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Section I: Global Trend- Environmental Sustainability and Ecotourism

Globalization has created a worldwide community where events that occur on one side of the globe often have a ripple effect throughout the world. The global community has recognized this to be especially true of the global economy. Globalization has created opportunities for developing countries to become economically competitive with the rest of the world. However, as manufacturing increases in these developing countries so does the consumption of natural resources. According to Ken-Ichi Akao, a professor of Environmental and Resource Economics at Waseda University in Tokyo, “pollution from production and consumption are an inevitable part of economic processes.” Also, Herman Daly, American ecological economist and professor at the School of Public Policy of University of Maryland, points out that as natural resources are taken from the earth, they return to the earth as pollution. Daly describes this process as uneconomic growth; the point at which the natural capital (natural resources) becomes so scarce that man-made capital (consumables) becomes irrelevant (Daly 100). This is particularly true of developing countries that often rely on natural resources as a prime source of income.

Developing countries are beginning to have to choose between economic growth and the local environment; creating a need for sustainable development. Sustainable development, or long-term and consistent economic growth, is impossible without addressing the consumption of natural resources and degradation of the environment. Economic development cannot be sustained unless the damage done to the environment is reversed because there will be, as Daly points out, more “bads” than “goods” (Daly 100). In other words, there will be a point where if we use up too much of our natural resources and waste is created from this use, that the amount of waste product generated will be greater than the amount of “man-made goods” created and will

ultimately result in very little “natural goods” that that could be used as a source of income. This creates the uneconomic growth mentioned for developing countries which rely on their natural resources.

As the effects of daily consumption become apparent in the everyday lives of global citizens in the forms of smog and other effects related to global warming, environmental sustainability has become an important issue for governments and citizens alike. This has created an increased environmental awareness throughout the world in which people are more conscious of the environmental impact of their daily activities. This in turn has resulted in more environmental awareness campaigns that educate people about the current state of the environment, what consumers can do to lessen their “carbon footprint” and businesses who want to let consumers know that they are eco-friendly (Dinghill). Globalization has created an increased environmental awareness resulting in the global trend of environmental sustainability which results in more efforts by businesses, consumers, and governments to become more environmentally friendly.

Sustainability, as defined by the World Commission on the Environment and Development (WCED), is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the need for future generations to meet their own needs” (UN). The United Nations General Assembly’s report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development on December 11, 1987 stated that sustainable development “should become a central guiding principle of the United Nations, governments and private institutions, organizations and enterprises” and recognized “the common interest of all countries to pursue policies aimed at sustainable and environmentally sound development” (UN). The UN’s report and the WCED report titled “Our Common Future”, which targeted multilateralism and interdependence of nations in the search for a sustainable development path led, to the Rio Conference of 1992 (Dadalos). The WCED, also known as the Brundtland Commission, was by no means the beginning of a global discussion on the environment. It was, however; one of the

first instances in which a commission directly addressed not only the degradation of the environment, but also the role of humans in this degradation and a recognition that for future development; it is vital to consider and lessen the negative impact of humans on the environment so that a future is indeed possible. The Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 was “the first international conference to deal at the highest political level with global environment and development issues in a comprehensive and forward-looking way” (Cléménçon 111). The Rio Conference was a summit of 118 countries that discussed how to meet the challenge of global warming, pollution, biodiversity and the inter-related social problems of poverty, health and population. Both the conference and the Brundtland Commission are examples of the global community coming together in the late 80s and early 90s to recognize the need for sustainable development. This caused a rise in the demand for environmentally friendly practices and products from businesses. Most recently, NBC participated in *Green Week*. NBC.com describes green week as a “week of green-themed programming aimed at entertaining, informing and empowering Americans to lead greener lives.” The website also features a daily tip on how to become greener. The efforts by the global community in the Rio Conference and the push by even television stations to inform the public on how to lead greener lives is evidence that environmental sustainability is a global trend that exceeds the power of solely governmental regulation and has made its way into the lives of the average person.

Environmental sustainability has made very large impacts on the way consumers and investors view and use natural resources. Along with making the average person or company aware of the effects their consumption or production has on natural resources, environmental sustainability has also become a tool used by developing countries to provide local economic benefits through sustainable tourism (ecotourism). Sustainable tourism is one of the many manifestations of the increasing concern for environmental sustainability. As mentioned above, many developing countries rely on their natural resources as a main source of income, and to eventually increase economic growth. The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism

as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (Definitions). Eco-tourism has become one of the staple methods for such developing countries to work towards the goal of overall environmental sustainability while also providing an economic gain to local communities and citizens.

Traditional tourism has become one of the world's largest industries and is one of its fastest growing economic sectors (Sustainable). It has a huge amount of impacts, both positive and negative, on people's lives and on the environment. Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability “to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change” (Padilla). Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as “soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires” (Padilla). It often puts a strain on vital natural resources, and it can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources. Countries which practice ecotourism take into perspective such negative impacts while working towards sustainable conservation to turn the negative impacts into positive ones. The tourism industry can contribute to conservation through financial contributions such as revenue from park-entrance and tour fees; through improved environmental management and planning of specific natural resources and their areas; and through raising and spreading environmental awareness to the public by showing the critical environmental problems of a certain area (Sustainable).

The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) contributes a large amount of their efforts towards promoting, developing, and supporting sustainable tourism throughout the world. UNEP has stated on their main home page for ‘Tourism’ that “after decades of sustained growth in volume and visibility, tourism is one of the leading global industries (11% of global GDP) and one of the major migratory movements in modern society (about 700 million international travelers in 2001), producing significant impacts on resource consumption, pollution, and social

systems” (Sustainable). UNEP believes that tourism can be used as a unique tool for awareness building and learning for guests and hosts alike. Sustainable tourism development strategies and management practices can be used toward all forms of tourism and in all types of destinations; for example sustainable tourism can be applied to mass tourism or various niche tourism sectors (Sustainable). The various principles that guide sustainability refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and rely on a balance between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (About). According to the International Ecotourism Society these principles include the following: ecotourism must “minimize impact, build environmental and cultural awareness and respect, provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, provide direct financial benefits for conservation, provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate” (Definitions). Ecotourism is about connecting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel and those who implement and participate in responsible sustainable tourism activities should follow such ecotourism principles.

Section II: Promoting the Awareness of Environmental Sustainability in Costa Rica

The Central American country of the Republic of Costa Rica is a nation that serves as a superior example when examining the sustainable development of a single country from both an economic and environmental standpoint. Costa Rica has been nicknamed “The Green Republic” (Evans) and is renowned worldwide for its long history of conservation efforts. Costa Rica has remained committed “to sustainable economic development, nature conservation, and nature-oriented tourism” (Vivanco, 3), while also faced with the implications of being a third-world country. As stated in the previous section, environmental sustainability has become a tool used by developing countries to conserve natural resources that have been previously exploited to produce economic growth. Agriculture has been among the top industries which Costa Rica relies on economically, yet has also become a cause of the destruction of many natural resources such as

forests and land. The exploitation of natural resources bears heavy consequences of environmental degradation while making it more difficult for the developing country to reach economic stability. Costa Rica has used this tool to not only conserve its vast and lush abundant land but to generate practices that create sustainable development throughout the country.

Through a series of decisions and programs, environmentalism has been integrated into the social consciousness of Costa Rican citizens alike (Evans, 154). For any country, all stakeholders, ranging from citizens to visitors and local to multi-national corporations, must be aware and actively conscious of the sustainable development efforts happening around them in order for their country to achieve the greatest levels of sustainability possible. These participants must then be kept aware of such on going initiatives that are implemented to maintain and improve upon the existing levels of environmental conservation. The global aspirations and abstractions of environmental sustainability can not be transformed into reality until environmental conservation actions are being practiced in concrete places (Vivanco, 8). In Costa Rica, efforts to achieve such green practices have included awareness campaigns to promote conservation must be effectively positioned to target all aspects of Costa Rican life. Professionals within the marketing field have had the opportunity to use their knowledge to promote and advertise environmental sustainability practices, ranging from governmental initiatives and projects, corporate responsibility towards the environment, to everyday “green” living practices.

For the last century, inhabitants of Costa Rica had been under the impression that their country held “more than enough [natural] resources and that no shortages would develop (Evans, 44). Ticos, which is what Costa Ricans refer to themselves as, believed that their land was well suited for “agriculture and livestock” (Evans, 44) and that forests were an obstruction to the expansion of their agricultural practices. Little did they know that the years of deforestation, which they saw as an “improvement” (Evans, 44) to the land, would cause a profusion of negative ecological effects and eventually lead Costa Rica into the environmental dilemma to which the country has been responding the past thirty years. The dilemma is situated around past

agricultural developments which produced short term economic wealth for natives yet has led to recent problems when trying to create long-term conservation of natural resources (Evans, 43). Raul Prebisch, a Latin American economist, calls this dilemma a “technical ambivalence in which increased productivity has made an enormous contribution to human welfare but at the same time has had serious consequences for the biosphere” (Evans, 43). The high demand for certain export products, mainly coffee and bananas, encouraged small businesses as well as foreign corporations to continue to manipulate the land to increase profits. Not only were thousands upon thousands of trees cut down and vast tropical forests eliminated, but also many natural habitats and ecosystems including exotic wildlife and flora were exterminated. “Following a long period of large-scale natural resources exploitation, Costa Ricans began to realize the enormous value of their natural wealth, which led to the protection of one quarter of its territory and several international conservation prizes” (Buchsbaum).

In the second half of the twentieth century, Costa Rican policymakers pursued many reforms in social and economic areas due to the downturn of foreign demand for Costa Rican exports (Vivanco, 44). One of the national organizations that came from such reforms was known as the Instituto Costarricense de Turismo and was established in 1955 with the mission to set aside land for preservation use. Today, the institution is known as the Costa Rica Tourism Board or the ICT. The Costa Rican government promoted a clear message to their citizens that change was needed in order to create sustainable development from an economic and an ecological standpoint. Many laws were passed and organizations were formed to motivate the Costa Rican people, and foreign investors, to act on behalf of the new belief of environmentalism. The government realized the extensive damage of deforestation, correlated with years of negative agricultural practices that brought about serious problems for the environment such as decreases in watersheds, overall low soil sterility, and overgrazed pastures (Evans, 44). Since 1963, when the first environmental protection reserve was created, Costa Rica's conservation initiatives had expanded to include 70 protected areas or national parks covering 21% of the nation's territory, as

well as the creation of Costa Rica's National Park Service in 1970 (Vivanco, 15). Costa Rica's first Forestry Law of 1969 set the stage for many future land use trends in Costa Rica. "The most important aspect of this law was that it established categories of national parks, the methods to create them and an administrative body to govern and manage them" (Morse). By the end of the 1970s thirteen National Parks had been established, including Tortugero National Park in 1975 and Braulio Carrillo National Park in 1978. During in the 1980's, "Costa Rica continued with the structural adjustment program furthering trade liberalization, slowly downsizing the government, and diversifying agricultural exports while promoting both tourism and conservation" (Morse). In 1989, the government developed a national strategy of sustainable development (ECODES) designed to negotiate the mix between agricultural development and strict conservation (Morse). By 1996, the administration declared its intent to turn the country into "a laboratory for sustainable development by promoting environmental concerns along with social investment and a more participatory democracy" (Morse).

One of the Costa Rican government's main initiatives towards creating sustainable development involved manipulating a very lucrative industry to the nation: tourism. The beauty and culture of the nation alone is Costa Rica's best marketing tool when appealing to tourists. According to Martha Honey, the Co-Director of the Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, Costa Rica has excellent national parks, a stable democratic government with no army, a pleasant climate, and friendly people (Honey). It also has one of the highest standards of living, the largest middle class, the best public health care system, the best public education through the University level, and the highest literacy rate in Latin America (Honey). "The favorable climate, the abundance of exotic wildlife and brilliant tropical flora, and the warm offshore waters that lap the bordering coastal plains have lured hundreds of thousands of international tourists" (Nelson, xxi). In 1988, Costa Rican tourism generated \$164.7 million in foreign currency and by 1997 "statistics showed that tourism was the largest industry" within the country, estimated at a worth of \$700 million (Evans, 216). Tourism earnings surpassed coffee in

1990 and then bananas in 1993, becoming the number one foreign exchange earner and creating a more diverse economy for the nation (Minca). The local tourism market has been consistently growing at a 7.1% annual growth rate with more than 1.73 million tourists visiting Costa Rica every year (Evans, 217). Costa Rica has been able to maneuver their growing tourism industry into a tool that can help the state execute their environmental sustainability goals more efficiently through promoting and advocating the practice of ecotourism. “From 1994 to 1998, under President José María Figueres, Costa Rica offered a variety of incentives to tourism investors and launched a \$15 million publicity campaign to U.S. and Canadian ecotourists”(Buchsbaum). During Figueres’ term, the government also passed a law that made environmental impact studies mandatory for tourism projects within Costa Rica (Honey).

Costa Rica is one of several countries in the world that has been embracing ecotourism as a national conservation and development strategy (Stem). The transformation of the Costa Rican tourism industry is one of impressive scale and over the years, the country has earned a reputation as the premier ecotourism destination in the world and is considered ecotourism’s poster child (Honey). The environmental benefits of ecotourism development in Costa Rica have been far reaching. According to Bernardo Duhá Buchsbaum, “ecotourism has been steadily increasing in Costa Rica since the 1970’s and really began to take off in the 1980’s when tourism garnered tremendous support from the government and assistance from USAID, the World Bank, and the IMF” (Buchsbaum). The Costa Rican government began to invest heavily in ecotourism, and in the early 1980’s they used incentives as a marketing tool to engage citizens and businesses in ecotourism practices (Morse). In 1984, the government passed an important piece of legislation that granted many incentives and tax breaks to hotels, airlines, car rental agencies, travel agencies, and sea transportation for engaging in ecotourism practices (Honey). Strong private sector conservation initiatives were also developed during this period. One of the first Eco-lodges in the world, Rara Avis, was initiated in 1986 as well as several other private reserves, including Selva Tica and Selva Verde provided by the La-Selva Biological Station, have added to the

reserve base in Costa Rica (Morse). Though at the time, the parks offered little in the way of employment in the area, they were the beginning of an industry on the rise. Costa Rica at the national level benefited from a boom in tourism in part due to the country's national park system, its reputation as a peaceful nation, and to the global explosion of ecotourism (Morse). It can be inferred that this incredible increase in the area marked for conservation would not have been possible without the economic incentives of ecotourism backed by the national government.

A coalition of ecotourism organizations, including the Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD), CANAECO, the Costa Rica national chamber of ecotourism, and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), in parallel with the Costa Rican government launched an on-going campaign in 2007 to make Costa Rica the world's first "carbon neutral" tourism destination. According to an article by Stefan Lovgren of National Geographic, the pursuit for carbon neutrality aims to balance the amount of carbon dioxide a country releases when burning fossil fuels with the amount that it captures or offsets by, for example, planting trees (Lovgren). The Costa Rican government is developing plans to begin offsetting all of the country's carbon dioxide emissions, said a press release from the CESD on May 14th, 2007.

Martha Honey, Co-Director of the CESD, stated within the press release: "For the last decade, Costa Rica has been the poster child for responsible ecotourism that benefits both communities and conservation. Now their commitment to ecotourism is going a step farther by addressing squarely the impact of travel on climate change" (New Campaign). Nature Air, a Costa Rica based regional airline which became, in 2004, the world's first airline to offset all of its carbon dioxide emissions and invest the dollar equivalent in rainforest restoration, is the "flagship" company within the campaign. The company will be featured by the government as a business which has already implemented the "carbon neutral" mission. Within the CESD press release, Nature Air Vice President Alexi Huntley was quoted to state: "We're (Nature Air) offsetting 100% of our fuel consumption and we're helping to protect the Osa Peninsula, one of the most biologically diverse places on earth. We wanted to become a catalyst for change and to challenge

the industry” (New Campaign). The Nature Air project is only the first step within the “carbon neutral” campaign, which is expected to be a large and vigorous project to enable all travelers to Costa Rica to enjoy carbon neutral vacations.

Environment and Energy Minister Roberto Dobles said Costa Rica aims to reach this goal using budgeting, laws, and incentives, including measures to promote bio-fuels, hybrid vehicles, and clean energy (Lovgren). Another key component of the national strategy will be a “C-Neutral” label to certify that tourism and certain industrial practices mitigate all of the carbon dioxide they emit (New Campaign). Under the new certification system, tourists and businesses will be charged a voluntary “tax” to offset their carbon emissions, with one ton of carbon valued at \$10, according to the press release (New Campaign). The money will be used to fund conservation, reforestation, and research in protected areas. To augment the development of C-Neutral, the country is cultivating a carbon certificate market that aims to not only boost carbon capture and storage in the nation’s forests, but also help maintain their scenic beauty (New Campaign). In the National Geographic article Dobles stated, "We have an opportunity to become the first carbon-neutral tourist destination, we want Costa Rica to be a guilt-free location to visit, and that will be good for business" (Lovgren). Dobles believes that if Costa Rica is able to embrace greener business practices this will eventually lead to a greener bottom line, especially in the tourism industry (Lovgren).

Ecotourism has prospered in Costa Rica, largely because it has become more profitable than competing land uses such as agriculture, cattle grazing, hunting, logging and conventional mass tourism, which have proved themselves to be environmentally destructive (Weaver, 1999). Marketing is one of the most important components of the travel industry in general and has played a key role within the development of ecotourism in Costa Rica. Marketing is also a key economic ingredient for the success of ecotourism. Ecotourism marketing has allowed the country to capitalize on the value of its natural resources, without exploiting them to the point of nonexistence, while showing consumers the reasons for conservation needs. “Ecotourism

developed as a way to commercialize the existence value of sensitive ecological regions, protecting forests and generating employment and income at the same time” (Roberts). As the demand for ecotourism has increased in Costa Rica, marketing professionals within the tourism industry have taken notice. According to Martha Honey, “the growing public concern with the environment and interest in outdoor-oriented travel, coupled with the growing dissatisfaction with conventional mass tourism, showed the tourism industry that there was a sizable market for ecotourism” (Honey). The same belief was seen to be true within the tourism industry in Costa Rica and marketers have taken advantage of the situation. When viewing ecotourism in Costa Rica from a market analysis standpoint, there has been a positive indicator that a large market exists for marketing professionals to target. “According to a 1995 survey by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), some 83% of travelers support ‘green’ travel companies and are willing to spend more for travel services and products designed to conserve the environment” (Honey). Marketing professionals within the tourism industry have come to view eco-travel as a marketing tool to attract the growing number of environmentally and socially conscious travelers (Honey). Over the years, promotional materials for nature tourism and ecotourism have developed a distinct style designed to sell “experiences” rather than “products” (Honey). Elaborate marketing campaigns have been a way for both foreign and locally owned ecotourism companies within Costa Rica to create a competitive advantage within the tourism market.

The Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy established a model to benchmark the ability of nations to protect the environment over the next several decades called the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI). The model integrates 76 data sets, including tracking natural resource endowments, past and present pollution levels, environmental management efforts, and the capacity of a society to improve its environmental performance and molds them into 21 indicators of environmental sustainability. These indicators then permit a comparison across a range of issues that fall into the following five broad categories: environmental systems, reducing environmental stresses, reducing human vulnerability to environmental stresses, societal

and institutional capacity to respond to environmental challenges, and global stewardship. Under the ESI model, each country is given a ranking from number one, being the most environmentally stable, to number one hundred and forty six, being the least stable. As of 2005, Costa Rica holds the eighteenth position within the rankings. The country has maintained such a high ranking for environmental sustainability mainly because of the governments push to incorporate sustainable development into the nation's infrastructure. This push stemmed from the realization that many of Costa Rica's agricultural practices were exploiting the country's main natural resource – its forests – and would ultimately leave the country in a fragile economic and environmental state.

The goal of marketing, whether from the Costa Rican government or any private business, “must be to move ecotourism beyond simply [being] a new niche within nature travel” but to significantly transform the way tourists and general the tourism industry views conservation within Costa Rica (Buchsbaum). The ecotourism industry in Costa Rica has built an international reputation for quality ecotourism and built up incredible momentum over the past two decades and has yet to reach its full potential. As a whole, the country appears to be embracing conservation through ecotourism and looking for ways to maximize its potential economic and environmental value. Costa Rica has demonstrated signs of commitment, including the promotion of ecotourism, that it is heading in the right direction in its search for the path to sustainability.

Section III: Marketing Environmental Sustainability Worldwide

The global trend of environmental sustainability creates marketing opportunities in both the non-profit sector that want to spread environmental awareness campaigns as well as in the for-profit sector that wants to cash in on eco-friendly consumers and establish a reputation as an eco-friendly company. As exemplified in the previous section, government organizations are also taking action to spread awareness about the environmental impact of the actions of both consumers and businesses within a countries boundaries and worldwide. Marketing professionals

are needed to publicize and coordinate these efforts to reach the greatest audience of a target market. Non-profit and non-governmental organizations have the choice to either contract out marketing needs from an outside firm, or hire inside marketing staff to create campaigns that have maximum reach and frequency of their message. Creating an effective environmental awareness campaign involves getting the attention of people who are normally outside the realm of environmentalism; reaching regular people who are ignorant to the fact that their individual actions have an impact on the environment and its sustainability. Marketing to people who are not already involved in the awareness of environmental sustainability and its goals will result in a more informed consumer and hopefully create consumer (and producer) activism. Ecotourism is only one the many sustainable trends where marketers can apply their skills. The reading below gives insight through examples on how marketing is being used to advocate environmental sustainability.

Environmental awareness campaigns in Chile create opportunities for marketing professionals to work with environmental organizations, such as the Pure Salmon Campaign's Global Week of Action. The Pure Salmon Campaign created a documentary illustrating the environmental impact of Chilean salmon farming as well as the labor risks involved (Second). During the Global Week of Action, the Pure Salmon Campaign has coordinated events across the globe in an effort to motivate consumers to demand better standards from the salmon industry as a whole. According to an article on PR Newswire, "Salmon farming is associated with a whole host of horrors including: human and marine mammal deaths, escapes, diseases, and, contamination." This campaign involved coordinating worldwide events intended to spread knowledge to change such horrors.

Small to large scaled businesses around the globe have focused their marketing efforts to show their commitment to environmental substantiality. Various businesses are reaching out to their consumer base on an eco-friendly level, either through company advertising or directly on a product's packaging. For example, BP, formally known as British Petroleum, gas stations have

an aggressive environmental campaign informing customers of their intentions to help preserve the environment. BP has been using the phrase “Beyond Petroleum” in advertising and on the website to tap into the environmental sensitivity of their consumers by recreating their brand image around an environmental concept. The use of this phrase in place of the company’s actual name is how BP is tapping into the new eco-friendly consumer. BP states that it is “dedicated to diversifying domestic energy solutions that will power our future,” (Environment). The company wants to stray away from being viewed as just another gas company, but as an innovator seeking energy alternatives that will eventually replace dependence on nonrenewable resources. “As a major manufacturer and marketer of fuels”, BP believes it has a responsibility to play an active role in finding solutions to the challenge of creating cleaner fuels, and thereby cleaner air (Environment). BP has transformed its brand image through aggressive advertising accompanied by direct action to create a positive environmental impact in the future.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) is an organization that solely exists to promote ecotourism through the creation of an international network of individuals, institutions and the tourism industry, to educate tourists and tourism professionals, and influence the tourism industry, public institutions and donors to integrate the principles of ecotourism into their operations and policies (Definitions). TIES sponsored the Global Ecotourism Conference 2007, entitled "Protecting our Planet - One Trip at a Time", to mark the fifth year anniversary of the United Nations “International Year of Ecotourism” in 2002 (The Global). The conference, held in Oslo, Norway, brought together over 450 participants from over 70 countries to provide unique learning and networking opportunities within the realm of the ecotourism industry (The Global). The inaugural Global Ecotourism Conference, which ran over a three-day period, was the first major global conference on ecotourism since 2002 and “marked an important step forward in development of ecotourism globally” (The Global). The main goals of the conference according to TIES included the following:

“To bring together national and regional ecotourism associations from around the world and provide an opportunity for existing associations and those wishing to establish new associations to examine their common issues and to build a stronger global movement for ecotourism; to assess the achievements in the field of ecotourism since 2002 and to discuss new challenges by uniting ecotourism stakeholders, both in the private and public sectors, to evaluate past achievements, and to discuss critical issues facing the ecotourism community today; and to collaborate with key UN agencies, international environmental NGOs, and national governments to foster ecotourism as an important tool for poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable reforms of the tourism industry” (The Global).

As the International Ecotourism Society’s goals for holding this inaugural conference are stated above, the core and underlying purpose of the conference is to market and promote the environmental sustainability initiative of ecotourism around the world. This large-scale event was used as a marketing means to send a loud message to a large targeted audience.

As an ever-increasing environmental sustainability trend extends its reach around the globe, the promotion of environmental awareness has also become “globalized”. Businesses, consumers, and governments alike have made extensive efforts toward achieving environmental sustainability through widespread marketing initiatives. Marketing professionals have been given the opportunity to invest their time and knowledge in a worthwhile goal of creating sustainability in a local, national, and global environment.

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