

international plan of action for sustainable development that was developed at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** and the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** were charged with responsibility for organizing activities throughout the year. The principal event to honour the IYE was the World Ecotourism Summit held in Quebec City, Canada (19–22 May 2002). Over 1100 delegates from 133 countries attended the Summit.

The purpose of the Summit was to bring together interested parties in ecotourism including governments, **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**, academics, **tourism** professionals, international agencies and community representatives to network and discuss principles and priorities for the future of **ecotourism**. Prior to the Summit, 18 regional preparatory conferences were held for stakeholders to discuss issues of local or regional interest. In addition, a web conference was organized to facilitate participation by those who could not attend the other events.

The IYE, the preparatory conferences and the Summit were organized around four main themes:

- Ecotourism policy and planning: the sustainability challenge addressed the integration of principles of sustainable development with ecotourism, including land use planning, **national parks** and finding a balance between development and **conservation**.
- Regulation of ecotourism: institutional responsibilities and frameworks dealt with issues of regulations and voluntary schemes.
- Product development, marketing and promotion of ecotourism: fostering of sustainable products and consumers was oriented around business needs and interests in ecotourism.
- Monitoring costs and benefits of ecotourism: ensuring equitable distribution among all stakeholders dealt with the **impacts** of ecotourism.

One of the major contributions of the Summit was the Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism and a consensus definition of the term ecotourism. According to the Declaration, ecotourism:

embraces the principles of sustainable tourism . . . and the following principles which distinguish it from the wider concept of sustainable tourism:

- Contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
- Includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation, contributing to their well-being.
- Interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitor.
- Lends itself better to independent travellers, as well as to organized tours for small-sized groups.

The IYE activities, and in particular the Summit events, recognized that travel and tourism provided a vital source of income for people around the world. Furthermore, there was acknowledgement that travel and tourism can contribute to the well-being of the Earth's ecosystem, and that sustainable development and tourism can be integrated to better serve the needs of tourists, communities and the planet. The primary conclusions of the IYE were that: (i) tourism is a global economic force; (ii) ecotourism in particular is a politically valuable concept; and (iii) while ecotourism can be beneficial for the environment and development, it is also often abused and misused.

Related internet sources

United Nations Environment Programme International Year of Ecotourism: <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/iye.htm>

World Tourism Organization International Year of Ecotourism: <http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/IYE-Main-Menu.htm>

Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism: <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/documents/ecotourism/WESo utcomes/Quebec-Declar-eng.pdf>

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International Year of the Ocean (IYO, YOTO)

Since 1959, the United Nations has designated a wide array of International Years in order to draw attention to, and to encourage international action on, major issues deemed to be of global importance. The UN adopted a declaration in 1994 designating 1998 as International Year of the Ocean. This was an important opportunity for governments, individual organizations and individuals to raise public awareness of the significant role of the ocean and the critical issues facing it.

Raising awareness was considered to be necessary in order to encourage decision makers to take action and protect the **marine environment**. **UNESCO** was the leading UN agency in implementing YOTO, and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission spearheaded this endeavor (see Fig. 17).

A number of activities occurred during that year, including international conferences, public outreach and educational initiatives. The year was filled with special events, including a major International World's Fair – 'Oceans 98' or 'Expo 98' – in Lisbon, Portugal. YOTO afforded the opportunity to reflect on human alteration of the oceans and how extensive the **impact** had been, and how little really is understood of human impact over the centuries (e.g. Carlton, 1998). While YOTO served to increase awareness of some of the oceans' management concerns, many people noted that there was no real rigorous discussion of many of the issues that will shape the future management of the oceans (e.g. Michaelis, 1998).

Related internet sources

YOTO, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission: <http://ioc.unesco.org/iyo>

YOTO, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: <http://www.yoto98.noaa.gov>

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Fig. 17. Logo for the UNESCO 1998 International Year of the Ocean.

International Year of the Reef (IYOR)

The year 1997 was designated the first International Year of the Reef worldwide by a group of **non-governmental organizations** and institutions. This effort was endorsed by the **International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)**, an international partnership of 75 nations seeking to implement Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, the action programme adopted by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Agenda 21, to date, is the most comprehensive action plan to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation and to promote environmentally sound sustainable development. Chapter 17 presents integrated strategies and programmes for the protection and rational use of **resources** from the oceans, all kinds of seas and coastal areas.

IYOR is intended to provide a global context for national and regional efforts to save **coral reefs**. As such, it promotes collaboration among organizations and programmes with common interests in reef management and research.

The year 2008 has been proposed as the second International Year of the Reef, in order to mark the tenth anniversary of IYOR. The recommendations are that 2008 marks a year-long campaign of international, national, regional and local events, campaigns, activities and initiatives hosted by governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world and modelled on IYOR 1997 activities. Also planned for 2008 is the release of the World Status report on Coral Reefs and the US Status Report on Coral Reefs.

Related internet sources

International Year of the Reef: <http://www.worldbank.org/html/cgiar/newsletter/april97/8iyor.html>

International Year of the Reef: http://www.coralreef.gov/taskforce/pdf/dawson_iyor.pdf#search

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Interpretation Interpretation can be defined in simple and broad terms as a special type of communication between site managers and visitors that takes places in **tourism** and **recreation** settings (Ham, 1992; Moscardo, 1999). Interpretation is central to activities such as guided walks and self-guided trails, and is commonly used as a management tool in **national parks** and other protected natural