

A STRATEGY TO ENSURING THAT THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF TOURISM IN CAPE COAST METROPOLIS OVER THE  
NEXT 10-15 YEARS IS BASED ON COMPETITIVENESS,  
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND  
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to propose, justify and defend a strategy for a tourist destination called Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana. The strategy would propose for ensuring that the development of tourism in Ghana over the next 10-15 years is based on competitiveness, environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability. In order to understand what tourism sustainability is, the discussion commences by looking at the complex nature of the following terms: tourist destination, strategy, development of tourism, competitiveness, environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability. The discussion goes on to examine the fact file of Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana- as the chosen destination. Forms of sustainable tourism are also discussed together with a strategy for developing tourism in Cape Coast also discussed using Ghana's Integrated Tourism Development Approach. An action plan for the strategy is offered with conclusion and recommendation drawn out of the strategy for ensuring sustainable tourism development in Cape Coast

**Key words:** Sustainability, Tourism, Strategy, Competitiveness, Indicators, Destination and Development

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## Introduction

Tourism is a rapidly growing phenomenon and has become one of the largest industries in the world (Cooper et al. 2008). The impact of tourism is extremely varied. On one hand, it plays an important and certainly positive role in the socio-economic and political development in destination countries by, for instance, offering new employment opportunities. Also, in certain instances, it may contribute to a broader cultural understanding by creating awareness, respecting the diversity of cultures and ways of life. On the other hand, as a tool to create jobs, it has not fulfilled its expectations. At the same time, complaints from tourist destinations concerning massive negative impacts upon environment, culture and residents' ways of life have given rise to a demand for a more sustainable development in tourism. Thus, different parties will have to be involved in the process of developing sustainable tourism (UNCSD NGO 1999).

Tourist destinations are places of interest to tourists. Given certain attributes, a tourist destination could hold the attention of those attracted enough to visit it. How long a destination remains successful will depend on whether it was managed in a sustainable manner (Howie, 2003). From the simple account of destination development, it is clear that simply encouraging people (tourists) to visit a given place is, in itself, insufficient to create a destination. For a village, town, region, or country to be regarded as tourist destination, it may well have to continue to provide the necessities and the pleasures of everyday life for its residents and visitors. However, without appropriate tourist-oriented development the place will not become a tourist destination (Howie, 2003). Thus, we can say that, a tourist destination is a city, town, or other area that is dependent to a significant extent on the revenues accruing from tourism. It may contain one or more tourist attractions (Business website 2003).

Gunn,(1988 in Howie 2003) suggested that all destinations share certain common characteristics and that recognition of this would facilitate their design and development. He referred to Mathieson and Wall (1987) who listed key characteristics of destination as: natural environment features and processes, economic structure and economic development, social structure and organisation, political organisation and level of tourist development.

Burtenshaw et al. (1991, p.218) argue that tourism development seeks to create a "saleable tourism product." Increasing strain between the environment and economic development demands

sustainable development as a reasonable means to achieve political, social and ecological stability. Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1987). Sustainable tourism is about re-focusing and adapting. A balance must be found between limits and usage so that continuous changing, monitoring and planning ensure that tourism can be managed. This requires thinking long-term (10, 20+ years) and realising that change is often cumulative, gradual and irreversible. Economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development must include the interests of all stakeholders including indigenous people, local communities, visitors, industry and government (Dodds and Kelman 2008).

Environment is the physical and biological resources of the planet on which human communities depend for their survival. Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining culture integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems (WTO 2004). Sustainable tourism products are products which are operated in harmony with the local environment, community, and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries not the victims of tourism development (WTO 2004).

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (WTO 2004).

Strategy is defined as conditions, entities, events, and factors within an organisation which influences its activities and choices, particularly the behaviour of the employees. Factors that are frequently considered part of the internal environment include the organisation's mission statement, leadership styles and organisational culture (Business Dictionary.com 2010). Strategy is about giving an organisational purpose and direction, motivating trustees, staff and volunteers

to engage meaningfully with the external environment – linking in to funders and beneficiaries (Copeman, 2010). Strategy is about determining how an organisation will match its diverse capabilities with the needs of stakeholders, now and in the future (in order to maximise impact) (Copeman, 2010). These definitions then may mean that an organisation's strategy will determine how it relates to the outside world – how it makes the most of opportunities, responds to change, and faces up to threats: opportunities to innovate, improvise and improve.

### **Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana—Chosen destination**

The destination selected for this article was Cape Coast, in the Central Region of Ghana. Cape Coast is the regional capital of the Central Region. It is bordered on the South by the Gulf of Guinea, Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Aberem on the West, East Abura-Asebu and Kwamankese District and North by Twifo-Heman-Lower Denkyira District. The Metropolis covers an area of 122 square kilometres and it is the smallest District in the Ghana (ghanadistricts.com, 2006).

The population of the District was estimated to be 54,125. In the 1984 Population Census of Ghana, the population was estimated to be 85,438; 2000 Population Census of Ghana puts the population at 120,000 with an annual growth rate of 1.38%; and the 2010 Population Census establishes the population to be 169,894 people approximately. The ratio of male to female is 1:10 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000, 2010)

As illustrated in *figure 1*. Cape Coast is a coastal town; therefore the main economic activity of the people is fishing. The men go to the sea while the women do the processing, mongering or the selling of the fishes in the community and to traders who come from communities around Cape Coast and beyond. Farming is also carried out in the rural north of the District as the main source of livelihood for the inhabitants, while fishing is done along the coast. Other sources of employment in the municipality are trading, crafts, charcoal burning, teaching and tourism (ghanadistricts.com, 2006).

In terms of tourism and culture, Cape Coast is noted for its historical endowments in terms of buildings and ancient sites. Basically Tourism is a growing industry in the municipality, which is home to the Cape Coast Castle, a fort, tombs of historical importance, historical buildings in the

old sections of the town, and shrines. It also has a number of hotels, guest houses and restaurants. The main modes of transportation are taxis and 'trotros'. It must be noted that, Cape Coast like any other coastal town inherited a large stock of housing which to this day reminds the visitors of an intense contact in its past with foreign culture. The Cape Coast Castle and the celebration of the Emancipation Day bring a lot of tourists both from far and near to Cape Coast. Fort St. Jago at Elmina, the Slave Route project, the "Posuban" shrine as well as other natural attractions like Kakum National Park have brought tourists to Cape Coast as it has a number of luxurious hotels and entertainment services which tourists mostly enjoy(ghanadistricts.com, 2006).

Cape Coast is well known for its high quality educational institutions. It has institutions at all levels of education. At the tertiary level, it has the University of Cape Coast and the Cape Coast Polytechnic. There are eight (8) Senior Secondary Schools, one (1) Technical School and one (1) Training College. At the first cycle, there are thirty one (31) pre-schools, sixty six (66) Primary Schools and forty five (45) Junior Secondary Schools in the Municipality(ghanadistricts.com, 2006).

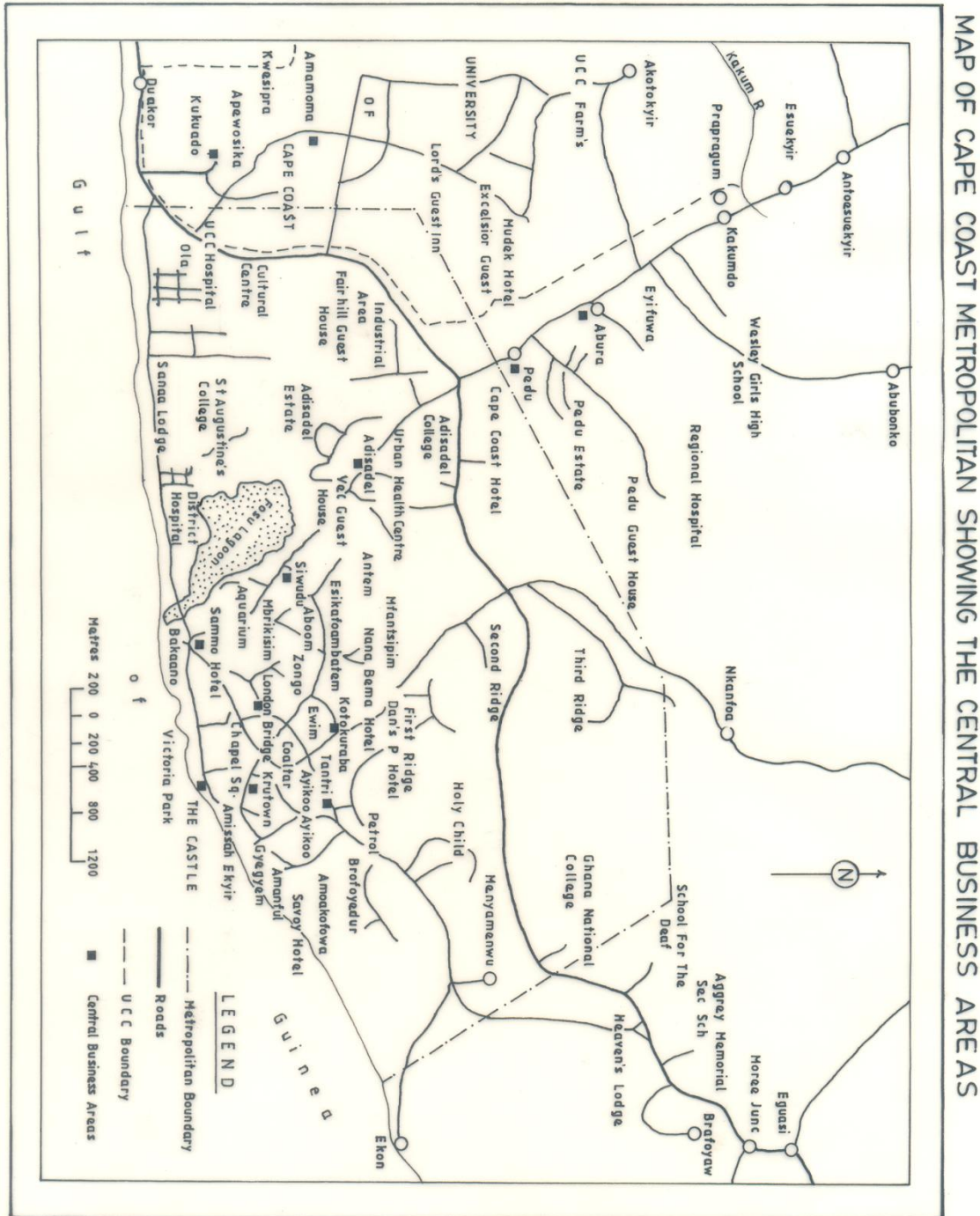


Figure 1: A Map showing Cape Coast, the Tourist Destination selected for this Article

Source: University of Cape Coast – Department of Geography

## Forms of Sustainable tourism

### Environmental aspect

Tourism can create great pressure on local resources such as energy, food, land and water that may already be in short supply. According to the Third Assessment of Europe's environment (EEA, 2003), the direct local impacts of tourism on people and the environment at destinations are strongly affected by concentration in space and time (seasonality). They result from: the intensive use of water and land by tourism and leisure facilities; the delivery and use of energy; changes in the landscape coming from the construction of infrastructure, buildings and facilities; Air pollution and waste; the compaction and sealing of soils (damage and destruction of vegetation); the disturbance of fauna and local people (for example, by noise). The growing number of tourists visiting sensitive natural areas may also jeopardize nature conservation. Some conflicts may also arise between tourism development and other sectors such as agriculture and forestry (Sproule 1996 and Cooper et al 2008)

### The socio-cultural impacts of tourism

The socio-cultural impacts of tourism are the effects on host communities of direct and indirect relations with tourists and of interaction with the tourism industry. For a variety of reasons, host communities often are the weaker party in interactions with their guests and service providers. The impacts arise when tourism brings about changes in value systems and behaviour, thereby threatening indigenous identity. Furthermore, changes often occur in community structure, family relationships, collective traditional life styles, ceremonies and morality. This tourism can cause change or loss of local identity and values and brings about several closely related influences as listed; commercialization of local culture, adaptation to tourist demands, the physical influences that increasing tourism has on a destination causing severe social stress as it impacts negatively on the local community (Sproule 1996 and Cooper et al 2008).

Also, socio-cultural disadvantages may involve: Cultural deterioration, Resource use conflicts, such as competition between tourism and local populations for the use of prime resources like

water and energy because of scarce supply, Crime rates typically increase with the growth and urbanization of an area, Deteriorating working and employment conditions(Sproule 1996 and Cooper et al 2008).

### **Economic Impacts**

There are many hidden costs to tourism and they can have unfavourable economic effects on the host community. Often rich countries are better suited to profit from tourism than poor ones. Although the least developed countries have the most urgent need for income, employment and general rise of the standard of living by means of tourism, they are often the least capable to realize these benefits. Among the reasons for this are large-scale transfer of tourism revenues out of the host country, exclusion of local businesses and products. Others include: Leakage, Local businesses often see their chances to earn income from tourists severely reduced by the creation of "all-inclusive" vacation packages, Infrastructure cost, Increase in prices (Sproule 1996 and Cooper et al 2008) and Economic dependence on tourism as many countries have embraced tourism as the single most important way to boost their economy. This has made them very vulnerable to anything that negatively affects the local tourism industry (e.g. terrorist scares, military conflicts, impacts of natural disasters) have a devastating effect on overall economic climate. The Turkish economy for example has suffered a lot because of the war in Iraq at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The seasonal character of the tourism industry creates economic problems for destinations that are heavily dependent on it (Tourism Concern 1998).

### **Strategy for Developing Tourism in Cape Coast, Ghana—the Integrated Tourism**

#### **Development Approach**

Increasing evidence shows that an integrated approach to tourism planning and management is now required to achieve sustainable tourism. It is only recently that there has been a growing recognition of the importance of combining the needs of traditional urban management



(transportation, land use planning, marketing, economic development, fire and safety etc.) with the need to plan for tourism (Jamieson and Noble 2000)

Some of the most important principles of an integrated approach to sustainable tourism development include the following:

- Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad-based community-inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development.
- Tourism should provide quality employment to its community residents and a linkage between the local businesses and tourism should be established.
- A code of practice should be established for tourism at all levels - national, regional, and local - based on internationally accepted standards. Guidelines for tourism operations, impact assessment, monitoring of cumulative impacts, and limits to acceptable change should be established.
- Education and training programmes to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established (Jamieson and Noble 2000).

Ghana's tourist industry, like that of other developing countries, is oriented mostly towards attracting and caring for vacation or business traveller. The country generates very little leisure travel because of the generally low levels of disposable incomes (Akyeampong, 2003) The government of Ghana since 1987 has adopted and implemented measures aimed at making the country an important tourist destination. Under Ghana's "Vision 2020" tourism was tagged as one of the "growth poles" to propel national economic growth to high levels. Promotional exercises would be intensified at national, regional and district levels in support of Ghana's 15-year Tourism Development Plan (M.O.T. 1996). Most promotional activities have taken the form of seminars and lectures and they are designed to alert the private sector and government agencies to identify opportunities and programmes that are necessary for the advancement of the tourism industry in Ghana Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER, 1998, p.146). The policy of the tourism sub-sector is to develop Ghana as an internationally competitive tourist destination. The implication is that tourism must be supported by good hotel and restaurant services, telecommunication and efficient transportation system that meet international standards (Arthur, 2004).

## Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

While the aim—sustainable coastal tourism—is clear, there is no standard recipe for reaching it. Usually, the development of a Strategy and Action Plan for sustainable coastal tourism is a useful measure that guarantees efficient and coordinated action. It is the best developed with involvement of all major interest groups that have a stake in local sustainable development. These Interest groups will be; Government, Tour operators, Non-Governmental Organisations, community or host, and tourist and leisure participants (NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1997).

### Analysis of status-quo

According to (Cicin-Sain and Knecht 1998) in developing a strategic approach to coastal sustainable tourism, a thorough compilation and analysis of existing information and knowledge is the prerequisite for a Strategy. It should take into consideration:

- Previously developed tourism management or related strategies for the specific area (What can be used? Has it been implemented? Which lessons are to be learnt?)
- A stakeholder analysis (Who has an interest in sustainable tourism development? Who are the main actors?) (WTO 2004)
- Facts and figures of the local educational system, economy and social structure
- Anecdotal and traditional knowledge

Methods for collecting this information are among others:

- Interviews with stakeholders
- Questionnaires distributed and collected by e-mail, fax or personally in order to compile standardised data and perform a statistical analysis
- Invitation to focus group meetings (e.g. meetings on environmental education, biodiversity management, good governance and fisheries)
- Literature search in the local library and the internet

## Strategy development

A Sustainable Tourism Strategy is based on the information collected in analysis of the status quo. It defines the priority issues, the stakeholder community, the potential objectives and a set of methodologies to reach these objectives. (Cicin-Sain and Knecht1998)

These can include among others:

- Conservation of specific coastal landscapes or habitats that make the area attractive or are subject of nature conservation legislation (NOAA 1997).
- Development of regionally specific sectors of the economy that can be interlinked with the tourism sector (e.g. production of food specialities and handicrafts)
- Maximising local revenues of tourism investments
- Enabling self-determined cultural development in the region, etc.

## Action plan

The action plan spells out the steps needed to implement the strategy and addressing a number of practical questions such as: Which organizations will take up which activities, over what time frame, by what means and with what resources?(WTO 2004)

As the actions have to be tailored to regional circumstances, there is no standard Action Plan for all. However, Action Plans usually include measures in the following fields:

**Administration:** e.g. promotion of co-operation between sectors and integrated development models involving local people in shaping tourism policy and decisions (Jamieson and Noble 2000)

**Socio-economical sector:** e.g. promoting local purchasing of food and building material; setting up networks of local producers for better marketing; development of new products to meet the needs of tourists, etc (Jamieson and Noble 2000)

**Environment:** e.g. improving control and enforcement of environmental standards (noise, drinking water, bathing water, waste-water treatment, etc.); identification and protection of endangered habitats; creation of buffer zones around sensitive natural areas; prohibition of

environmentally harmful sports in jeopardised regions; strict application of Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessment procedures on all tourism related projects and programs(NOAA 1997 ; Jamieson and Noble 2000).

**Knowledge:** training people involved in coastal tourism about the value of historical heritage; environmental management; training protected area management staff in nature interpretation; raising environmental awareness among the local population; introducing visitors information programme (including environmental information)(NOAA 1997 ; Jamieson and Noble 2000).

*This action plan was drawn based on the WTO 2004 Indicator Development Framework.*

To monitor the process of sustainable development and to improve the planning process there is a need to have indicators that help to evaluate and co-ordinate sustainable development. Indicators have been identified for all three aspects of sustainable tourism development - ecological, economic and social. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) recently proposed the use of selected indicators for sustainable tourism. In order to be useful to tourism sector managers and administrators, the selected indicators are demand-driven; they respond to decision-makers' need to know and they are practical for most nations or regions(WTO 1996 and 2004; Yunis 2004).

Indicators should show the real performance in destinations, for example: "The ratio of environmentally-friendly arrivals" and not the "existence of pick-up systems from airports and train stations" which may not be used by tourists. The indicators should allow us to derive comparable values for all destinations. Northern or mountain destinations, for instance, need more energy for the heating of accommodation and facilities than sun or beach destinations. It would not make sense to measure only the amount of energy used - as the values depend on the circumstances of the destination. If we look at that part of total energy use, which comes from renewable resources, we have a valid indicator for all destinations based on: Relevance; Data availability; Comprehensibility and credibility; Comparability and Predictive ability (Yunis 2004; WTO 2004).

Indicators selected:

Table 1: List of Indicators with Explanations

Indicators	Explanation
Water quality	Faecal coliform count at beaches; chlorophyll-A algae count; tourist complaints about water at beaches
Environmental education	Number of environmental modules offered by schools in the region in conjunction with a count of the number of students who receive the modules
Preservation of nature	Number of rare/endangered species
Overcrowding and congestion in the beach area	Persons per square metre in the peak period
Social impact	Ratio of tourists to locals in peak period
Image of the region	Level of satisfaction by locals
Seasonality	Tourist numbers in peak month
Variety of attractions	Percentage of service establishments open year round
Solid waste management	Percentage of households using official garbage removal (voucher purchase)
Consumer satisfaction	Based on exit questionnaire
Cleanliness of water and bushes	Number of toilets per tourist on beach in peak times
Cleanliness of restaurants	Number of tourists with reported salmonella poisoning from local restaurants and eating outlets
Crime	Number of crimes reported by non-residents/residents
Pricing	Monthly average price of rooms
Public access to beaches	Percentage of usable beach open to public
Protection of biological resources	Category of site protection using IUCN index (Ceballos,1993); number of rare/endangered species; existence of an organized plan for region
Black market accommodation	Based on survey of visitors
Funding for protection	percentage of hot spot revenues that are dedicated to protection
Overall attitudes towards the destination	Based on visitor questionnaire

Source: (Yunis, 2004; WTO 2004)

First of all, the carrying capacity can be the motivation to attract tourists visit the destination. The tourism industry, especially in national parks and protected areas, is subject to the concept of carrying capacity so as to determine the scale of tourist activities which can be sustained at specific times in different places. Various scholars over the years have developed several arguments developed about the definition of carrying capacity. Middleton and Hawkins defined carrying capacity as a measure of the tolerance of a site or building which is open to tourist activities, and the limit beyond which an area may suffer from the adverse impacts of tourism (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998). Chamberlain defined it as the level of human activity which an area can accommodate without either it deteriorating, the resident community being adversely affected or the quality of visitors' experience declining (Chamberlain, 1997). Clark and Stankey defined carrying capacity as a certain threshold (level) of tourism activity, beyond which there will be damage to the environment and its natural inhabitants (Clark & Stankey 1997). The World Tourism organisation (WTO) proposes the following definition of the carrying capacity “The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction (Priority Actions Programme (PAP), Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme(UNEP): UNEP/MAP/PAP, 1997).

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Finally, these recommendations are made to ensure integrated tourism development in the Cape Coast Metropolis of the Central Region of Ghana:

First, an **Integrated Coastal Zone Management of the beaches:** Beaches are meant to be areas that are comprised from the submarine area to the dunes. This implies the reorganization of the whole territory and even of its periphery, in a way that the natural areas can benefit from that process and provide a concentration of tourism in a specific area. It is also necessary for sustainable development that the incorporation of the costs of environmental services and damages (and their repairs) falls directly into the prices of the goods, services or activities which cause them; thereby contributing to the implementation of the Polluter Pays Principle in the coast. Beaches have an economic and an environmental value and they help to protect the coast against

coastal erosion, so a greater investment is needed (Cicin-Sain, and Knecht 1998). This approach is what most developed countries had used to sustain it coastal Zone (G. F. A. N.C 1997; Cicin-Sain, and Knecht 1998; Hall 2001).

Second, a **better dissemination of the existing information** should be achieved. For that purpose, a better coordination of the existing governmental bodies that deal with coastal management is necessary. Also, the information should be accessible to everyone. Concerning the latter aspect, scientific journalism has to be protected and favoured, as well as seminars where all the agents related with the coast can exchange their opinions, results or methodologies (Cicin-Sain, and Knecht 1998; Hall 2001).

Third, an **improvement of the environmental education** is essential for a sustainable development of the coast (Hall 2001).

Benefits that Cape Coast will gain if strategy is well followed will include; Economic Benefits (Foreign exchange earnings, Contribution to government revenues, Employment generation, Stimulation of infrastructure investment, Contribution to local economies, Direct financial contributions to nature protection and Competitive advantage), Social-Cultural benefits (Tourism as a force for peace, Strengthening communities, Development of facilities as a benefit to residents, Revaluation of culture and traditions and Benefits for the tourists of sustainable tourism ) and environmental benefit (Alternative employment) (WTO 2004)

It is believed that, if the strategy outlined in this paper for ensuring sustainable tourism development in the Cape Coast Metropolis of the Central Region of Ghana is adhered to, it would ensure the steady sustainable growth of tourism in the metropolis which is known as, 'the heartbeat of tourism in Ghana,' both for host residents' and visitors/tourists' now and in the future.

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