

## UNWTO ALGARVE FORUM

### ***TOURISM AND SCIENCE: BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE***

#### **Tourism as an Instrument for Development**

#### **(Social) Development vis-à-vis Tourism**

Development is the process of social transformation that involves an accumulation and interplay of human, institutional and physical capital. This process enhances human activity's adaptation to the environment and its productivity, while encouraging the equitable participation of citizens in shaping their societies, benefiting from resources and discussing future strategies, as well as strengthening their skills as individuals. Sustainable economic growth and financial capital can facilitate this process, the key factors of which are: education, knowledge management and institutional development. The resources used are commensurate with the carrying capacity of natural, social and economic systems and enable current needs to be satisfied without compromising the well-being and progress of future generations.

Contemporary approaches to development policy emphasize the need to (i) empower the agents, basically through knowledge management efforts; (ii) advance the institutional framework to facilitate the agents' efforts and their efficient performance; and (iii) set a long-term gradualist strategy, beginning with "easier" economic activities (which might include tourism) and ending with open competition in sophisticated products and services offered in global markets.

Tourism can contribute to development, promoting the sustainable use of human, natural-cultural and physical resources which were idle or underutilized. In particular it enhances human capital and its socio-economic productivity, both key factors in development. Tourism is a powerful instrument to increase knowledge, awareness and skills, and thus for personal achievement, full participation in society and institutional development.