



Delegation
of the European Union
for Republic of Kazakhstan

Resolution of the international conference on "Ecotourism in Kazakhstan" Karaganda city, 26-27 August, 2010

On 26-27 August 2010 the international conference "Ecotourism in Kazakhstan" took place in Karaganda. The event was organized in the framework of the ETPACK project "Ecological Tourism and Public Awareness in Central Kazakhstan", implemented by "Karaganda regional ecological museum" public association in cooperation with German Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), as well as the GEF/UNDP Small Grants Programme project "Ecotourism in Central Kazakhstan: conservation of the PA Natural Resources and Creation of Economic Opportunities in the Rural Areas", implemented by Avalon Public Foundation, with active assistance of the Department of tourism and sports of Karaganda oblast.

Representatives of 7 countries of the world took part in the conference, among them employees of the competent public bodies, specially protected natural areas, non-governmental organizations, projects in ecotourism development, higher education institutions, tourist agencies and mass media outlets.

In the framework of section "International experience of ecological tourism and community-based tourism" different conceptions of ecological and responsible tourism were discussed, examples, based on experience of ecotourism development in such countries as New Zealand, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus etc. were given. The internationally known and proven methods of development were suggested to be used in Kazakhstan.

The participants agreed on the definition of ecotourism, proposed by the International ecotourism society: "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."

In the framework of section "The Kazakhstani experience in the sphere of ecological and community-based tourism" reports, dedicated to existing experience in ecotourism development were presented (including Shal Akyn district, Saty village, three eco-sites of Central Kazakhstan, namely Kyzylarai, Ulytau and Kent). Reports, concerned with promotion of Kazakhstan as a tourist destination, particularly with the help of contemporary Internet technologies, were also considered.

In the framework of section "Ecotourism and nature conservation (biodiversity and protected natural areas)" reports of the representatives of specially protected natural areas of Kazakhstan and non-governmental organizations, dealing with general basis of policy for ecotourism development on specially protected natural areas, were considered. Practical examples of the West-Altai and Aksu-Zhabagly nature reserves, as well as the Katon-Karagai and Ile-Alatau national parks were given.

The reports presentation in the sections was followed by the panel discussion, dedicated to ecological tourism development in Kazakhstan, which was combined with discussion of the following topics: 1) The

legal framework of tourism development in Kazakhstan (its adaptation to ecotourism); 2) Guest-houses certification; 3) Authenticity and practice of eco-cultural tourism.

After having considered the reports and having discussed the issues of the conference in the course of panel discussion, the participants of the conference came to the following conclusions:

Taking into account, that

Tourism is mentioned as one of the priority orientations of economic policy of the Republic in the State Programme in accelerated industrial and innovation development of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2010-2014;

Nowadays ecological tourism is considered to be an optimum alternative of sustainable development of tourism sector worldwide;

Fundamental principles of ecological tourism development, which determine its correct understanding, are as follows: participation of local communities in the process of tourists servicing organization and minimization of environmental impacts;

Ecological tourism, being a composite and integral part of domestic and inbound tourism, contributes to the positive image of Kazakhstan abroad;

Recognising, that the suitable legal framework for ecotourism development had not been worked out yet, whereas measures in its development, assumed by the State and private organizations, do not always correspond to the principles, commonly accepted worldwide;

The participants consider it necessary to assume the following measures, contributing to ecological tourism development in Kazakhstan:

- to draw attention of the Ministry of tourism and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan to necessity of the State support (including Financial support) of the projects in ecotourism development, including community-based tourism, in the framework of creation of special complex State programmes or within the bounds of existent programmes (including the State programme in accelerated industrial and innovation development of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2010-2014)

- to draw attention of the Ministry of tourism and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as local executive powers, to necessity of improvement of normative legal acts in the sphere of tourism on republican and local levels (State programmes, strategic plans of the ministries, regional master-plans etc.) by proposing amendments regarding ecotourism development and support; to inform the Ministry about the necessity of financial provision of the events planned;

- to draw attention of the Ministry of tourism and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as local executive powers, to necessity of the State (financial and not only) support in creation and functioning of tourist information centers in all regions;

- to draw attention of the Ministry of tourism and sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as local executive powers, to necessity of compulsory presence of ecological component in all projects in tourism development; to recommend to exclude from its activity positioning of big tourism projects, which do not get in line with ecotourism principles;

- to recommend the Committee of forestry and game management of the Ministry of agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan to make provision of organization of events, concerned with tourism development, in the work of specially protected natural areas at their territories (qualified and tactful personnel training, providing tourists with fliers and maps, maintenance of order and minimal infrastructure, maintenance of territory protection regulations without any exceptions, providing

transparency in the process of establishing and collecting entrance fees for visiting specially protected natural areas, also with the help of Internet), as well as to distribute information, connected with its activity, also by the way of permanent functioning and updating of the web-site.

- To recommend the government and the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan to consider possibility of adding amendments to existing legislation of Kazakhstan (Act of the Republic of Kazakhstan "About specially protected natural areas") concerning: 1) possibility of establishing private specially protected natural areas; 2) adding historico-cultural and nature reserves to the list of specially protected natural areas;

- To recommend Local Akimats and equivalents of the Republic of Kazakhstan to organize working groups in tourism development issues, with recruiting specialist of departments of industry and entrepreneurship, local tourist organizations, non-governmental organizations, higher education institutions and other interested parties, possessing corresponding experience and knowledge,

- To call upon vocational secondary and higher education institutions of Kazakhstan to introduce educational programmes in ecological tourism and to call upon the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan to increase the number of grants for the corresponding major. Tourist organizations are recommended to extend co-operation with higher education institutions, aimed at practical processing of theoretical knowledge in the framework of practical training for students on ecotourism sites and routes;

- To work out the common marketing strategy of promotion of Kazakhstan as an ecological tourism destination and to promote it inland and abroad with the help of the Kazakhstani and foreign mass media, also by means of info-tours organization.

- To establish networking between organizations, working in the sphere of ecotourism development in different regions of the country, by means of working out the Internet platform, as well as establishing association of legal entities or public association of people, participating in ecotourism sphere, with the purpose of interchange of experience, information, information materials and clients; with the aim of optimization of costs for tourist product promotion and productive personnel education and training.

- To step up the work of attracting existing tourist organizations of Kazakhstan to promote and realize ecotourism products, as well as redirect its activity profile from outbound to inbound and domestic tourism; to raise their awareness of ecotourism issues.

- to popularize ecotourism on the local level and to develop the potential of local population with the aim of involving it in ecotourism activity;

- to send this resolution to the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the government of the RK, the Parliament of the RK, The Ministry of tourism and sports of the RK, Committee of forestry and game management of the Ministry of agriculture of the RK, the Ministry of education and science of the RK, The Ministry of culture of the RK, the Ministry of communication and information of the RK, regional Akimats of the RK, as well as to other interested parties.

The conference participants would like to make the following final declaration public:

Ecotourism is a special part of tourism industry, it abides by absolutely different laws. Competition principle does not work here. Ecotourism can be described as a movement, which is strong in the event that all the levels of society vertically and a big amount of players horizontally cooperate with each other. Multiplier effect is made through such a system. Examples of the countries, where ecotourism is actively supported by national and regional authorities and municipal structures, where **politics, travel industry and civil society work together creatively in order to "ecologize" tourism**, can be seen as a good illustration.