de CHATA dragen de deelnemende hotels ook zelf bij in de kosten van het programma. CHATA-secretaris Don Werdekker hoopt dat er in de toekomst meer hotels aan het programma deel zullen nemen. "We hopen dat er een voorbeeldfunctie van het programma uitgaat naar de andere hotels. We hebben ook plannen om hier een prijs aan te verbinden. Het hotel dat binnen een jaar tijd de beste resultaten boekt, zou hiervoor in aanmerking kunnen komen."

THE DAILY HERALD, Friday, June 6, 1997

St. Maarten, Saba Co-Host Sustainable Tourism Forum

PHILIPSBURG—A conference on sustainable tourism will be held in St. Maarten and Saba from June 10 to 13.

The conference to discuss policies which may contribute to sustainable tourism is being organized by the hotel associations and the Saba Conservation Foundation, together with the Environmental Division of the Ministry of Public Health.

Calling the conference "the first important step toward a coherent policy for sustainable tourism for the Netherlands Antilles," the organizers point out that tourism and the environment are highly interlinked. "Tourists come to enjoy the natural beauty of our islands and expect a clean environment. At the same time tourism and tourists have a considerable impact on the environment. Finding and keeping the right balance between tourism and the environment is the challenge of sustainability."

The Antillean Government confirmed the need for sustainable development in its

paper Outlines of the Environmental Policy 1996-2000. In the policy, tourism in relation to the environment was selected as one of the five priority areas for government action.

"In order to accommodate experts in the field of environment and tourism to give their input in a policy on sustainable tourism, a conference is organized jointly by the Central Government and the two host island territories Saba and St. Maarten."

The agenda includes items like "green hotel management" which, through saving and recycling water, energy and producing less waste, can make a real difference. Attention is also paid to the beaches, which in addition to their recreational and tourism importance, also have a biological function, for instance for nesting sea turtles.

Another practical approach is to prevent endangered species from becoming extinct by measures such as restructuring tourist menus and convincing the

souvenir trade to pay attention.

Other topics include physical planning, creating awareness for tourism and environment, as well as alternatives for present forms of transportation.

The outcome of the conference will form the core of a policy on Sustainable Tourism, "aiming at a form of tourism which will remain attractive for the Netherlands Antilles as an economic activity and is in balance with both nature and the environment at the same time," the release concludes.

HERALD: 7/6/97

Conference On Sustainable Tourism In St. Maarten

PHILIPSBURG—The Environmental Section of the Central Government Department of Public Health & Environment will launch a discussion on St. Maarten on June 11 on the topic of "Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles."

Because Commissioner of Tourism Theo Heyliger will be off-island at the time of the conference, Commissioner of Education Sarah Wescott-Williams will address the conference on

Wednesday morning.

The opening discussion will take the form of a conference on sustainable tourism in the five islands.

In the outline for a policy on sustainable tourism, the Environmental Section notes that the goal is to make tourism sustainable in an ecological way, to balance tourism with its surroundings as much as possible.

Some of the topic areas include Visitors, Government and Green Hotels.

Conferentie over duurzaam toerisme op Bovenwinden

12-6-97 Antille

WILLEMSTAD —

Ideeën en gedragslijnen die bij moeten dragen aan een duurzaam toerisme zijn onderwerp van een conferentie die momenteel gaande is op de Bovenwinden. De organisatoren zijn de eilandgebieden van Sint Maarten en Saba, de hotelverenigingen, de milieuvereniging Saba Conservation Foundation en de sectie natuur van het Departement van Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiëne. De conferentie duurt tot en met morgen, 13 juni.

De conferentie moet een belangrijke bijdrage leveren voor een goed beleid op het gebied van duurzaam toerisme voor de Nederlandse Antillen. Toerisme en natuur zijn direct aan elkaar verbonden. Enerzijds komen de toeristen naar de Antillen

om van de natuur te genieten en anderzijds hebben ze een aanzienlijk effect op het milieu. De uitdaging die nu besproken wordt is om de juiste balans te vinden tussen toerisme en milieu en die te behouden. De regering benadrukt in het beleidsdocument *'Contouren van het Milieu- en Natuurbeleid Nederlandse Antillen 1996-2000'* de noodzaak van duurzaam toerisme. De regering wil actie ondernemen en heeft het thema 'toerisme in relatie tot het milieu' aangegeven als een van de aandachtsggebieden.

Op de conferentie zullen aan de orde komen: groen hotelmanagement, stranden en het vinden van een evenwicht tussen toerisme en natuur. Een belangrijk aandachtspunt is het tegengaan van het uitsterven van bedreigde diersoorten. Dit kan bijvoorbeeld door de

menu's aan te passen en de souvenirhandel te overtuigen om er aan mee te werken. Andere discussiepunten zijn: ruimtelijke ordening, draagvlak verbreding voor toerisme en natuur en alternatieven voor de huidige manier van transport op en naar de eilanden. Naar aanleiding van de conferentie zullen de eilanden het beleid er op afstemmen om te werken aan een evenwicht tussen het toerisme en de natuur.



Groei in toerisme moet men zoeken in betere kwaliteit van het milieu

WILLEMSTAD — Groei in het toerisme moet vooral gezocht worden in het verbeteren van de milieu-kwaliteit in plaats van steeds maar meer hotelkamers en cruistoeristen. Een ongebreidelde groei van het toerisme zal natuur en milieu ernstig belasten. Tot deze conclusie zijn een zestigtal deskundigen gekomen tijdens een conferentie over duurzaam toerisme, die vorige week op de Bovenwindse eilanden werd gehouden.

Aan de hand van een uitgebreide discussienota opgesteld door de sectie Milieu en Natuur van het departement van Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiëne (Vomil) discussieerden zestig deskundigen op het gebied van planning, toerisme, hotel-management, natuur, milieu en transport twee dagen over duurzaam toerisme. Onder de aanwezigen bevonden zich staatssecretaris Daniel Hassell en de vijf gedeputeerden van Toerisme.

Vele invalshoeken werden tijdens de conferentie belicht zoals planning, het veilig stellen van natuurgebieden,

beschermen van diersoorten, die worden opgegeten of als souvenir worden verhandeld, milieuvriendelijk hotelmanagement en de gevolgen van het cruisetoerisme op het milieu.

Er ontstond een levendige gedachtenwisseling, die resulteerde in nuttige suggesties. Zo werd onder meer geconstateerd dat meer hotelkamers op Bonaire tot milieudegradatie zullen leiden. Aan de eilandelijke politici op Bonaire werd gevraagd een duidelijk en ferm standpunt in te nemen.

Ter sprake kwamen ook de plannen op St. Maarten om twee mega-pieren voor cruise-schepen aan te leggen. De pieren zullen leiden tot overstelpende aantallen bezoekers met alle gevolgen van dien voor het milieu. Tijdens de conferentie werden door diverse deskundigen kritische kanttekeningen bij de plannen gezet. Als oplossing werd gesuggereerd om de transportsector zelf een commissie in te laten stellen teneinde tot zelfregulering te komen. Mocht deze commissie binnen een vastgestelde termijn niet tot een oplossing komen, dan zal de overheid dwingend moeten

ingrijpen. Daarnaast werd aangedrongen om hotels op alle Antilliaanse eilanden in de gelegenheid te stellen op milieuvriendelijke wijze hun eigen energie op te wekken en afvalwater te zuiveren. De overheid moet de handen bieden door de bureaucratische belemmeringen weg te nemen.

De aanwezigen riepen op om zo snel mogelijk te beginnen met milieu-investeringen in de hotels. "Wanneer de hotels niet snel milieuvriendelijk gaan opereren, zullen zij binnenkort de boot missen als internationale touroperators milieu-eisen aan de accommodaties gaan stellen. Investeringen in het milieu moeten financieel aantrekkelijk gemaakt worden en snel van start gaan", luidt de aanbeveling van de conferentie.

Verder werd de noodzaak onderstreept om tot een duidelijk beleid voor de openbaarheid en bescherming van stranden op de Antillen te komen. Ook de sterke roep om regels ter bescherming van karkó, de zeeschildpad en kreeft en tegen overbevissing werd gehoord.

List of Participants

**List of Participants
Conference on Sustainable Tourism for the Netherlands Antilles
11-13 June 1997, Sint Maarten & Saba**

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HELAAS MEVROUW
SABA IS AL VOOR
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AKS