Water Equity in Tourism

A Human Right – A Global Responsibility
Executive Summary

This report argues that for tourism to be truly sustainable, its development and management must be proximate upon a respect for human rights, including the right to water and sanitation for essential personal, domestic, and livelihood needs. In many cases, tourism development is negatively impacting the quality, availability and accessibility of freshwater for local people, amounting to an infringement of their water and sanitation rights. This is posing risks to community health and well-being, hampering economic mobility – particularly of women – harming livelihoods, threatening food security, and undermining the sustainability of the tourism sector itself. These issues are explored and evidenced through a series of case studies from five popular tourism destinations in the global South: Zanzibar (Tanzania), Goa and Karnataka (South India), The Gambia (West Africa) and Bali (Indonesia). All regions are highly dependent on tourism as a means to generate jobs and economic growth. However, tourism cannot fulfil its potential as a contributor to poverty alleviation and sustainable development while it is so often causing the unsustainable depletion and inequitable appropriation of freshwater. While the challenges in each case study destination are varied and complex, emerging common themes are identified. These include shortcomings around infrastructure, governance, information and planning, coordination and cooperation, as well as issues of rule-breaking, inadequate water privatization, and low levels of awareness. Additional pressures on water resources stem from urbanisation, population growth, climate change and water-related degradation. These challenges are likely to be similar to those faced in other tourism destinations around the world. Opportunities for improving water equity in each destination are also flagged, along with some examples of good practice, which could provide useful learning for others.

These Principles of Water Equity in Tourism aim to capture the essential points from the recommendations of this report (see page 27). The Principles are underpinned by the notion of water as a human right. They are based on the recognition that there are shared risks to all water and tourism stakeholders of water if it is not managed equitably and sustainably. These shared risks give rise to a shared responsibility (CID Water Mandate, 2010) of all stakeholders to work together to address water issues, with particular responsibility conferred to those inequitably consuming water, in positions of power and with greater access to information.

1. The right to water and sanitation should not be compromised by tourism

Governments should uphold their international legal obligations to fulfil and protect the right to water and sanitation of citizens as a priority. Governments should issue guidelines to tourism businesses operating locally and overseas on their business responsibility to respect human rights.

2. Governments should implement clear regulations for sustainable and equitable water and tourism management

Destination governments should implement clear regulatory and institutional frameworks for sustainable, equitable, integrated water and tourism planning and management. Transgressions should be penalised; good practices should be championed.

3. Land use and tourism planning should be based on assessments of water resources

Land use planning should be based on assessments of water resources and infrastructure, and tourism carrying capacities established. These should take into account livelihood needs, food security, population growth, climate change, and wider watershed degradation.

4. Tourism businesses should implement their business responsibility to respect the right to water

Tourism businesses should move beyond technical approaches and implement their business responsibility to respect human rights, as set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNHRC, 2011). The Guiding Principles offer a valuable framework for managing human rights impacts through a process of due diligence. Approaches emerging from the CEO Water Mandate, another major global initiative, also provide useful guidance for effective business engagement in sustainable water management (CEO Water Mandate, 2010). Institutional donors must continue to fund improvements to water infrastructure in the global South, and encourage sustainable tourism founded upon principles of participation and respect for human rights. There is a need for improved cooperation and collaboration among all stakeholders with respect to the above, as well as with data gathering, information sharing, advocacy, capacity building, technology transfer, and sensitisation, including of tourists.

5. Tourism businesses should reduce their water consumption

Tourism businesses should work towards reducing their water consumption and contributing to water conservation by making use of existing industry guidelines.

6. Land use, tourism and water planning should be undertaken participatorily

Land use, tourism and water planning should be undertaken transparently and participatorily, with adequate community representation, particularly of women.

7. Tourism businesses and other communities should be accountable to local communities

This includes providing access to resources where water rights have been adversely impacted.

8. Cooperation to further water equity should be pursued by all stakeholders

Cooperation and collaboration should be pursued by government, international donors, tourism and civil society stakeholders in researching and undertaking data collection, improvements to community water access, resilience, capacity building, technology transfer, and tour sensitisation.
The right to water constitutes one of the most fundamental human rights. However, for many communities, particularly those living in the global South, this right is being compromised by tourism development.

The inequities of water access and consumption between resorts, large hotels and golf courses on the one hand, and local communities and small-scale tourism entrepreneurs on the other, are starkly played out in holiday destinations in some of the world’s poorest countries. Typically, tourism development is most intense in coastal areas and on islands, where portable water is scarce, while peak tourist seasons coincide with the driest months of the year. However, while hotels may have the money and resources to ensure their guests enjoy several showers a day, outlying villages, a round of golf, and landscaped gardens, neighbouring households, small businesses and agricultural producers may regularly endure severe water scarcity.

Every year about 2 million people – most of them children – die from diarrhoea-related diseases

A lack of access to clean water and sanitation both exacerbates poverty and is itself the result of poverty. Breaking this vicious cycle in the interests of sustainable development has been identified as a priority by the international community for many years. For example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set a target of halving by 2015 the proportion of the world’s population without access to water and sanitation (UN, 2000). However, as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set a target of halving by 2015 the proportion of the world’s population without access to water and sanitation (UN, 2000), while every year about 2 million people – most of them children – die from diarrhoea-related diseases (WHO, 2011). In fact, more children die every year from lack of access to clean water and sanitation than die from AIDS, malaria and measles combined (UNGA, 2010). More often than not, such water scarcity is not due to a physical absence of water, but is caused by inadequate or non-existent infrastructure, depleted or polluted groundwater supplies, and a lack of resources to secure water from other sources. The physically burdensome and time-consuming task of sourcing and collecting water usually falls to women.

In fact, just three per cent of the Earth’s water is fresh and some 70 per cent of this is frozen in the polar icecaps. Meanwhile, water demand per person is predicted to reach 1 billion in 2012 and 1.8 billion by 2030 – up from 900 million in 2010 (UNWTO, 2011). The potential for tourism to generate jobs, economic growth and foreign exchange, means it is harnessed as a development driver by countries all over the world. This includes many in the global South claimed by the UN as ‘least developed countries’ (LDCs), as well as small island developing states (such as in the Caribbean).

Indeed, tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing services industries in the world. Global tourist arrivals are predicted to reach 1 billion in 2012 and 1.8 billion by 2030 – up from 900 million in 2010 (UNWTO, 2011). The potential for tourism to generate jobs, economic growth and foreign exchange, means it is harnessed as a development driver by countries all over the world. This includes many in the global South claimed by the UN as ‘least developed countries’ (LDCs), as well as small island developing states (such as in the Caribbean).
Water is intrinsically linked to life, to health and sanitation, food production, livelihoods, and our dignity and well-being as human beings. As such, the right to water is enshrined within a multitude of internationally recognised human rights standards. Some of these are legally binding on states, as well as conferring responsibilities on businesses. This includes the right to life under Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the right to an adequate standard of living, enshrined in Article 25 of the UDHR and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and General Comment No. 15 on the Right to Water, issued by the UN Social and Economic Council (2002).

More recently, in 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution reaffirming the right to water and sanitation, while the UN Human Rights Council acknowledged that this right is legally binding in international law. These resolutions signify a strengthened recognition of the critical significance of water and sanitation to socioeconomic development, and a bid to bolster governments and the international community in meeting their commitments in this regard. According to the UN, there are several components to the fulfilment of the right to water. Water must be sufficient, safe, physically accessible and affordable, with non-discriminatory and equitable access for personal, domestic, and essential livelihood needs. General Comment No. 15 states that indigenous peoples’ access to water on their ancestral lands should be protected from encroachment and pollution, and that indigenous peoples should be empowered to manage their own water resources. Furthermore: “Water should be treated as a social and cultural good, and not primarily as an economic good. The manner of the realisation of the right to water must also be sustainable, ensuring that the right can be realised for present and future generations” (ECOSOC, 2002:5).

Role of governments
The majority of governments are signatories to the major international human rights treaties. As such, they are obliged to respect, fulfil and protect the right to water and sanitation of their citizens. This means taking active measures to extend this right to all citizens. However, many poorer countries face major resource limitations in this regard. Governments are also obliged to protect water rights against abuse by corporate interests – including those engaged in tourism – such as over-extraction, appropriation and pollution of water resources. According to the UNGPs, the business responsibility to respect exists independently of governments, because these often fail to protect – or are even directly involved in harming – citizen rights. Indeed, as illustrated in this report, this is the case in many popular tourism destinations, where governments sell off land and siphon off natural resources, often ignoring democratic process and without due regard for the impacts on living standards and livelihoods of local people.
Existing industry approaches

Where they exist, industry water initiatives are typically limited to reducing water consumption, and ignore wider business impacts on the lives and livelihoods of local communities. Many industry players, such as hotels and tour operators, claim to be addressing their impact on water, and a range of water-related guidelines have been developed under various initiatives. These include the ‘Four Operators’ Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development, the International Tourism Partnership, the Travel Foundation, and the Toledo Sustainability System Criteria (Tourism Concern & EBDG, 2011). However, such initiatives generally take a narrow approach, framing water as a purely environmental issue and focusing on water conservation measures within hotels. This includes the installation of water-saving technologies in guest rooms (such as aerated shower heads and low-flush toilets), rainwater harvesting, the use of grey (reused) water for garden irrigation, as well as a towel re-use schemes for guests.

Although such approaches are positive and should be broadened further, they ignore the wider impacts of tourism businesses’ water consumption on the lives and livelihoods of local communities and the environment. As our case studies show, in many instances the consumption and pollution of freshwater by the tourism industry is directly contributing to the infringement of the right to water of neighbouring communities. Tourism business complexity in such infringements, even if inadvertent, extends up through the supply chain, placing companies at risk of allegations of abuse while undermining the social, environmental and economic sustainability of both the company and the destination.

Tourism businesses are also involved in direct link breaking, such as the trends and restaurateurs in Goa that have been found to be pumping sewage directly into Colva Creek (see page 15). As outlined in the UNGPs, by adhering to national law in the first instance, as well as enacting the business responsibility to respect human rights through a process of human rights due diligence (see page 26), companies can reduce the risk of culpability or complicity in such socially and environmentally harmful behaviour.

The case studies

The following case studies destinations were chose because they are all popular with UK and European holidaymakers, including independent travellers and package tourists. As such, many of the largest tour operators (such as Thomson, TUI, Thomas Cook, Kuoni, Fitt Chico and Cooperative Travel) and international hotel groups (including Intercontinental) operate in one or more of these locations. The case studies are selected from countries in the global South in order to link the impacts of the tourism sector’s water consumption with wider sustainable development. Tourism is being utilised as a development driver in all the focus countries: Indonesia, Tanzania, India and The Gambia are ranked among the lowest 35 in the UN’s Human Development Index. This indicates the real challenges they face in terms of poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and government capacity and resources (UNDP, 2011).

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However, these issues are by no means confined to the Southern hemisphere. All over the world, including popular European tourist destinations, such as Spain, Cyprus, Greece and even the UK, there is increasing pressure on dwindling water supplies due to climate change, growing populations and industrial consumption.

In each location, the same basic research methodology was applied and a set of questions addressed. The research namely gathering the perspectives of various stakeholders in the tourism sector: government, local communities, and from tourists. The exception is the Maldives case study, which is based on information provided by our local partner, Kukhali.

Our research focuses on coastal destinations, because this is where tourism development tends to be most intense and water resources particularly prone to saline intrusion. However, challenges around water scarcity and inequality also present themselves in inland tourist areas, such as national parks and mountain ranges, including the Alps (e.g. see alpwaterscarce.eu) and The Himalayas (e.g. see climate4life.org).

The full research reports are available at www.tourismconcern.org.uk.
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Zanzibar lies east off the coast of Tanzania and consists of two major islands, Pemba and Unguja. Tourism is a major contributing factor to Zanzibar’s economy and arrivals in 2011 reached an all-time high. However, despite tourism on-going rapid advancement in 2011, half the population remains in poverty.

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Tourism to Goa began in the 1960s and the state remains India’s beach tourism capital. However, Goa is fast becoming a victim of its own popularity and is facing huge water challenges as a result of poorly managed tourism development. Scenically located between the Arabian Sea to the west and the Sahyadri Hills to the east, the south Indian state of Goa is known for its unspoilt sandy beaches and natural beauty. In 2010, some 2.6 million domestic and international visitors flocked to its shores, swelling the state’s tourist population. However, Goa is facing serious water issues. These issues are threatening the sustainability of Goa as a tourism destination, as well as the well-being and livelihoods of local communities. These include small-scale tourism entrepreneurs, such as guesthouse and beachside restaurant owners. Tourism development is generally poorly planned and regulated throughout Goa’s coastal belt. The mini-government’s drive towards high-end tourism, characterised by 5-star resorts and infrastructure, struggles to cope with millions of tourists that descent upon its shores. Tourism Concern

Tourism Concern

Thirst for water

Although the majority of hotels surveyed reported engaging in some kind of waste conservation measures, including use of sewage treatment plants, water recycling and harvesting, and placing black spots on the already strained freshwater resources and infrastructure. Such high-end tourism typically consumes greater volumes of water (up to 3,555 litres per room per day) than smaller guesthouses (573 litres of water per room per day), the market for second homes, luxury apartments and homesites is also booming, with new developments springing up along paddy fields and coastlines.

Our research in the coastal villages of Goa indicated that water is being allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Government regulators and local communities are now entirely dependent on piped water.

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The Gambian economy is heavily dependent on tourism. The sector generated GDP; it is the prime foreign exchange earner reaching 146,000 in 2008. International tourists started arriving in the 1960s and by 2008 there were 140,000 overnight stays with revenue per room per day, to 1,310 litres per room per day, and little incentive to reduce their usage. Most hotels surveyed, such as in the area of Kom and Kololi, also report filling up reservoir tanks from the mains supply when available. However, because the hotel pipes are wider in diameter than those servicing neighbouring communities, they effectively siphon off the bulk of the water, apparently causing availability for locals to drop.

Water issues in The Gambia are reportedly contaminated, which means the authorities cannot provide an adequate supply to local households. Meanwhile, public supply in rural areas is minimal, and previous dependence on rivulets has been replaced by commercial standpipes and piped supply. While most households report some degree of water conservation, such as reused water schemes, reduced toilet flows, pipe maintenance and provision of guest information, overall their understanding of water issues was low. Most had garden sprinklers running in the middle of the day. Two 5-star hotels had grey water and sewage treatment plants, but only one hotel practised rainwater collection. Furthermore, income development and concentration of ground water is exacerbating rainwater run-off and risk of flooding during the monsoon. There is a tendency to site boreholes on high ground (which limits rainwater replenishment of groundwater), or within 20-50 metres of the shoreline, which increases the risk of salinization. Reversing salinization would be a very expensive process and is of particular concern to the Department of Water Resources (DWR). This DWR currently has no information on borehole numbers, sitings and usage, nor does it have have the legal mandate to conduct the necessary investigations or enforce better practices.

Women Fruit Sellers stated that “lack of access to running water is a barrier to the development (of) the businesses of the women.” Unsurprisingly, most of these micro-enterprises are more concerned with their water consumption. “All of the women use water very wisely because we have to go and fetch it” said the Association’s head. Adama Bah, local, explaining that they frequently faced low pressure and water shortages due to power cuts and the appropriation of the mains supply by hotels. The most acute problems were reported in Kom and Kololi. The principal issue was not to be the price of quality of water, but its failure to flow through the pipes at all. While higher and middle-income households can better coping by installing water tanks and even boreholes, the cost of making a borehole is far beyond the means of the majority of Gambian households. Low income households, which must rely upon public standpipes and have an average of 12 occupants, suffer.

The Gambia’s water challenges are complex and many, but include poorly regulated tourism, resource limitations, and low levels of awareness. This context is leading to inequitable water access between large tourism businesses and local communities, including small-scale tourism enterprises, and could hamper the country’s efforts to pull itself out of poverty.

The Gambia’s coastline – Th法治的s for the Future

Tourism in The Gambia
International tourism started arriving in The Gambia in the 1970s. The sector has doubled in the last 15 years, with arrivals reaching 50,000 in 2008. Tourism currently contributes 6% to GPD, is the prime foreign exchange earner and an important creator of livelihoods both within and beyond the formal and informal sectors. Cheap package holidays for Europeans eager to escape the winter rain between October and March. Approximately half these tourists are from the UK. Tourism is concentrated along a 5 kilometer stretch of coast – comprising almost two thirds of The Gambian coastline – in a designated Tourism Development Area (TDA). Tourism arrivals peak during the dry season, while the monsoon lasts just four months, from June to September. The Gambia depends upon groundwater resources, which are accessed via public piped supply, as well as private boreholes and hand-dug wells. The expansion of tourism, as well as the diversification of agriculture and fishery self-sufficiency, are key facets of the government’s “Vision 2020” development strategy. However, both tourism and agriculture are highly water-dependent and thus is a central challenge. That the government’s strategy will falter is a particular concern to the Department of Water Resources (DWR). This DWR currently has no information on borehole numbers, sitings and usage, nor does it have the legal mandate to conduct the necessary investigations or enforce better practices.

Poverty levels in The Gambia stem from a weak regulatory framework, poor inter-departmental coordination, and lack of financial and institutional capacity to plan, monitor and equally manage freshwater resources. As a result, both tourism and agriculture are heavily water-dependent and there is real risk that the government’s strategy will falter if The Gambian water resources are not managed carefully.

Water security
Water is one of The Gambia’s most important natural resources, yet the country has a heavy reliance on groundwater resources. As a result, both tourism and agriculture are highly water-dependent and thus a central challenge. That the government’s strategy will falter is a particular concern to the Department of Water Resources (DWR). This DWR currently has no information on borehole numbers, sitings and usage, nor does it have have the legal mandate to conduct the necessary investigations or enforce better practices.

Water free for all
In order to counter erratic supplies, most hotels and second homes dig private boreholes with electric pumps. However, this practice is extensively unregulated and unmonitored. The prevailing perception among hotels is that water from boreholes is “free” and “abundant.” This is a particular concern given the need for the water authorities to increase revenues in order to improve water infrastructure. Additionally, many hotels have faulty water meters. Therefore they pay the same amount regardless of water usage rates. Overall, hotels have little idea of how much water they are consuming (estimated volumes from 20 litres per room per day, to 1,310 litres per room per day), and little incentive to reduce their usage. Most hotels surveyed, such as in the area of Kom and Kololi, also report filling up reservoir tanks from the mains supply when available. However, because the hotel pipes are wider in diameter than those servicing neighbouring communities, they effectively siphon off the bulk of the water, apparently causing availability for locals to drop.

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Bali

As early as the 1930s, tourists were flocking to the Indonesian island of Bali in their thousands (Pearl, 1997). By 2008, two million tourists visited, significantly swelling Bali's constant population of 3.5 million. Foreign tourist arrivals are expected to increase 150 per cent by 2025, while Bali's population is set to grow to over four million. Tourism is an integral part of the Baloine economy, accounting for $8.5 billion (2008-2009). Bali's biggest natural resource is its water, which has been defined as a national treasure (Bali Discovery, 2009). Bali's biggest natural resource is its water, which has been defined as a national treasure (Bali Discovery, 2009).

According to Bali's Ministry of Health, over 50 per cent of infant deaths are caused by diseases related to poor sanitation, water and environment, and the island has a higher prevalence of diarrhoea (13 per cent) than the national average (7 per cent). Indeed, Bali villagers report that lack of water is dominating their lives: “I cannot sleep, because of worrying about water for our rice field,” said one woman. “This is something no man need to think about [before]. At least for the last eight years we have had water, so that every night my husband has to stay in the rice field, because [the water] gets ridden by other farmers”, she said.

Bali is enduring a vicious cycle of increasing tourism development, deforestation, water depletion, augmenting water costs, and declining agriculture.

Cultural significance of water

Water has an important cultural significance in Bali. It is regarded as critical to maintaining a harmonious relationship with God and the environment (Widina and Doro, 2011), while water temple and traditional community irrigation systems (subak) have been key to water management for a thousand years (Lamberg, 2000). Yet due to the diversion of water to coastal resorts, coupled with declining incomes to the agricultural sector (Ministry of Cultures and Tourism, 2009), Bali’s iconic paddies terraces are now being lost at an average rate of 3,000 a year, leaving large academic to water of food shortages (Jakarta Post, 2012). One recent study estimates that the island is already short of 20,000 hectares of agricultural land needed to feed current students and tourists (Jakarta Post, 2018). Some farmers are selling up because, despite a 2010 memorandum on new water rules due to a rain overseasonally, forcing people to rely upon neighbouring village’s boreholes or to purchase bottled drinking water. However, the price of bottled water has increased 25 per cent in three years, prompting poor villagers to buy ‘roil’ water from unregulated vendors. The quality of this can be highly dubious. Some locals spoke of increased cases of diarrhea and reported seeing mould and larvae in the roll water.

Tourists at Kuta Beach. Rampant coastal tourism development is being caused by a range of factors, rampant, unregulated tourism developments, combined with poor water management, are arguably key. Of Bali’s 400,000 new residents during the dry season (Bali Discovery, 2009). Bali’s biggest natural resource is its water, which has been defined as a national treasure (Bali Discovery, 2009).

In order to curb the unsuitable public supply, most hotels, launderies and other tourism businesses buy dug wells with electric pumps. All are required to have permits and meters for their wells, and should be billed for their water consumption. However, these regulations were apparently unknown, ignored or unenforced. There is now evidence that this widespread unmonitored extraction of groundwater is leading to its depletion. Most wells must now be dug to a depth of 60 meters – 20 meters deeper than before – in order to reach potable water. This is particularly problematic for communities relying on shallower hand-dug wells, who cannot afford to pay for mechanical diggers or electric pumps. However, most tourism industry stakeholders interviewed were unaware of the need to conserve water, or of the impacts of their activities on the water table. Similarly, very few of the tourism interviewed were aware of Bali’s water woes, with more than 90 per cent believing the island has enough water to cater for its population’s needs. However, 95 per cent of tourists also thought their accommodation should be making efforts to conserve water.

Contamination

The quality of Bali’s water is also seriously deteriorating. The ground water and wells in Nusa Dua, Tanjung Benoa and Legian areas are so heavily contaminated that the water is unsafe for human consumption,” said Ketut Sundra, a lecturer in Indonesia’s Udayana State University (Korab, 2007). A lack of environmental awareness among tourism businesses and residents, coupled with the absence of sufficient waste management systems, means that much solid waste and sewage is dumped in waterways. This waste ends up in irrigation channels and paddies, blocking storm drains and exacerbating flooding, while polluted run-off pollutes infield groundwater and flows out to sea.

Climate of Inaction

Overarching Bali’s water issues is weak governance. Responsibility for water provision is distributed across 11 government departments, spanning national, provincial and ‘regency’ levels. However, roles are poorly defined and inter-departmental cooperation is weak. The resulting intransigence and lack of accountability means that there are numerous regulations, none of which are enforced. Many government officials interviewed seemed unaware of Bali’s water problems, which remain conveniently obscured by an absence of monitoring and information. Corruption and the power and influence of the tourism industry are also key factors in the climate of inaction. One local contact was threatened for posting online information about luxury hotel dumping waste near waterways, while a European journalist reported that farmers were afraid to talk, having been warned off by previous speaking to our researcher.

Bali is enduring a vicious cycle of increasing tourism development, deforestation, water depletion, augmenting water costs, and declining agriculture.

This case study is based on field research undertaken by Shane Dale of the University of the West of England, (2012).
Case Study 5

Alleppey, Kerala

Houseboat tourism is booming on the backwaters of Alleppey in Kerala. While this provides economic benefits for some, the livelihoods and drinking water access for many local communities are being severely threatened.

The southern Indian state of Kerala is a popular destination for both national and international tourists. In 2009, tourism contributed 9 per cent to Kerala’s GDP (Kerala Tourism, 2011), with international arrivals numbering over 630,000 in 2010 (Kerala Tourism, 2010). The coast of Kerala is fringed with a network of lakes, rivers, and canals, which make up the idyllic backwaters. Alleppey (also known as Alleppey) is the most popular backwater destination, attracting several thousand tourists every year, including many from the UK (Ghadar et al., 2008).

Most visitors spend some time on a houseboat – a converted rice barge complete with sleeping quarters, kitchen, bathroom, and staff. However, while houseboating costs the exponential growth of houseboat tourism is being met with mounting concern and resentment from many local communities. Poorly regulated houseboat tourism is affecting water quality, ecosystems, and traditional livelihoods. Alleppey’s waterways are home to over 10,000 people. Their entire way of life is intimately connected to the backwaters, which they rely upon for fishing, drinking, bathing, cooking, and other livelihood activities, such as rice farming and toddy-tapping (harvesting of mildly fermented coconut water). B. Vishwanath, president of a local panchayat (village-level government) states: “Life is very much relied on water. The livelihood of the people, such as agriculture and fishing activities, depends on the quality of water here.”

Houseboat boom

In recent years, houseboat numbers have mushroomed. The state tourism board, Kerala Tourism, estimates that 1000 houseboats now operate on the backwaters, with the majority of these concentrated around Alleppey. However, the true figure could be even higher. Large operators from other parts of India are reportedly moving in, offering “luxury” houseboats (some even with swimming pools), and buying up waterfront property to nurse their boats. This is pushing out local operators. In the same period, the rural backwater communities have started to experience increased scarcity of drinking water and declining fishing and agricultural productivity as Alleppey’s waterways become increasingly polluted (Habibullah, 2009; Thomas et al., 2009).

Many houseboats reportedly dump sewage, kitchen waste and rubbish into the backwaters. There are designated locations for waste discharge, but these are commonly ignored by houseboat operators. Houseboat engines kill Patel and other pollutants directly into waterways, while careless refuelling often results in spills. These pollutants dramatically affect the delicate aquatic ecosystems. Oil coats the gills of fish, causing their death or migration to less polluted areas. Several bird species have also dramatically declined within the last decade.

Fish catches down

Local fishermen confirm that fish and oil pollution are affecting the quality of fish and from the lake. “Fishermen have blamed their woes for the kerosene taste of the food…” Now we know that the kerosene taste is from the fish itself. We are not able to sell fish because of the kerosene. The houseboats are dumping our livelihood. The fish stock is also reducing,” said K. Raja, a fisherman from Kainakari. Another fishermen reported: “We have taken a loan from the bank for the small fishing boat and net. Now we are unable to repay the loan because we are not getting enough catch and sell.”

Drinking water

Over 80 per cent of households being along or near the backwaters rely on it for daily drinking and cooking. Less than half of these households reportedly treat the water before consuming it. As the canal and lake waters become more polluted, locals are making alternative water sources their own. However, government piped supply is limited. Few households enjoy access to piped water, and those who do, it is erratic and inadequate. Many have no choice but to depend upon contaminated sources. Women are particularly affected by poor water quality. Lakshmi, a resident of Kainakari, said: “Earlier the water in the lake was very good, we took drinking water from there. Now it is very bad because of the pollution from houseboat and other tourist boats. There are no piped water connections. I am responsible for collecting the water and doing the household job. I have to go too far, by boat, to collect drinking water.” This is dehumanising my work.”

A primary school teacher reported: “Most of our parent-teachers meetings nowadays revolve around the impact of waste…” Mothers and fathers are worried that the presence of tourists is a bad influence on the children. They’re mostly worried about their children’s health. “People don’t want to drink the lake’s water anymore. It tastes of petrol and smells bad... they’ve asked for water from the city, but they don’t give enough. Every morning they worry about the water.”

Before consuming it. As the canal and lake waters become more polluted, locals are making alternative water sources their own. However, government piped supply is limited. Few households enjoy access to piped water, and those who do, it is erratic and inadequate. Many have no choice but to depend upon contaminated sources.

Agricultural impacts

Livelihoods within the agricultural sector are also being severely hit. Paddy fields are directly irrigated by the backwaters, which means that oil, sewage and rubbish from the houseboats easily flows into these agricultural units. Furthermore, farmers attribute recent incidences of ill health to prolonged contact with polluted water. A farmer of Thanthrikuru reported: “Our paddy fields are in a very bad shape due to the pollution. We are not getting agricultural workers, because they are afraid to work in the polluted paddy fields due to health concerns. I am also suffering from skin diseases because of the long contact with the contaminated water.”

Shocking the facts?

In its 2011 tourism strategy, Kerala Tourism acknowledges that houseboat pollution and destiny is a problem (Kerala Tourism, 2011). In answer to “to dispose houseboat operators and crew activities to relatively underused stretches and regions,” they encourage the use of improved waste management systems. However, unless it first establishes clear carrying capacities for alllegations in combination with local communities, and actively enforces and monitors boat numbers and their utilization of waste management systems, it risks simply spreading the problem elsewhere.
The case studies in this report share many factors that are contributing to water inequality between tourism interests (particularly large hotels and resorts) and local communities, including small-scale tourism entrepreneurs.

**Wider contextual issues**

Besides increasing internal stress of tourists and migrant labour to service the industry, all the case study destinations are experiencing strong population growth and urbanisation. This is adding to the strain on fragile coastal water resources and the broadly inadequate infrastructures. All are facing wide watered degradation due to deforestation and the concentration of groundwater and agricultural land. Energy vulnerabilities and the impacts of climate change, such as rising water levels and increased risks of drought and flooding, are also common themes (see figure 1).

**Weak governance**

Weak tourism and water governance are arguably the key factors giving rise to water inequality in tourism. This includes lack of coordination between government departments, weak regulatory frameworks, weak monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations, inadequate taxation and water planning, poor accountability, and corruption. These weaknesses are largely from inefficient institutional and economic capacity, as well as low awareness levels and political interferences. In the gaps created by inefficient governance, poorly planned and regulated tourism development is causing ever-increasing pressure on water resources. For example, large hotels and resorts are often allowed to drill boreholes and sell water to tourists, which is impacting on local water availability. Poorer households, particularly the women, are most affected by such water shortages, and must spend considerable time queuing at public standpipes. Moreover, hotels and resorts often have their own private water systems, which depletes availability and pressure for other users. Most hotels also invest in boreholes to ensure a regular supply. However, this groundwater extraction largely goes unregulated and unsustainable, and the water is considered ‘free’. This is altering the given the due need for government authorities in all locations to recover revenue in order to improve equitable access to water and sanitation.

**Incremental privatisation**

In Zanzibar, guards now patrol some hotel water pipelines due to conflicts with the local community. In the Gambia, decrepit infrastructure is costly and perceived as unnecessary where water can be extracted from the ground for free and broken meters go ignored. As stated by respondents in Goa, individual or large tourism operators are earning lucrative sums by selling water to tourists, while a request for governance support from local communities to install chemical toilets was turned down.

**Inadequate institutional and resource management**

Inadequate institutional and resource management systems are undermining community rights to water access and control, and inequitable consumption of water is undermining equitable water access and control. This is undermined by the fact that most national water policies and planning frameworks remain largely uncoordinated and uncoordinated, and there is little incentive for hotels to pay for poor quality water, which poses serious risks to health.

**Lack of incentive**

The prevailing situation means that there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures. Installing water-saving infrastructure is costly and perceived as unnecessary where there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures. Installing water-saving infrastructure is costly and perceived as unnecessary where there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures.

**Rule-breaking**

All the case studies highlight instances of rule-breaking, where tourism businesses take advantage of water governance gaps. For example, in Goa, hotels are allowed to drill boreholes and sell water to tourists, which is impacting on local water availability. Poorer households, particularly the women, are most affected by such water shortages, and must spend considerable time queuing at public standpipes. Moreover, hotels and resorts often have their own private water systems, which depletes availability and pressure for other users. Most hotels also invest in boreholes to ensure a regular supply. However, this groundwater extraction largely goes unregulated and unsustainable, and the water is considered ‘free’. This is altering the given the due need for government authorities in all locations to recover revenue in order to improve equitable access to water and sanitation.

**Low awareness**

In Zanzibar, guards now patrol some hotel water pipelines due to conflicts with the local community. In the Gambia, decrepit infrastructure is costly and perceived as unnecessary where water can be extracted from the ground for free and broken meters go ignored. As stated by respondents in Goa, individual or large tourism operators are earning lucrative sums by selling water to tourists, while a request for governance support from local communities to install chemical toilets was turned down.

**Limited awareness**

Nonetheless, most hotels are interested in water conservation, but lack the knowledge or incentives to implement any such measures. From basic methods, such as reduced water charges, to more advanced ones, such as water efficiency audits and water auditing, hotels are interested in water conservation. In the Gambia, for example, hotels are seeing significant improvements in terms of water efficiency. However, there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures. Installing water-saving infrastructure is costly and perceived as unnecessary where there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures.

**Erosion of community water management systems**

The gradual erosion of traditional water management systems is undermining community rights to water access and control, and inequitable consumption of water is undermining equitable water access and control. In all cases, there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures. Installing water-saving infrastructure is costly and perceived as unnecessary where there is little incentive for hotels to implement water conservation measures.
Discussion and Conclusions: Opportunities and ways forward

Despite the challenges, there are notable opportunities from improving water equity in each case study site. These can offer useful lessons for tourist destinations elsewhere facing similar challenges. Grasping these opportunities could help governments fulfill their obligations to uphold and protect the right to water and sanitation as a priority, and support tourism businesses in implementing their responsibility to respect these rights.

The significance of tourism to the economies of Zanzibar, Goa, Bali, and the Gambia and Kenya make it imperative for their governments and tourism businesses to take steps to ensure sustainable water management and equitable access. The deteriorating infrastructure of luxury tourism developments and their capacity to pay for their considerable water consumption should be harnessed to support improved access for local communities. In all locations, there is a dire need for improved tourism and water governance, including with regard to the planning, regulation and monitoring of tourism development and its water use. It is essential that water resources be announced and tourism carrying capacities ascertained. Other livelihood needs must be taken into account, as well as pressure from growing populations, changing climate, and other water-related stresses. Agriculture and, in the case of Alappuzha, freshwater fishing, should be protected against overconsumption, pollution, and land appropriation by tourism development. International tour operators and multinational hotel groups have a clear vested interest and responsibility to understand and help address these issues and impact, and to influence local, national and international solutions accordingly.

There is a need for ongoing, coordinated donor support to help 대해서 도움이 필요할 수 있는 하원·지방 정부 및 해외 기구와의 협력이 필요합니다.

Tourism planning should involve all relevant government departments, rather than be the sole responsibility of the tourism board. For instance, in Zanzibar, discussions on the impacts of water inequity for the formation of village Water Committees. Given that the impacts of water mismanagement are disproportionately borne by women, their participation in such committees is vital. Although the role and effectiveness of the committees is currently questionable (many residents interviewed were unaware of their existence, doubted their effectiveness or expressed concerns regarding corruption), their potential to contribute to improved tourism development is considerable (Slade, 2011). This could include more coordinated dialogue with hotels, tour operators and relevant authorities on water issues, as well as improved engagement in the various forthcoming donor-funded water projects. One such project is an African Development Bank-funded pipeline scheme for Kiwenga.

Key to achieving greater water equity in The Gambia is the revision of the National Water Policy and Water Bill, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, plus the creation of a legal basis and institutional framework for its effective implementation. Tourism planning should involve all relevant government departments, rather than be the sole responsibility of the tourism board.

Tourism planning should involve all relevant government departments. The Gambia's Centre for Responsible Tourism (CRT) has demonstrated a commitment to demonstrating a commitment to achieving water equity for its communities. The CRT has a network project is planned (Jakarta Globe, 2011).

As the upstream rector is relatively new, there is an opportunity for the Kenyan state authorities to develop and implement regulations to ensure it becomes sustainable. These should be developed with the participation of local communities. Communal rights to water, including those held by the local authorities, should also be considered.

Tourism businesses need to expand their capacity to reduce water consumption and pay for what they use.
As well as representing best ethical practice, adopting a rights-based approach to water can provide significant advantages in terms of business sustainability, identifying and managing risks associated with potential conflict in infringements of water rights, and promoting sustainable development in destinations (IHRB(ii), 2011).

Off-setting impacts?

Good practice in one area should not be used to off-set bad practices elsewhere (UNHRC, 2011). For example, in Loliondo division, Tanzania, a group of indigenous Maasai pastoralists of Soitsambu Village have reportedly been denied access to an area known as Sakanya Farm, which has long served as traditional grazing lands and watering sources, since the area was acquired from a Government parcel by a safari operator with links to the UN (UNHRC, 2011). The Maasai allege that they were not properly consulted about the Government’s original appropriation of their lands, nor about the subsequent sub-leases, and argue that Sakanya Farm was not the Government’s to lease. The case is currently pending appeal in the Tanzanian courts.

Furthermore, a report of the safari operator has allegedly buried, damaged and removed the ‘polo’ property and possessions from the disputed land. Since then, there have been further reports of beatings, shootings, harassment, extrajudicial arrests and detention of pastoralists who try to access the grazing and water sources on the land (ibid). Elsewhere however, the safari operator has fostered positive relations with other local Maasai sub-villages. This includes supporting community development initiatives, including the excavation of boreholes (Thomson Safaris, 2011).

This example also highlights the importance of human rights due diligence. Such a process should have alerted the safari operator to the existing land dispute. It should have seen them consulting with the Maasai with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent to operate on their traditional lands (in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), and in order to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits from such operations, before entering into any lease agreement.

A broader example relates to corporate philanthropy. The charity Just a Drop raises funds through global tourism businesses for water and sanitation projects in some of the poorest countries in the world. Although corporate donations should be encouraged and the work of Just a Drop is extremely valuable in providing the right to water and sanitation, charitable giving should not be used as a means for companies to off-set potential complexity in the alignment of community water rights obligations.

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solutions (e.g. see CEO Water Mandate below). However, Kuoni’s water dialogue appears to have been without recognition of the rightsholders themselves – communities in destinations – even though they stand to be the most immediately affected by the company’s water consumption.

The UNWTO is the largest global tourism policy body, with a membership of 155 countries, seven territories and over 400 affiliated representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities. It has officially adopted the Millennium Development Goals, and in recognition of the importance of water to the tourism sector, has joined UN-Water, a body set up to strengthen water to the tourism sector, has joined in recognition of the importance of the Millennium Development Goals, and especially adopted the educational institutions, tourism representing the private sector, territories and over 400 affiliations.

Drawing on the findings of this report, Tourism Concern has the following recommendations for government, industry and destination governments:

- Universally apply the CEO Water Mandate (CEO Water Mandate, 2011).
- Implement the Water Equity in Tourism Principles (inclusive of the potential of tourism) measures (such as the link between the erosion of decision-making and implementation of unsustainable integrated water and tourism planning and management).
- Adopt the current water equity in tourism principles.
- Promote and protect the right to water and sanitation of local communities.
- Maintain tourism’s contribution to poverty alleviation.

**GOVERNMENTS**

1. Governments should implement their fundamental duty and international legal obligation to uphold, fulfil and protect the rights of their citizens to water and sanitation for personal, domestic and non-personal livelihood needs. This includes protection against infringements by tourism businesses. The right to water and sanitation should not come second to, or be compromised by, tourism development.

2. Governments should nominate tourism businesses operating locally and/or owned by their citizens to water and sanitation policy coherence.

3. Dominate governments should not privilege allocation of water supplies or infrastructure to the tourism sector and should take steps to ensure public supplies are not appropriated by superior tourism sector infrastructure to the detriment of local communities.

4. A clear regulatory and institutional framework (for the coordinated development and implementation of sustainable integrated water and tourism planning and management) should be established. Such a framework should provide for the adequate recognition of clearly defined departmental mandates, roles and responsibilities.

5. Any such regulatory framework should incorporate measures governing water provision by private suppliers, including water tanker and providers of borewells. It should include measures and guidance to encourage greener infrastructure development and protect vulnerable communities.

6. Land use planning should be based on an assessment of available freshwater resources, which should be key criteria in establishing tourism capacity carrying capacity. Such assessments should also cover the water consumption and impacts of all tourism businesses and services, consumption: 

7. Land use, tourism and water planning and decision-making should be undertaken transparently and inclusively, with involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including national, regional, and local governments, tourism and other large water consumers, such as agriculture. Special efforts should be taken to involve women, given their increased vulnerability to adverse water impacts, and other marginalized groups, such as indigenous communities.

8. Clear financing and incentives structures should be established with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including communities, tourism and other large water consumers, such as agriculture. Special efforts should be made to involve women, given their increased vulnerability to adverse water impacts, and other marginalized groups, such as indigenous communities.

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15. Clear financing and incentives structures should be established with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including communities, tourism and other large water consumers, such as agriculture. Special efforts should be made to involve women, given their increased vulnerability to adverse water impacts, and other marginalized groups, such as indigenous communities.
Recommendations

ALL STAKEHOLDERS

1. Stakeholders in government, the donor community, the national and international tourism industry, civil society, and other affected sectors, such as agriculture, should recognize that there is a shared risk to all if water resources in destinations are not managed equitably and sustainably. This shared risk gives rise to a shared responsibility (CEO Water Mandate, 2010) to work together to address the issues, with particular responsibility resting on those inequitably consuming and polluting water resources, and those in positions of power and with greater access to resources.

2. Relevant stakeholders should consider establishing multi-stakeholder initiatives in order to foster dialogue and understanding of water issues and impacts, and to develop collaborative approaches to address inequitable access. Measures might include:

   - Such initiatives could serve as a forum for the setting of transparent targets for managing and reducing industry water consumption, knowledge sharing, and promotion of good practices, and focusing joint approaches to address resource limitations and training needs (CEO Water Mandate, 2010).
   - Collaborative approaches whereby tourism businesses assist in the provision of water infrastructure and supply to local communities should be undertaken on an interim basis where no viable alternative exists. They should form part of a coherent government policy and strategy and be implemented in accordance with clearly defined standards that ensure provision is equitable (Shade, 2011).
   - Such collaborative approaches should be developed in partnership with local communities, with special consideration given to the needs of women and other users who may be disproportionately impacted by insufficient access to water and sanitation. The development of community protocols around tourism and water resource management, whereby communities set out how they expect other stakeholders to engage with them, could be explored (Shade, 2011).
   - Companies should work towards fulfilling their business responsibility to respect water (and other) rights through a process of human rights due diligence (UNHCR, 2011). This entails identifying potential and actual human rights impacts of their water consumption, integrating findings into company processes addressing negative impacts, and reporting on performance (see page 23).

HOTELS, TOUR OPERATORS AND TOURISM BUSINESSES

1. Tourism businesses should abide by laws and regulations governing water consumption and management, including monitoring and paying for water use, even where such regulations are poorly enforced.

2. Tourism businesses should move beyond technical approaches to water conservation and recognize their business responsibility to respect the right to water and sanitation, as set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This means taking steps to ensure that business activities, including in supply chains, are not infringing upon these rights, such as through groundwater depletion, pollution, appropriation of public supply, use of unregistered private providers, or privatisation of land.

3. The advantages of adopting a rights-based approach should be recognized, in terms of sustainable business practice, managing risks associated with potential conflict in water rights infringements, and promoting wider development in destinations (IHRB(ii), 2011). The UN Guiding Principles, as well as the CEO Water Mandate, offer useful frameworks for change in this regard.

4. Companies should work towards fulfilling their business responsibility to respect water (and other) rights through a process of human rights due diligence (UNHCR, 2011). This entails identifying potential and actual human rights impacts of their water consumption, integrating findings into company processes addressing negative impacts, and reporting on performance (see page 23).

5. Industry stakeholders should play an active role in advocating for, and engaging in, sustainable and equitable water policy and management at destination level, especially by doing so collectively (CEO Water Mandate, 2010). This should include awareness-raising with tourists.

6. Industry stakeholders should provide relevant data and support the establishment of water resource baselines and tourism carrying capacities in destinations.

7. The UNWTO has a particular importance role in promoting a rights-based approach to water and sanitation as part of truly sustainable, equitable tourism development, and should align its policy, sustainability indicators and guidelines for destinations governments and industry stakeholders accordingly.

CIVIL SOCIETY

1. Awareness-raising among local community, industry, government stakeholders and tourists of water scarcity issues, advocating for participatory, rights-based approaches to tourism development.

2. Empowerment of communities to advocate for their water and sanitation rights, and to effectively participate in tourism and water policy-making processes and other multi-stakeholder initiatives.

3. Exploration of opportunities to revive or strengthen community-based water management systems, for example of successful models shared and replicated.

4. The UNWTO has a particularly important role in promoting a rights-based approach to water and sanitation as part of truly sustainable, equitable tourism development, and should align its policy, sustainability indicators and guidelines for destination governments and industry stakeholders accordingly.
Tourism Concern is an independent campaigning organisation founded in 1989 to challenge exploitation in tourism, particularly in the global South. It aims to increase understanding of the impact of tourism on environments and host communities among governments, industry, civil society and tourists; and to promote tourism development that is sustainable, just and participatory, and which is founded upon a respect for human rights.