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GREEN GROWTH AND TRAVELISM

LETTERS FROM LEADERS

EDITED BY GEOFFREY LIPMAN, TERRY DELACY, SHAUN VORSTER, REBECCA HAWKINS AND MIN JIANG



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Preface



Maurice F. Strong

Founder Chairman, Cosmos
International Group, Secretary General
1992 Rio Earth Summit

Travel and tourism – the green imperative

Maurice F. Strong, P.C., O.C., LL.D was born and educated in Canada. He has been working at senior levels in business, government and international organizations for over 30 years, and now spends most of his time in China. Current appointments include: Founder Chairman of Cosmos International Group; Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General of Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20); Honorary Professor of Peking University (Beijing); Member of United States National Academy of Sciences. Some of Mr. Strong's past appointments include: Under Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; Senior Advisor to the President, World Bank; Member, Foundation Board, World Economic Forum; Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972); First Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme; Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit).

Rio+20 comes at a time in which changes in the world economy are producing daunting challenges to the tourism industry. These challenges have also produced a new generation of opportunities, of which none is more important to the future of this industry than the 'green imperative'.

In its multiple dimensions, travelism – the travel & tourism socio-economic value chain – is one of the most pervasive industries, driving the processes of globalization and contributing to the economy of even the smallest communities, providing an ever expanding linkage between the local and the global. At the core of this challenge is the need for the

industry to become a true leader in the greening of the economy. Indeed, the industry must see this as an imperative which will require the full commitment of its own leaders. Even at the most difficult economic times, travel increases and with it the environmental impacts of travel, particularly the increasing greenhouse gas emissions it produces.

Tourism involves travel and it requires that the destinations which attract visitors be protected and enhanced. The industry has strong incentives to do so as well as a great responsibility. For the environments which attract tourists are not only great assets for the industry but for the communities in which they are located.

Advances and innovation in technologies have led to a rapid expansion of travel by air, rail and road that has made our world smaller. This has led to the phenomenal internationalization of trade, communication, sport and recreation. And in turn, the systemic relationships being developed between them are inextricably linked to the expansion of travel and tourism. It is a relationship that is being strengthened by the internet and social media which are making travelism accessible to so many more people and destinations.

At the same time, a more accessible world also multiplies our risks and vulnerabilities – the rapid transmission of health threats, the impact of natural disasters, the costs of energy and food and volatility in the markets for so many key commodities. The resulting crisis conditions are now afflicting the economies of the United States and Europe, affecting most countries and impacting especially the poor and disadvantaged in both developing and more industrialized countries. Energy costs, which I believe will escalate to record levels, will place an especially heavy burden on the industry

The economic and financial crises also highlight the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the winners and losers, in all countries. This deepening rich-poor divide is producing growing tensions and citizen protests as evidenced in the rapid expansion of the movement which began with the occupation of Wall Street.

This is clearly a time of momentous change on a scale that will have a profound effect on the human future. Your industry has a responsibility to consider how green travelism contributes to this challenge and can best contribute to its solutions.

The environment as nature's capital is the greatest single resource for tourism and this provides a powerful incentive for the industry to protect it. It makes green tourism a necessity for the industry, not merely

a fringe issue too often receiving more lip service than real commitment. Yet there is within the industry a disturbing tendency towards what we call 'green washing'. This clearly undermines global efforts to protect the environment on which tourism, indeed all life, depends.

The industry must integrate 'green' as an absolute necessity for its own future and the responsibilities it has for the entire human future. Simultaneously, this new travelism vision and its commitment to action must be integrated into the mainstream movement for radical global change. Rio+20 must give strong momentum to this movement. This is the reason that your industry needs to give high priority to its fundamental engagement.

Twenty years ago travel rose to the occasion – the sector's very participation in the Rio Earth Summit, the *Agenda 21 for Travel & Tourism* that you produced and the leadership you then showed provided a beacon for the sector that was truly worthy of your role as one of the world's largest industries.

Today the travel industry needs an enlightened but radically reinvigorated agenda for green growth transformation. You have made notable progress on which the industry can now build. But it needs real and continuing action, targets, measurement and a new mindset that links economic, climate, social and environmental response, as well as welcoming global and local inclusion. I am convinced you can make much more of your unique positioning if you fully integrate the interests of local communities into overall strategic policy in a meaningful way. In a sustainable green growth world, destinations will have the ultimate responsibility for their destiny.

Let me also call your attention to a fundamental issue in this change agenda – the importance of linking environmental and travelism education: particularly for the next leadership generation which will have to drive the most challenging changes.

I am involved in an initiative, with likeminded colleagues, to launch a World Environment University grounded in the Island province of Jeju in South Korea. Within that framework the establishment of a Green Growth and Travelism Institute is a priority element. As a torchbearer of the green growth 2050 vision, this is envisaged as the centre of a virtual global network of related organizations and institutions. This initiative is very well advanced with prospects of support from a core group of universities on every continent – this book with its leadership vision is an important underpinning to the focus for this sector on the green

growth transformation journey.

That transformation must be started now and will be carried on by our children and grandchildren. Our task is to make the right choices now. No issue is more important in that context, than the growing risks of climate change, which provides the greatest threats ever to the sustainability and security of life everywhere. Travelism is a victim of as well as a contributor to climate change. It is now widely recognized that travelism accounts for some 5% of global carbon emissions and this is growing rapidly with aviation the leading and most rapidly growing contributor.

The initiative of WTTC in setting a goal of 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2035 over 2005 levels and the International Air Transport Association's commitment to a mid-term goal of carbon-neutral growth from 2020 with reduction in emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2050 are commendable demonstrations of response to this challenge. I will expect that, based on this, your industry will move ahead in strongly supporting regulatory, voluntary and market-based mechanisms to ensure achievement of its objectives.

Travelism plays a key role in protecting the earth's natural capital – its biological diversity, the services that nature provides on which so much of our life and wellbeing depends. The eco systems – mountains, forests, islands, waters and coastal areas which provide some of the most attractive venues for tourism – are nature's gift to humankind which it is in our interest and responsibilities to protect.

Travelism also provides an immense range of opportunities for economic development and relief from poverty in some of the most disadvantaged areas. *Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism* prepared in response to the 1992 Earth Summit, and more recently the very detailed report by the United Nations Environment Program on *The green economy, pathway to sustainable development and poverty eradication* define the many ways in which green tourism is essential to the development of the green economy.

Tourism creates jobs, opportunities for local entrepreneurship, small and medium sized business and economic development in virtually every community. There is no other industry that can have such a universal impact on economic development and the escape from poverty. The greening of tourism must be much more than applying a green veneer over underlining activities which are far from green. The greening must occur at every level of the travelism system. It has to be

the heart and core of the industry which must take the lead in this. But it must be supported in and incentivized by much more enlightened and effective government policies and practices. This means that the green growth lobby must become much more active and influential than those who lobby for lesser measures.

Finally in this context, travelism thrives on peace and sustainability and it is an essential contributor to it. Tourism which is such an important factor in the economies of most countries provides them with a strong incentive to maintain internal security and protect the human rights of their people. The very conditions so necessary to the health of their tourist industry also helps to establish and maintain social stability and well being and provide expanding opportunities for their people.

No nation will have a greater positive impact on these developments than China where I spend much of my time these days and with which I have had a long relationship. After a century of internal turbulence and conflict, China has again emerged as one of the world's great nations with an immense and growing impact on its future. No nation has a greater variety and diversity of tourist destinations from the habitats of pandas to its vast heritage of historic, cultural and national wonders. Chinese travellers are great tourists within their own countries. Its domestic market is today twice as big as all of the international travel in the world. However Chinese international travel – where they are poised to become the leading global player – is less than 5% of its total travel.

There are few destinations in the world that do not receive Chinese visitors. Yet, tourism in China is still at its early stages and there are immense opportunities for tourism both in China and by the Chinese travelling internationally. In the early stages of China's remarkable economic growth, China, like the more traditional developed countries, gave little priority to the environment. It has paid a heavy price for this. China is fully committed to developing a green economy. The greening of its economy is a top priority and this will clearly contribute to its attractiveness for tourism. No country has greater potential for leadership in green tourism than China and this will continue to open up unprecedented opportunities for the greening of the industry.

Finally, my personal experience with travel and the environment have been integral to my own life. It is out of my own experiences that I have become so firmly committed to the systemic relationship between the environment and green travelism and indeed the imperative for this sector to fulfil its leadership destiny through the transition to green travelism.

Dedication

We are dedicating this book to Maurice Strong, and to each and every individual that makes a modest bottom-up contribution to the sustainable development agenda, because they are the true champions of the green revolution underway.

For half a century Maurice Strong has been a global advocate for our planet and its people, becoming the architect and first head of the pivotal United Nations Environment Program. Twenty years ago, at the Rio Earth Summit, he led the charge to establish the framework for sustainable development and in shaping a planetary Agenda for the 21st Century. Today he is advocating the same message from his base in China, on which so much of our common future depends.

Maurice has also continuously encouraged our sector to reach forward to integrate the environment into its core business strategies. Many of us have been fortunate to become his friends and colleagues during this time, benefitting from his wise words and guidance. This guidance has helped steer the efforts to green the industry through *Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism*, which was conceived during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the creation of the first ever green certification program a few years later and current efforts aimed at establishing a green growth focused global academic network.

Maurice recently urged the industry leadership in the World Travel and Tourism Council to fully integrate into mainstream Rio+20 initiatives, stating that 'My personal experience with travel and the environment have been integral to my own life. It is out of my own experiences that I have become so firmly committed to the systemic relationship between the environment and tourism. I firmly believe in the importance and indeed the imperative of making the transition to green travelism.'

We wholeheartedly share this view and it is for this commitment that we dedicate this book to his vision, in the hope that it can make a contribution to the process of transformation.

G Lipman, T DeLacy, S Vorster, R Hawkins and M Jiang

About the editors

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Terry DeLacy is a Professor in sustainable tourism and environmental policy at Victoria University, Melbourne. He was previously Director of the Australian Government established, national Sustainable Tourism Co-operative Research Centre and dean of the agricultural and natural resources faculty at the University of Queensland. Terry's research area is in environmental policy specialising in natural resources, sustainable tourism, climate change and most recently destinations in the emerging green economy. He is currently leading projects in Bali on developing a green growth 2050 roadmap and in the Pacific on developing vulnerability/resilience frameworks for the tourism sector to adapt to hazards and risks including to those from climate change.



Shaun Vorster is Special Adviser to the South African Minister of Tourism. He holds a DPhil in Political Science from Stellenbosch University. In his early career, he lectured part-time on international relations theory and European politics, and served as research and strategy manager for the official opposition in Parliament. He also served as Chief



Director in the Office of the Premier of the Western Cape, and, from 2004, as Special Adviser to the South African Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. In the latter capacity, he was actively involved in international climate change negotiations. He is currently completing an MBA at Stellenbosch University, focusing on aviation, travel and tourism in the low-carbon economy. Views expressed in this book are in his personal capacity.

Rebecca Hawkins is a Director of the Responsible Hospitality Partnership (www.rhpltd.net), Research and Consultancy Fellow at Oxford Brookes University, and a Visiting Professor to the International Centre for Responsible Tourism at Leeds Metropolitan University. She has contributed to the responsible business agenda in this sector for the last 20 years and has worked extensively to deliver tools, training programmes and consultancy services to help hospitality businesses operationalise responsible business programmes.



Rebecca has also worked extensively in the area of sustainable tourism certification and destination management in an international context.

Min Jiang is a Research Fellow at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. She has been leading the climate change research group at the Centre for Tourism and Services Research of Victoria University and coordinating a number of research projects including a major one in the Pacific on developing vulnerability/resilience frameworks for tourism to adapt to climate change risks. Holding a Bachelor of Law (LLB), a Master of Law (LLM), and a PhD in environmental law, Min has strong multi-disciplinary expertise in environmental law and policy, sustainable tourism, and the social and institutional dimensions of climate change adaptation. Min has built up a strong scholarly publication record of more than 40 publications of various kinds including international journal articles, book chapters, conference presentations and technical reports.



Introduction and Overview

Geoffrey Lipman, Terry DeLacy, Shaun Vorster, Rebecca Hawkins and Min Jiang

We wholeheartedly believe that the Rio+20 Earth Summit confirms the international commitment to a long-term global green transformation to which the travel and tourism sector will make an increasingly powerful contribution. This is also the rationale for this book, which we hope can make a modest contribution.

First, we framed an outline concept of the goal of 'green growth' (the new geopolitical paradigm to respond to the big economic, social, environmental and climate challenges of today, as well as to the population driven resource challenges of tomorrow) and the vehicle 'travelism' (the entire travel and tourism value chain, including the destinations that it serves). We outline this in the initial section *Towards Transformation*, with a strong emphasis on recognizing the scale, scope and impacts of the sector; its real capacity for engaging in the forefront of global change and the importance of 'trans-cending the silos' (a phrase which we took from Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk of South Africa).

Second, we asked a cross-section of thought leaders, mostly inside the travel and tourism system (public, private and civil society) for their views on the challenges and opportunities, as a contribution to the Rio+20 Earth Summit process. We asked them to keep it brief, strategically focused, practical and above all readable. We were delighted with the response from across the spectrum; from leaders heading international organizations and global initiatives; from government ministers steering the change; from business leaders including aircraft manufacturers, airlines, hotels, cruise liners, travel services and the like who are implementing the change; and the thought leaders in academia and the non-governmental sector who are contributing to shaping agendas. Of course there are gaps, but we know this is just the first step of a multi-decade transformational journey and the body of knowledge will grow as we move forward.

Third, we reviewed the papers critically and worked with some of the authors to update sections to ensure overall coherence or to minimise repetition. We did not seek to change or influence the ideas. Many of the contributions quote data and assert various positions not specifically supported by references, but by real life experience. We were comfortable with this as the book is not an academic reference work and the assertions contained in the letters stand and fall on the credibility of the leaders who have written them. In the final analysis, we decided to leave out all references and footnotes in the interest of readability. Instead we have produced a compendium which is available online in this book's page at the publisher's website: <http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com>.

The biggest challenge was to determine the order and the grouping of the viewpoints. In the end, in the main section, *Letters from Leaders*, we decided to simply list the contributions alphabetically by author. This is partly because so many of the views intersect and reinforce other contributions, but not in any logical grouping. It also testifies to the very idea of transcending traditional silos, rather than trying to force contributions into little boxes. And it's partly because we expect that people would not sit down to read this book from cover to cover, but rather to dip into particular parts over time, and hopefully draw on contributions for their own transformation processes. We made an executive choice on where to start because we thought that the letter from Thomas Enders, CEO of EADS (the parent of Airbus), captured so well the spirit and vision of the transformation need.

Finally, we have tried to identify some of the main strategic directions emerging from the letters. Key messages include:

- Travelism is a force for good, economic and social; but to fully capitalize on this, it must also be environmentally sustainable.
- The challenge is for the sector to leverage its core competencies of economic growth, job creation and as a conduit for cross cultural understanding, to deliver greater benefits for local communities and society, while 'future-proofing' the businesses through which these benefits are channelled.
- What is now required is to incorporate green innovation and carbon reduction into technologically, economically, and socially credible strategies for the next decades, with progressively enhanced implementation.

- There is a need for greater policy coherence and coordination across the travelism value chain; most importantly, breaking out of the silos that still see tourism and aviation as separate economic activities. Travel and tourism should be positioned collectively as a strategic industry, with air transport as an interconnected core, not an isolated entity.
- There is great value in cross-sectoral networks to help shape tomorrow's continuously evolving global socio-economic agenda, and there is a need for broad inclusion to encourage sound debate, avoid tunnel vision and embrace multi-stakeholder principles.
- There is a need for better data and integrated measurement systems linking travelism (aviation and tourism data sets) and environmental accounting as well as factoring the emerging 'gross national happiness' concept into a more inclusive balance sheet of societal wellbeing.
- Travelism's job creation capacity must be factored into mainstream strategies for green growth and social inclusion. Here the value of coherent and credible data across sectoral information presentation and messaging will be significant.
- Given the volume of travel and tourism activity in developing and emerging market destinations, the sector can provide more equitable economic growth, which would promote social inclusion at a global level. Development agencies should focus on market driven solutions that use green growth approaches to meet consumer demand and contribute to the bottom line.
- The importance of action at the local level in any transformation towards a green growth path should be recognized. This means taking globally evolving principles and treaties and translating them through regional and national regulatory frameworks into local community or city focused action plans for green travelism growth.
- Aviation is a key driver in the development of sustainable travel and tourism, with connectivity a crucial element of a modern, resource efficient, global, green economy. Without aviation's connectivity, today's global economy simply could not function.
- To secure a green growth economy while coping with growing challenges and shrinking resources, we need a coherent international approach to implement a new air transport R&D frame-

work, and target concrete, resource efficient operational delivery, integrated with a priority educational revamp.

- Funding in particular needs an overhaul. Global revenues from aviation taxes could be used to fund the research, education and fleet renewal that would actually cut emissions and fuel a greener economy.
- It is vitally important to revamp education systems to fully integrate green growth and travelism into curricula and research disciplines, as well as more effectively communicating the importance of responsible travel to consumers. Social and environmental sustainability principles are integral to the expectations of young future leaders. They are more likely to feel attracted to and stay within companies that make a positive impact on the environment.
- Addressing the challenges of climate change should not be about sacrifice but about opportunity. There should be a healthy aviation industry, even when we have achieved the low carbon world of the future. But to make that a reality, we need new technologies, new fuels, partnerships and better policy.
- It is essential to agree a global market based mechanism for managing international aviation emissions, while avoiding double counting and double taxing of emissions. This must be designed to create price signals, provide offsetting opportunities, encourage long term R&D and promote behavioural change. Aviation's carbon burden should not be disproportionate. It must not become the 'cash cow' of the climate regime. This assumes that a significant portion of revenues from carbon pricing will be re-invested in green growth.
- There are real opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from air transport through operational, infrastructural and technological energy efficiency improvements, and by investing now in research and development for low carbon, sustainable, second generation bio-fuels to eventually replace kerosene jet fuel.
- Creating the essential global aviation bio-fuels industry will require a package of public policies, funding and partnerships at various stages of the technology life cycle and throughout a long value chain.
- There are 'low-hanging fruit' available to reduce emissions in the accommodation cluster, including through green building design,

energy efficiency measures and renewable energy deployment; and in the land transport cluster through passenger modal shifts, more efficient vehicles and low carbon fuels as well as improved public transport in 'green cities'.

- There is a need for strategies to assist local communities and SMEs to understand climate change vulnerabilities and increase their adaptive capacity. The large information gaps related to losses and damages of climate change has limited the place of tourism in major international climate change assessments.
- There is significant potential for leveraging sustainability and development from technology innovation and this will require mechanisms for transfer, financing and capacity building in the world's poorest countries and small island states.
- Ecotourism should be recognized as a specific green growth element and an important beacon for the sector: it is particularly important for developing countries and should be factored into both conservation strategies and development funding. This should not diminish from the imperative of applying stringent, enforceable standards for main-stream travelism transformation. Over time, success for a destination will not be judged by numbers of tourists, but by what beneficial effects tourism will have on the social, cultural, economic and environmental health of the destination.
- There is a need to engage business fully, across the value chain, especially small and medium businesses, incorporating sustainability into strategies and routine operations, as well as company reporting systems.
- It is also important to eliminate 'green-washing' and to encourage responsible sustainability benchmarks and certification programs.
- Strategies are needed to connect the know-how and market access of multinational companies with businesses and entrepreneurs in less developed areas of the world. Successful bottom of the pyramid and inclusive business cases and practices need to be adapted and implemented in the travel and tourism sector.
- Inadequate access to capital for SMME's is a major barrier for greening tourism. Creative public and private funding and risk sharing instruments are needed, as are prioritized government spending on public goods.

- Internet based technology can be a massive driver of travelism's green growth transformation, with innovations in mobile devices, consumer applications and broadband access opening up new markets – particularly in developing states.
- New forms of public private partnerships will reshape investment, development, environment and climate response across the travelism sector. Increasingly this will translate into infrastructure and human capacity building and will be focused on destinations where green growth strategies and CSR are mainstream priorities.
- Smart development of national parks is an important way to stimulate green growth, tackle the problem of biodiversity loss and engage communities: but it needs radical new communications strategies.
- Cities will also become major centres of green travelism growth and in this framework, sporting, entertainment or cultural events as well as green meetings can be important, globally projected and locally delivered.
- As consumer preferences evolve to demand greater sustainable performances by the companies from which they buy their travel, there is not only the opportunity to influence and educate the consumer but also to set the mould which others can follow. Business can influence local and international supply chains by demanding more sustainable products. This in turn creates a ripple effect and the potential global outreach is immense.
- The sector should be making sustainability commitments because we care about the environment. But we must also be making them because it makes good business sense. In spite of all the initiatives of the past decade, the main challenge is to fill the current gap between aspiration, policy design and implementation. Travelism can and should be part of the sustainability solution.

We trust that these issues and, more importantly, the *Letters from Leaders* will form a basis for informed public debate on green growth and travelism, will make a constructive contribution to the transformation of the sector, and will serve as one source of guidance for tomorrow's leaders. We are particularly mindful of the next generation of pathfinders who are currently studying for entry into the global workforce and those inside who are climbing their career ladders.

It is our conviction that future generations and their leaders will come to share the belief, expressed in all the letters, in the potential for travelism to make a seriously powerful contribution to green growth.

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GREEN GROWTH AND TRAVELISM

LETTERS FROM LEADERS

Travel & Tourism is by any measure a massive modern day industry – in the same league as cars, oil, telecommunication and agriculture. It drives trillions of dollars in GNP, underpins millions of jobs, makes international business function and is the essence of leisure and happiness. In short it has to be one of the most significant sectors of the world economy. Yet all too often its role and potential is underestimated when it comes to global and national socio-economic policy and practice.

This book explores why the industry is misperceived and how it can take its rightful leadership place in the transformation to the new green economy.

Green Growth and Travelism: Letters from Leaders is the first hard hitting publication to look practically into these issues by taking the views of 46 government, industry and civil society thought leaders on the challenges, opportunities and solutions.

First the authors explore **Green Growth** as the new geopolitical paradigm to respond to the big social, economic, environment and climate challenges of today and the population driven resource challenges of tomorrow. They then analyze how **Travelism** - the Travel and Tourism value chain – transport, hospitality and the various industries that support our inexorable urge to move around this planet – can more effectively contribute to a positive long-term societal transformation.

Taking this viewpoint, the **'Letters from Leaders'** provides real evidence of the actions, viewpoints and hopes of those at the frontline. With a foreword from **Maurice Strong**, architect of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and Agenda 21, it includes contributions by thought leaders from inside and outside the sector such as **Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley** (Prime Minister of Bhutan), **Thomas Enders** (CEO of EADS), **Tony Tyler** (Director General & CEO IATA), **Taleb Rifai** (Secretary General UNWTO), **Richard Branson** (Chairman Virgin Group), **Shanzhong Zhu** (Vice Chairman CNTA), **Akbar Al Baker** (CEO Qatar Airways), **Marthinus Van Schalkwyk** (Minister Tourism South Africa), **Gerald Lawless** (Executive Chairman Jumeirah Group), **James Hogan** (President & CEO Etihad Airways), **Patricia Francis** (Executive Director ITC), **David P. Scowsill** (President & CEO, WTTC), **Giovanni Bisignani** (Chairman WEF Global Agenda Council), **Supachai Panitchpakdi** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD) and a host of others.

Research undertaken at Victoria University Melbourne Australia and Oxford Brookes University UK.



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