

MEXICO REACHES OUT TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



In an age of increasing concerns about the state of our planet, many countries have been making attempts to make tourism a greener industry, simultaneously helping local communities to thrive. Mexico has become the latest in a long line of states to announce plans to make Mexican tourism friendlier to the environment. The positive intentions of the Mexicans have been met with nothing less than admiration and applause. The plans were announced in cooperation with the World Heritage Association, of which Mexico became a member in 2006, and the United Nations Foundation.

The main aims of the new plans are to protect and improve Mexico's numerous coral reefs, mangroves, clear deep water pools and forests. Besides this, Mexico is the proud owner of 26 official World Heritage sites, its islands being the most recently recognised sites of heritage in 2005. A further priority for the improvement of Mexican tourism is to empower local communities via entrepreneurship. Indeed, it has been stated that a percentage of agent registration fees are to be donated to local communities in Mexico.

One interesting idea raised during the announcement of plans to improve the effect Mexican tourism has on the environment was to limit the size of groups of tourists visiting the central American country. It has quite logically and rightly pointed out that larger groups tend not to integrate into local communities whereas this is not the case with smaller groups of tourists. This was just one of several interesting points which came up.

The motives behind creating such a plan to aid communities and the environment are, of course, not purely for the purposes mentioned above. Many cynics would point out that is a cunning plan to attract more people by giving off this image. Although the Mexican tourist organisations may have pure intentions, there are surely some ulterior motives for such sudden and forceful announcements.

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