**Social Responsibility: application of good practices in the Cuban tourism and hospitality industry**

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Working paper - notes

Abstract:
In a dynamic and constantly changing external environment, Social Responsibility in the tourism and hospitality industry is paramount for assuring a balance among, shareholders and internal/ external stakeholders, the environment inclusive. Socially responsibility has different forms and dimensions and its application more often than not, is content specific, as politics, economy, society, culture, technology, environment, and law, are taken into consideration. This makes its application not only difficult but also gives leeway to many companies to take advantage of unique local environments and conditions and especially in the developing world. This account aims to portray paradigms of social responsible practices in developing countries in an effort to depict good practices and highlight examples of malpractice.

Any tourism development has to be vetted by this committee for its environmental impact – evaluate that – is it efficient. Have clause in constitution to protect environment only Brazil and Cuba have that – see how effective it is. What are working conditions? All unionised.

Tour operators in GB are external stakeholders. E.g. Thomas Cook, the Holiday Place, VergilioViellanueva – works at SCUk with Antonio and has better English. Hotels managed by joint ventures – senior managers from foreign operator, they work with Cubans as a joint venture, much of the marketing is done by the foreign operators – you will invest in this hotel and your share will be the opportunity to exclusively sell that hotel abroad e.g. the Holiday Place (specific to Cuba) Thomas cook

Old Havana – their tourism is directly linked to the restoration of old Havana, so all the money generated by those who own the hotels in old Havana goes back into the restoration of Old Havana – tourism is the driver for redevelopment, but this includes social development, they haven’t evicted people to build hotels, they have renovated empty buildings for hotels and the money made from the hotels is invested in the housing so peoples houses have been improved as people are living there. These local people are also being employed in the project so local people get the jobs in the tourist business, so the city is being completely reinvigorated and developed using tourism as the economic driver.

I want to examine the efforts of the new Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA), in conjunction with other agencies and bodies to design and implement a comprehensive vision for environmental protection and sustainable development.



## Interview with tourist guide Nov 2014

He says tourism bought in money but there are ethical issues – in early 1990s – up to 1997/8 prostitution was a problem. It was not organised and was never legal and it was never a sex capital, but still poor girls would sleep with foreigner for money/gifts or would leave with them. – Not controlled by pimps so there were free to do this or not. Now as conditions in Cuba have improved it is less of a problem but still occurs although illegal and this is enforced. Gambling is also illegal since 1962. So no sexual tourism in Cuba. 1993 – 1995 emigration crisis.

1999 Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela and developed a commercial relationship with Cuba – mostly their oil for Cuban medical services so as conditions improved, prostitution decreased.

Tourism brought positive things – all money to restore old Havana came from tourism.

Culture changed a little due to increased exposure to western culture – 60% of TV programmes are US and bootlegs which has led to an increasing desire for consumer goods. But no adverts, just films and series – they like Greys anatomy, Big Bang Theory, House, Downton Abbey.

They have a policy to respect the environment are relocating the oil refinery and industrial infrastructure from the Bay of Havana and are creating a watersports facility instead and are cleaning the bay. Environment has been on the agenda since 1992 and Rio summit. In Havana now new buildings built since 1998 as policy is to refurbish old ones. Manzana De Gomez project to refurbish the place, one reason is to preserve cultural heritage.

First Hotel built in Veradaro in 1970 – Hotel International, but the goal of the local authority is to demolish the building because it was built on a sand dune and sand dune is necessary as a sea barrier, so want to rebuild nearby and preserve sand dune – but not everyone happy as locals see Hotel as part of history. Projects to preserve mangrove and coral – they are replanting mangrove where it has disappeared.

Tourists have not created an envy culture as it has bought business. Working conditions are good.

The tourist guide said his parents are both professors but he earns more than them. All think this is wrong but it is the norm that those making money from tourism hare it among their family and close friends. Tourist workers get a salary in Cuban pesos but tips are in CUCs and 95% of income comes from tips and this is not taxable. But no resentment among Cubans and 90% of population have access to CUCs either through relatives working tourism of remittances sent from abroad. Or they have their own business.

There are 3 classes – upper middle and lower but he said the gap between them is quite small. He thought only current issue was could improve customer service. Said didn’t think there were illegal taking of marine life and shells to sell.

He thinks the Cuban tourist industry is a good role model especially as they have managed to preserve their Cuban identity even while increased exposure to other cultures because they are all taught Cuban history in school – so they can respect other cultures, but Cuban culture comes first.