

# The Ecotourism Society of Seychelles



*For the Community & by the Community  
The Process....*

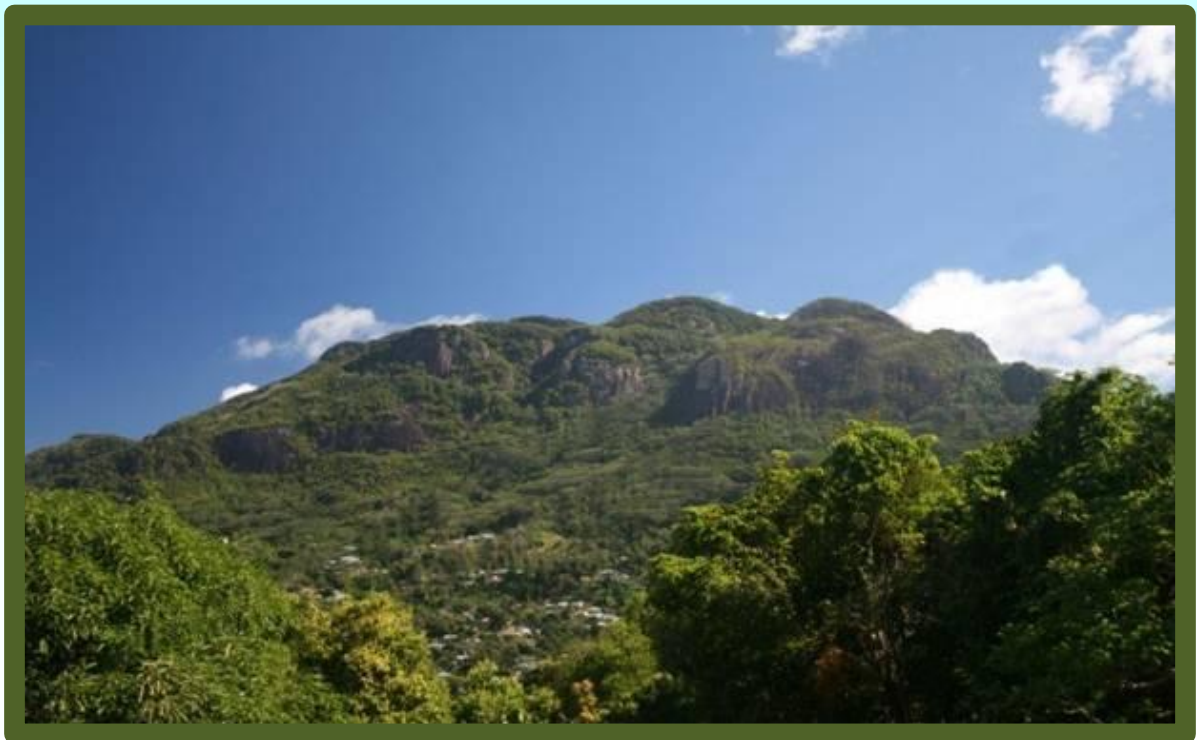
***“Turning Possibilities into Realities”***

***The Year of Togetherness....***

Newsletter No. 16 of 2009 by TESS in accordance to Article 7 Section 3 of its Constitution.

## **DIFFERENTIATION: FOR LONG TERM SUCCESS**

***Cultural Tourism - Adding More Value***



***Sky Focus***

*Courtesy of Martin Constance*

***Majestic Trois Frères Range***

***Vertical Integration***

## **CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES**

**Presentation by Ambassador Marc MRM Marengo, Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation (IOTO), Special Advisor to the Minister of Transport and Tourism, Chairman of the Committee on Ecotourism of the Republic of Seychelles at the IOTO Annual General Meeting, on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2000, Equatorial Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Greetings to you all...

*“Unity in diversity, multiethnic, multicultural and multifaceted.*

*An abode of peace and harmony” goes the Malaysian Tourism promotional slogan.*

*It is therefore abundantly clear that Malaysia has already captured the essence of the value of culture for their promotional endeavours and as such your beautiful country needs no convincing on the important issue of cultural tourism.*

*However, it is also worth noting that on a global scale, the WTO has also caught up with the idea for Article 2 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism of the World Tourism Organisation states and I quote:-*

*“Tourism, the activity most frequently associated with the rest and relaxation, sport and access to culture and nature, should be planned and practised as a privileged means of individual and collective fulfilment, when practised with a sufficiently open mind, it is an irreplaceable factor of self education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences, between peoples and cultures and their diversity”.*

*Consequently, it provides further evidence that “Travel for purposes of religion, health, education and cultural or linguistic exchanges are particularly beneficial forms of tourism, which deserve encouragement.”*

*In this respect “tourism policies and activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, which they should protect and pass on to future generations”.*

*“Particular care should be devoted to preserving monuments, shrines and museums as well as archaeological and historical sites which must be widely open to tourist visitation”.*

*Encouragement should be given to public access to privately – owned cultural property and monuments with respect for the rights of their owners, as well as to religious buildings, without prejudice to the normal needs of worship.*

*Tourism activity should be planned in such a way to allow traditional cultural products, crafts and folklore to survive and flourish rather than causing them to degenerate and become standardised.*

*Local population should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably in the economic, social and*

*cultural benefits they generate and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them.*

### **The concept of modern tourism**

*What we are talking here ladies and gentlemen, is the recognition of the concept of modern tourism, where success is measured not just in terms of Tourism income but also by the application of environment and society conscious approaches.*

*Indeed today, to most travellers of taste and intelligence, the standard vacation trip has frequently become, at best a crushing bore, at worst a horror, a nightmare.*

*For all over the world small – minded entrepreneurs, urged by profits, have nullified the charm, complexity and distinctive qualities of numerous leading destinations.*

*How under these most unfortunate prevailing circumstances, can a self-respecting, intellectually curious, spirited individual continue to travel?*

*The answer lies in a new approach, using new modes of travel in search of learning.*

*The key objectives is to experience events, lifestyles, attitudes, cultures, political*

outlooks and theological views utterly different from what the traveller will usually encounter at home.

The question therefore, is unless that happens why travel? why endure fatigue of transportation and its associated burdens, just to reach a replica of your familiar surroundings? Thus, unless vacation travel is a learning experience, unless it leaves the traveller a bit different than when it all began, it is in my view a pointless physical exercise.

That is why ecotourism is today the fastest growing segment of the travel industry and that is why we IOTO Member countries must continuously contribute to this growth and to broaden the appeal of eco-travel by increasing consumer awareness and to beautifully present the extraordinary array of eco-travel options that are available.

As you know the term eco-travel is really “an umbrella term for a variety of travel industry segments including adventure, heritage, culture, educational, altruistic (volunteer) as well as active sports, all tied together by an emphasis on fun, environmental sensitivity and social responsibility (SETS 21)”.

Our task therefore, is to continuously encourage travel that is not only exciting and enjoyable but above all that educate travellers to ways that they can help preserve the earth and our multi ethnic, multicultural and multifaceted societies.

For example, we in Seychelles we are fully committed to Ecotourism development. As such we are conscious of the role the community at large must play in promoting their local well-being. Consequently, with regards to the issue before us today we do ensure that we for example organise a variety of local festivals and events aimed at demonstrating an on-going sense of pride in the local community’s natural environment and cultural heritage.

In fact this week we are celebrating the Creole Festival, which has its origins in the early 1980’s when a group of linguists and researchers from Creole-speaking islands of the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean adopted the 28<sup>th</sup> October as International Creole Day, namely to raise awareness of the Creole Identity and Language.

In some countries the term Creole came to designate people of mixed origins. In Seychelles where racial origin is no longer a defining characteristic of any importance, “Creole” is now used more to designate the language, our mother tongue, as well as the culture of the islands as experienced through music, dance, arts, crafts, cuisine, customs and the way of life in general.

Indeed Seychelles has played a pioneering role in the promotion of the Creole language and culture and has become a pole of attraction for persons in other societies who believe that the assumption of their Creole identity and the greater, but sensible use of their mother tongue can be the means for social progress in their own countries.

As a consequence today Victoria, one of the smallest capitals in the world, is the capital of the Creole world. Mind you when the population of all the Creole islands are put together we do have a 10 million Creole speaking population...a small force in itself to be reckoned with.

Ladies and Gentlemen

From the above short expose it is abundantly clear that like in Malaysia, we in Seychelles have already recognised that if ecotourism is to register more success as a variable from of sustainable development, the private sector, the government and civil society must all cooperate to include local communities in the planning process.

For it is precisely through such processes that we will be better able to mitigate some well-known negative impacts of tourism such as loss of local traditions; commercialisation of local cultural products; erosion of self worth, undermining of family structure; fighting among those who benefit from the tourism cash economy and those who do not, and last but not least, crime and other illegal underground economies such as prostitution, alcohol and drugs.

This ladies and gentlemen, is indeed the concept of modern tourism, where success is measured not just in forms of tourism income, but also by the application of environment and society – conscious approaches of which the important issue of CULTURE should not and must never be undermined.

Thank you all for listening.

# Observations

Over the past ten years since the adoption of the then WTO (World Tourism Organisation) Global Code of Ethics in Santiago, Chile in 1999, it could safely be argued that the Seychelles Islands have registered considerable progress in the area of Cultural Tourism. However in our view there is still much more to be done. Thus now a decade later, in order to better the situation, the time is ripe for us to take stock of our achievements and our setbacks so as to pave the way forward in broadening our cultural assets whereby turning them into an economic and social phenomenon.

Consequently there is now the need to respond to the professional and intellectual challenges that implies for actual practitioners, destination managers, heritage site managers, museum curators, planners, archivists and above all the local community itself.

In so doing, we must also equip ourselves with the knowledge, ideas and awareness of the policy context at the local, national and international levels, together with the research skills and the relevant practical applications pertaining to Cultural Tourism ventures.

During the coming year 2010, TESS intends to place particular focus in this direction, in enabling the local Community to play a vital role in the further development of Cultural Tourism for the sustainability of the industry and for the benefit of all...in particular the less fortunate and the most vulnerable of our society

We do count on the support of one and all concern.



## **BOTTOM LINE**

Dave Pelzer's *Life Lessons*

From a man who knows...

***OF ALL THE LIFE LESSONS I HAVE BEEN  
FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO LEARN, THE  
SINGLE MOST POWERFUL, MOST  
IMPORTANT ONE IS: HATE NO ONE!***

*I believe hate is like cancer: it can spread and kill a person, one 'life cell', one day, at a time. If hatred goes unchecked it can take over one's life. If you hate today, it's easier for you to hate tomorrow, then the next day and the next, until you've wasted your entire life by becoming dominated by what you detested in the first place. How can you live a productive life and all that goes with it, if you are controlled by such intense feelings as hate? Personally, I don't call that much of a life...*