



"THE OTHER EGYPT": NEW TOURIST ROUTES AND SITES FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**SEMINAR HELD BY THE
COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF THE
ITALIAN EMBASSY IN EGYPT
27TH SEPTEMBER 2005**

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OPENING SPEECHES

Chairman - Dr. Nino Merola, Director "Italian Cooperation Office"

Welcome everybody,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to this seminar promoting the activities for community development by the Egyptian and the Italian authorities. I'd like to stress the presence of many friends that work with us and that are interested to this subject; I'll mention just few of them such as the delegations from Menya, from Fayoum and from Matrouh and many other friends, the tour operators that are working here in Egypt and some friends who have come specifically from Italy. It is a sign of interest towards this subject and I think it is a good indicator of what we can expect for the future:

... I mean to work together towards the common objective of developing areas in which there is a great potential, areas which need to receive such development that tourism and many others activities can bring to them.

We strongly believe that today will be a good starting point for our activities connected with this subject; there are already some plans to follow up to this meeting.

It is a great effort that we all put together and the Ministry of Tourism really thinks that it will bring some concrete results to Egypt.

Dr. Moustafa Fouda, Director Nature Conservation Sector NCS, EEAA

Good morning everybody,

On behalf of H.E. the Minister of Environment and the Executive Chief Officer of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), I welcome you in such a nice place and wish you a fruitful workshop. It is nice to be among friends simply because when I look at any face here I remember something, some good initiatives started some years ago and completed with success. Thanks to the Italians who helped us in the restoration of the programs, I'm sure we will have enough time to discuss many important issues. Everywhere you go, in Egypt, there is always something to tell, underneath the sand, in the water, upon the mountains. So, Egypt is blessed with many interesting landscapes and different environment.

Our role is to preserve this environment and at the same time try to balance between environment and development. In ecotourism specifically, and in tourism in general, we have been working together over the last five years and we achieved a lot. However, it is still beyond our own resources. That is why projects like this one are so important. In particular, the relationships between Egypt and Italy from the past until now; nowadays we need to put our hands together to allow – or at least give opportunity – for our children to enjoy the treasures of Egypt making good use of them. This is why sustainable tourism is an imperative.

Dr. Ahmad Marei, representing the Ministry of Tourism

Good morning,

I am very happy of being here on behalf of H.E. the Minister of Tourism.

Looking at last year 2004, tourism contributed over 6 billion dollars to Egyptian economy. Over 8 million visitors spent these 6 billion dollars that we welcomed here in Egypt throughout the year. 8 million visitors represent an increase of 35% versus 2003. Those 8 million visitors spent a total of 81 million nights in Egypt, and that again represents an increase of 56% versus the year before. Comparing these figures to international standards, we'll see that the WTO average growth rate is 4%, while growth rate of our region has been 10%. Now, we also have ambitious plans for the next years.

We are planning for the coming 10 years to increase the number of visitors to 18 million and to increase tourism contribution to GDP to over 12 billion dollars. The 2004 has also been a big milestone for us because it has been the first time in our history that we welcomed over 1 million visitors from a single country, and those people came from Italy. In light of those results and in light of those ambitious plans about the future, nothing will be possible without a very sound and solid ecotourism policy.

I think projects like Fayoum exemplifies this, because they are really good models for ecotourism. So I'm sure that we will continue to achieve results like the ones achieved last year.

INTERVENTIONS

Chairman - Dr. Nino Merola

My presentation will be just an overview of the work we are doing in different parts of Egypt.

The title "The Other Egypt" has been stolen from another project: we would like to stress the meaning to emphasize the issue of Community Development. Our concept is opening all the possibilities to fully utilize the communities' development's potentialities: the development of a site and of its population. So we have to look at all the different activities which might bring development to such communities. We will talk about development in the broader sense. We focus on tourism, of course, but tourism is not the only activity that can bring such development; we believe in the artistic potentials, in the qualities and in the history of this country.

We believe in its environment, which is amazing and already very well known for its peculiarities. We believe in the cultural heritage of the country, too. It is not up to me to stress the importance, the quality and the quantity of the cultural heritage available in Egypt. To reach this goal, I can tell you that Italian Government is working in many, many areas, from Wadi al-Rayyan to Siwa and to the most southern national parks like the area of Gabal Elba south to Marsa Alam. We are also active on the sea environment, in particular

in Samadai. I would like to say just a few words for each place. Wadi al-Rayyan potential is well known and we are particularly proud to recognize that, with our support and direct involvement, Wadi Hetaan site has been recently awarded as World Heritage Site. The importance and the projects for the short future about Siwa are well-known as well; we are supporting the protected areas, we are supporting architectural environment, we are working on the handicraft production; we are also keen to make an effort in promoting the typical agricultural products of Siwa like the dates, the olives and other things and we are trying to develop a management plan for all the Siwa area.

In the southern part of Egypt we strongly believe there is a great potential; maybe it will be the next frontier, and for sure this initial work will bring attention to the area and will create the basic conditions to get there. I will say a few words in particular about Samadai. Samadai is probably known to the most of you. It is a reef where dolphin population rests during the day. Their presence on that reef is almost daily and it is very high. It has been visited continuously – it is one of the main attractive sites in the south and it is also quite an important source of income for the governorate and so on.

So, we are now working, of course together with our partner of the EEAA, on a scientific approach. This is very important: I would like to stress that there is a strong commitment of scientists in Europe and in Italy in creating a management system for the area sustainable for the tourists and for the utilization of the site by the tourist point of view. In Ras Mohammed, the work to do is mainly due to our Ministry of Environment and Territory; the main result should be a submarine tunnel that should allow people to have a look at the beauty of the Red Sea, even if they aren't divers.

Again, we are working in promoting and protecting the cultural heritage, as I mentioned about Siwa, in other famous sites like Saqqara, our main objective there, is to have a sustainable management plan, and Madinet Madi in Fayoum. We aim to have Madinet Madi ready to be visited by tourists who want to go there.

We support handicraft productions and marketing in many areas of "the Other Egypt". We already started some pilot activities in typical food products that can have a good market both in Egypt and abroad; for example, we are imagining to characterize Siwa dates with a brand of origin, in order to mark the difference between traditional products and the others you can easily find in the markets, because the origin itself is a meaning of quality.

We also support the literature in safeguarding expressions, proverbs and oral traditions, in performing arts, jointly with the enhancement of the role of women in preserving and developing Egyptian cultural heritage.

Cairo itself is one of the places we are supporting and promoting. We hosted the seminar here at the Italian-Egyptian Centre for Restoration "Derwish-Mevlevi", to give you a practical example of what is the potential of this site, which is completely unknown and unutilized.

In Alexandria too there are many activities such as the department of old manuscript in the Library of Alexandria which is of great interest for specialists, and visitors interested in knowing about this kind of issue. Our challenge is promoting the "Other Egypt" for the benefit of the local communities and of the whole country.

Mr. Mahmoud El-Kaissouni Chairman of the Ecotourism Commission, Egyptian Federation for Tourism

Good morning,

I represent today the Egyptian Federation for Tourism. The most of us, even Egyptians, know nothing about "Other Egypt". We don't know nearly 90% of it. In brief, ecotourism in Egypt started actually by the mid 1980s and it started with the deep desert tours. We are nearly 1 million square km, and here we have 24 announced protected areas, that we think are going to be the base for a lot of activities in the future years. Until the year 2017 we are going to have 40 protected areas; some of them are equipped now for visitors, especially for tourist activities, like Fayoum. In Fayoum we have 2 protected areas: one of them, Wadi al-Rayyan, is ready for tourist activities thank to the Italian Government. The other one is in the northern part of Fayoum Lake. Italian Government is working in Siwa too.

Egypt is blessed, and we always say there is some kind of opened door between Egypt and God: if ever a door closes, several others open. So, ecotourism is opening a lot of doors in Egypt. Ecotourism, in fact, is included in about 1,5 million tourists' programme. We are having a lot of new unknown discoveries; one of the major, announced at the beginning of this year in France, is a meteorites' field. This field is in the Northeast site of al-Gulf al-Kabir and is considered the biggest in the world, with its 4500 square km size. During this month we have a scientific delegation coming from NASA planning to visit this location after testing some of the robots they are preparing for Mars in Baharayya oasis.

So, as I said, there are a lot of doors being opened.

Each part of Egypt, if we talk about ecotourism, is very rich. We are having a lot of discoveries and, thanks to the Italian Government; we are having a lot of help to prepare these sites for new activities.

Dr. Moustafa Fouda, Director Nature Conservation Sector NCS, EEAA

Everybody knows the long history of Egypt and tourism has always been based on it. I think we don't need to discuss that. But today Egypt offers another kind of destination for tourism; I think that the Red Sea is an example. Its potential could vary from something like diving and enjoying the nature, especially the coral reefs, to, for example, fisheries. And the coral reefs in the future will have a potential for medicine. So what I mean to say is that the same resource can be used over the time, and if you preserve them properly, you can make use of them.

We offer many sites in Egypt: adventures from the Gabal Mousa to places where you can relax and enjoy the nature. So I'm glad to see here tour

operators and people who would like to do something aimed at preserving the environment. So, to give other examples, there are the desert safaris, which are quite common features now in the western desert: they're as well as difficult, because you have to pay attention in dealing with such a fragile ecosystem – for example, we used to say to people who would like to hunt "hunt with a camera, not with a gun".

The problem is that sometimes we have resources but we don't care about them: we can offer a lot, but it is very, very important that we should have a plan and everyone must have a role in it. I always use the word "a cake": we have to share this cake together.

There is an unbelievable variety of landscapes here in Egypt: the desert, the mountains, important geological features available in many different sites, and some of them can be accessed within just one hour and half from Cairo, for example Wadi El Rayyan. There our job is to manage this heritage site in the most proper way, according to the international standards, and we have succeeded in doing it.

We also have a lot of culture, starting from the pre-historic period. It can give us a lot of important information about environment in the past – how it was, which animals there were and so on. You can have benefits from the culture, if you use it properly, especially thinking about sustainable tourism. For example, there was a woman living in the desert and producing very simple, traditional things; we decided to have a fashion show, with people coming here from Italy and enjoying a fantastic event near the Pyramids and also in Sharm el-Sheikh. There were a lot of those products available there, so they had the opportunity to see and buy them. Actually, this experience should be documented properly to show how can handicrafts end up in a good resource for many people – I mean, not only tourists but also local communities because, after all, we are keen about local communities development.

We would like to implement the millennium development goals to take care of those people too, we improve their life standards and livelihood, and at the same time we take care of them in terms of education, health and many other things. But, above all, we care of the environment, because you cannot just go and do whatever you want, you must have a strategy, you must have an action plan. We need to establish equilibrium between tourism development and natural resources. The strategy is available, and I will be very happy to send it to everyone is interested in it.

As was said before, we have 24 protected areas and we're planning to increase them to 40. We succeeded in getting a presidential decree in a way that nobody can touch these areas that we are going to declare protected – we cannot declare all of them at once, we don't have enough resources for that. But now we have a council in Egypt that is looking at land use in Egypt. For example I can speak about Wadi al-Gemal. It is the last protected area and a very good work is being done now for ecotourism: we established roads and signs so that you can go and enjoy nature. We encourage stakeholders, especially young graduates from AUC (American University in Cairo) to go there and spend one or more months, having a camp site and

they developed a camel track and are now developing rooms and roads in the area so that everyone can take benefits from these sites.

Another interesting example is Elba: there are mountains go down to more than 2000 meters, even into the deep waters. Between these extremes there is the missed oasis, the only place in Egypt with dense acacia forest and many rare species of animals.

We also have visitor centres in different places and we are proud of some of them. We have ecology in south Sinai. We offer shows, we offer a lot of activities like bird watching. We have a lot of publications in different forms (CDs, books, leaflets).

Some things already exist, but what we still need support to save these resources, and also from agencies and tour operators. Let us work together because if we don't do it, the next generations will damn us.

So, please, work together in a way that everyone can enjoy the treasures of Egypt.

Dr. Fouda about Samadai

Two years ago people realized there is a site called "Dolphin House" where you can go and watch baby dolphins with their parents. Once the word spread over, the place became quite famous. Then I went to the site and saw there were a lot of people visiting it. So I said the stakeholders: "Let's work together".

My job was simple, I provided some regulations in terms of the number of boats and visitors, and it was good for you. So, when I went there again after one year I saw to my surprise that, instead of the 10 boats we agreed, there were 37. So, instead of having 100 people, there were some 700 or 800 visitors, and that was not acceptable. I stopped it and I convinced the Governor of the Red Sea to stop this until we provide a site management plan. So, as I got the request from the Italian Consulate to bring there some tourists, I said let's work together to allow it. So, we found an Italian expert and we worked together to prepare a site management plan, which we discussed among the different stakeholders and we made it very clear: there is a site for snorkelling, a site for diving, a time limit, a number limit. And we said that nobody was going to go over there without paying the cost for all of this. And it worked. We also agreed that it was going to be an experimental approach. You need to have scientific bases to monitor what is going on. We formed an NGO and then we were able to get some resources from the Debt Swap, in a way that could ensure the sustainability of this resource.

So, when we started there were about 150 dolphins; when we stopped it there were something like 20 dolphins; now, anytime you go, you are sure that there are dolphins – once I was amazed we were able to spot some 4000 dolphins around the site.

Chairman – Dr. Nino Merola

Thank you. What I'd like to emphasize is that I think that the Egyptian Government, particularly the EEAA, is ready to support the flow of tourists in many, many areas by providing brochures and pamphlets, by doing research work and by organizing visitors' centers – some of them are ready and some others will be ready soon.

So, I think it's time for people interested also to rely on the Egyptian Agency for Tourism, making your requests available. I'm quite sure they will be more than glad to receive inputs from you, from the partners, and to accord to the resources that are available, maybe trying to provide a specific answer to your needs if those will be facilitating your job and providing development to the area.

Dr. Hussein El Zomor, Vice Secretary General Fayoum Governorate

Good morning. I'm here on behalf of H.E. the Governor of Fayoum. It has delegated Dr. Mohsen Bayad, the professor of engineering and the advisor to the Governor for Tourist Affairs, to make a brief presentation about Wadi al-Rayyan Protectorate and the vision and proposals of the Governorate.

Dr. Mohsen Bayad, professor of engineering and advisor to the Governor for tourist's affairs

First of all, I have an intervention in the issue of environment regarding the presentation of Dr. Fouda. I think there is a huge gap between what people says about environment and what really happens – and this gap is growing. Of course, there is adequate media, but still this media cannot reach the ordinary men, whose education can be so simple.

Dr. Marco Marchetti, Environmental Project Coordinator, Italian Cooperation

Just to complete what Dr. Fouda said, the protected areas are facing a challenge because it is very costly to operate and maintain a protected area, and the budget of the Government is very small. So here is the challenge for the future and the role of interrelation between ecotourism in the protected areas. These areas should be able, in the near future, to deal with the tour operators directly. Of course, on the sides of the protected areas, there should be infrastructure facilities to bring to the people the basic thing that should be there; otherwise, no real development of tourism could be ensured. In this sense, the Italian Government is supporting the Ministry of Environment. We are not supporting just for tourism, but also to develop the capacity and the possibility to interact with local communities.

But to manage a protected area requires a management plan; to prepare a management plan means to interact with all the partners, including the people living in this area. So it's a long job, and we are proud to say that we have done in Wadi El Rayyan the first step for Egypt. In the near future we hope there will be an autonomous body that will be able to interact with tourism companies as they are doing in South Africa, because the way is still long and I think we have just started.

Dr. Maria Casini, Archeological Expert-Italian Cultural Institute

We will have a look at the Italian commitment on archeology.

We have more than 17 expeditions working in many places located throughout the country. In many of these sites work is carried out very fast and some of them are ready to be visited and included as new tourist destinations, because one of the aims of archeologists is to make the site available to the public to make it part of the historical mosaic. This is why the duty of the archeologists is also to work in the conservation and restoration of the remains.

Now we have the archeological exhibitions from Alexandria to Luxor. In the western desert, the road between Siwa and Bahareya could be included in a trip, as well as the site of Bahrein, where we found a Ptolemaic tomb. In Fayoum we have 4 exhibitions. In Menya, in Middle Egypt, you can visit Antinopolis and Sheikh Ebada, a village established by the roman emperor Adriano in 1300 b.C. in honor of his friend Antino. On the Red Sea you can visit Wadi Gawasis, a very important site. All those sites, of course, are available to be visited, but we need first of all the permission of the Supreme Council for Antiquities and also the organization included in the tourist visit.

Dr. Antonio La Rocca, Archeological Project Coordinator-Italian Cooperation

I'm Antonio La Rocca, Italian co-manager of the 2nd phase of the project supporting the Egyptian Supreme Council for Antiquities in the environmental monitoring and management of cultural heritage sites. As I said, we are now working at the second phase of this project. I will tell you a few words about the activities done during the first phase and what we are planning to do now.

Until 20 years ago we opened to the public about 25 tombs in Sakkara; now only 8 to 10 are opened because of the decay of paintings. In the first phase of our programme, these tombs have been checked and it was found that their conditions were so critical that they should be kept closed. That is why they are not able to bear the pressure of the present day flows of tourists. During the second phase we will work in the areas of Sakkara and Fayoum where our aim is to design the visibility studies for managing archaeological sites with respecting environment-monitoring management.

We are strongly committed also in Fayoum and Sakkara.

In Sakkara we are designing a new tourist path network, which allows the decision maker of the site to manage the turn over of the tourist in order to reduce the pressure over the monument, especially the tombs.

In this way news transports suitable for archaeological sites will be proposed such as electric minibus.

This visibility study will include a very ambitious plan to propose new tourist path that links the Giza Plateau to Dahshour pyramids, trough the archaeological sites of the Abu Ghrab, Abu Seir and Sakkara.

So, these will be probably a very important link starting from Giza, will allow us to reach the south of Sakkara site.

This plan's realization will require years, but within our project we are planning to do the best for a pilot tourist part in Sakkara.

We also are working to allow the tourist to visit several archaeological sites. In Fayoum there is a pilot project aimed to realise a new tourist path which will link Wadi el Rayyan protected area with the Visitor Centre, the spring area and the archaeological sites of Medinet Madi where we are planning to build a Visitor Centre and the necessary tourist facilities to allow the tourist to visit and also to have a look at the local products. I would underline that this would be probably the first time in Egypt that an archaeological site is linked to an important naturalistic area like Wadi el Rayyan, thus realizing an integrated cultural pole in Fayoum. Thank you.

Dr. Vincenzo Valenti, Project Coordinator

Thank you, first of all I wish to express that my feeling today after at least three hours of speeches and considerations is that we are really on the right way. On the way to win this challenge, because creating new tourist routes and sites for the community development is really a big challenge. I consider that the most important thing to have the right approach is to diversify what Egypt offers at the moment to the international market, and to propose new tourist destinations and locations.

The challenge is to have new products to offer new destinations and new area sites to offer.

The challenge is that if we have some potential we need to transform them in opportunities. This is the first step.

The second step goes from opportunities to development.

The third step goes from development in the international market.

So, we need to work hard in this way, because Egypt has a lot of historical, environmental and cultural potentials. Today we need them to transform in local development.

Now I would like to talk about our project.

We have this cooperation between the Italian and Egyptian Government to create and promote new tourist districts. The title "The Other Egypt" is in a sense our approach to diversify new destinations such as Mediterranean Coast, South Sinai and Red Sea, the desert oasis.

The challenge is to organize these areas as tourist districts. In order to promote new tourist segments, it will be necessary, in addition to the traditional offers made by Egypt, to include a larger number of different locations, sites and areas that have not been yet considered by international tourism. So I think that we need to discover the "Other Egypt" and to organize the Other Egypt as a new tourist district.

This is our project. We are also working in cooperation with the TDA (Tourism Development Authority). The project's title is "Tourism Development in Egypt: Promotion and Implementation of New Territorial Tourist Districts". It means that tourism development don't have to be concentrated in only one area. It must be distributed into the local development because local community development is a challenge, because most of the tourist experience was concentrated in some areas, some groups and some companies. But we need tourism to extend this benefit to local development.

I think the challenge is to create development around the tourism and to create tourism districts. And what tourism needs? Because we have potentials but we don't have tourism development. So we need to have a good hospitality in the area to offer to the international market. We need to have roads, infrastructures and facilities. We need to have services at an international standard level. We need to have management because without professional management the tourist offer is out of the market. We need to have transportation, safety and security in all the area. It means that we need investments, finance, know-how, best practices, pilot projects and we need to involve the real partners. And the real partners are the tour operators, the agencies and the companies involved in this sector and in the sectors around it, such as commerce, handicrafts, agriculture, and transportation. If we understand that all these sectors around will really create new employment, new small companies, and this will create jobs and income also for the local people.

One of the things we need to create in the local areas is a tourist services centre, where all these activities are concentrated to attract people to this market and to let the foreign market know what Egypt is now proposing. Thank you.

Ms. Maria Donata Rinaldi, COSPE Representative in Egypt

My name is Maria Donata Rinaldi and I represent COSPE, which is an Italian Ngo, present in several countries and in Egypt since 1998, promoting local development, community development and cultural heritage through the preservation of traditional handicrafts, ecotourism and responsible tourism.

The main topic of our presentation is *local knowledge for a global world*, which means how can we support and promote and take advantage of the local knowledge, the local communities for a sustainable development in Egypt for a global world, which means also how to attract and link producers, people and local communities to the national market and the international world.

We try to do this with different projects throughout the country, trying to match cultural heritage, traditional handicrafts, organic food, responsible tourism and fair trade. For example, we are now working in Siwa in a new project funded by the Italian Cooperation together with another Italian Ngo, Ricerca e Cooperazione, which aims to promote sustainable development through ecotourism, training, through renovating traditional buildings of Siwa, and we promote economical revitalization and new tourist places through a participatory approach of the communities; another example, we're now working in Siwa in schools, with children and teachers of the primary school, to promote awareness about environment, about their culture, their architectural heritage and also to take children out of the schools in order to let them get in touch with the artistic heritage of their region. We're organising field's visits for the students of Siwa to promote their own environment.

Together with our Egyptian partners, we are working to promote traditional handicraft all over the country – COSPE is now working in 16 governorates, so

we have quite a large geographical coverage of the country. Our aim is also to give economic value to local handicrafts, also improving the quality (with training, technical assistance) because we think that it is a way to promote marketing and promoting marketing, especially on the international networks, is a way to give sustainability to the work of this people and, of course, to promote local and economic development. So we support the production, we try to improve working conditions of this people, which sometimes is very poor and so need improvement, and, on international level, we promote the concept and practice of fair trade.

Promoting bio-food production is another big potential we are trying to develop: we know that Egyptian agriculture is very rich, but there is still space to promote organic food production, which have a great economical value, especially on the international market.

About fair trade, an alternative concept of trade based on fair relations, fair prices, transparent relation between producer and consumer. What we do for fair trade in Egypt is not only marketing, but also to spread the concept and knowledge in Egypt. So, fair trade means improving the wages of the producers, the employment opportunities, the working conditions, and improving long-term trade relations, gender equality, and giving to the local communities more power on the market. What we experience everyday is that local handicrafts is suffering for globalisation, sometimes local handicrafts is no more considered as an economic potential, so supporting it is giving more opportunities to sustainable development and local development (opening new local markets for tourism and development).

Recently we experienced sustainable tourism, which is not exactly ecotourism and not only it: we are already organizing small tours with groups (max. 10 people) and we associate traditional tourism to visits to local communities or visits to our development projects or local handicrafts producers.

Now what we want to promote is tourism with an human face: we use an integrate approach, to obtain sustainable development through community development, and all this can be linked with responsible tourism, because when people go back to their countries they can tell something else than showing pictures of the pyramids. Thank you.

Ms. Zohra Merabet, Executive Director, NSCE (North South Consultants Exchange)

All the interventions have been stressing the opportunities that Egypt has for other kind of tourism, but I think we also have another challenge, which is to bring the marginal Egyptian people on board to really have success. I'm going to present the project we're implementing in Fayoum.

Fayoum is an hour and half away from Cairo and now the infrastructures are excellent, so there are good roads, which make it very easy to go there. Fayoum has geology, paleontology, it is on the main migration route of birds from Europe to Africa and there is the oldest paved road in the world (20 km.) in the desert, there is also the popular art and the traditional agriculture.

Our main project is, of course, to support sustainable development in Fayoum and to reduce poverty in the region through local economic activity. The second important objective is transforming the environmental and cultural assets of Fayoum into economic asset managed by the people.

We have to face some problems. The first one is the limited capacity of the existing human resources to serve and to work with ecotourism. The second one is the marginal economic benefit that people at the moment get from tourism activity in Egypt. Then there is the deterioration of fragile environment and the limited enforcement of existing preservation and conservation laws on the environment.

Our strategy is a combination, because we have to deal with the people, the system and the organization, which are not fit to support ecotourism. So our approach has been at the same time to improve the capacity of local people and local government through skills development and business training for ecotourism, and then we have to integrate ecotourism with the activities of the protected area in Fayoum and also we give support to the creation of small businesses (by promoting local exhibitions, supporting services and linking them with emerging market). Our strategy has been to work with the different stakeholders in Fayoum and, more important, with the Governorate, to develop the strategy, to be able to offer all these things to operators.

About 30 international tour operators have shown strong interest. We came up to one conclusion: the demand is very important but there are other challenges dealing with side management, security management (key subject), and services.

We saw a very high motivation from the people in Fayoum to get in touch with tourism; people have been very fast learning, for example to become tourist guides, or in language speaking; we had very interesting personal investments from local people. There has been some improvement in the security of the Governorate.

Now, what we need as a future action from the Government is to allocate resources and authority for management of sensitive sites, and for important archeological sites in Faoyoum. It is also very important to guarantee better security to the visitors and to create links between the different parts of the Government, the private sector and people, in a way that they can talk together and find the ways to resolve problems.

Mr. Umberto Di Maria, Deputy Chairman AITR, Italian Association for Responsible Tourism

I think the key aspect of this morning debate is the question: what kind of *other tourism* can be possible without the collaboration of the local communities?

An Italian research concerning travelers shows that 45% of the interviewed want to keep in contact with local population; the 20% want to know and respect the local heritage; the 80% want to know where their money goes;

the 14% want to feel useful for the country they visit; the 3% want to travel in little groups.

AITR was born to support and find the best way to organize sustainable tourism; after long discussions we came up with an ethical chart for responsible travel which is very important because it links the name of local communities with tourism. It's the discovery that the local communities exist.

This chart proposes a way to develop responsible tourism. The most important thing is that before the travel starts it has to be prepared: the tour operators must propose some training before the journey.

Secondly, the tour operators must build up a journey in collaboration with local communities, not negotiating the price but accepting the price the local community wants to be paid.

Thirdly, at the end of the trip, the travel experience has to be shared with other tourists.

We also have a policy, an objective that we want to reach.

First is to be active participants of international discussion about tourism (next year we will become a body of the new ethical committee of the World Tourism Organization).

Second, we want to achieve some changes in the Italian behavior towards tourism.

Third, we want to start talking with the industry of tourism and build up with them a new policy for sustainable and responsible tourism.

Fourth, we want to involve in the maximum way the local communities interested into being a destination of tourism.

Fifth, we want to support the already existing and working NGOs in Egypt in finding a way to make this new way to organize tourism.

To be concrete, four of our associations are already working in Egypt (between them CTA Viaggi Solidali, CISS and COSPE): they are professional, so they are technically authorized to produce journeys.

There is no theory, there are no models, but there is something in our experience that we can share.

How will be possible to organize sustainable tourism? There are different ways, and each of our associations carry out this task in different ways, but we know that all the proposals share the same ideas, specifically:

1. be prepared before leaving
2. be transparent and provide a fair division of the profits
3. respect cultural and religious aspects
4. no merchandised culture and religion
5. direct relation between tourists and local people (for example, through local, trained guides)
6. sustainable use of tourism
7. fair salaries for the ones working in the field

CONCLUSIONS

Chairman – Dr. Nino Merola

What I understood here is that we are no more into the theory but we are finally entering into the practical field. Everybody here said they're ready to start working.

Promotion, collaboration and cooperation between all the actors involved in this sector are a must.

Secondly, it has been stressed the importance of the local authorities: there is a clear vision of how to involve the communities, how to make the benefits of tourism really impact on the local areas, so local authorities must become everyday more active and play their role by confronting themselves not only with the central authority, but participating into the discussion, the managing and the planning. One of the propositions that can come from this meeting could be to create a task group made up of the major actors involved (government, local authorities, tour operators and so on) in order to discuss jointly what to do and how to take advantage of this great effort that is ready to start.

According to this it will be very welcome the preparation of master plans about the potentiality of new sites, about promotion and whatever.

Thirdly, there is no need now just to make lists of potentiality, areas of interest and so on, there is the need of preparing packages of offers, what can be offered in each area, every Governorate should probably elaborate its own offer in order to be ready to present it to the market through the multiple channels you've seen today are available (tour operators, Italian Cooperation and so on).

Fourthly, the different actors should define together how to manage things; we won't neglect the importance of having the local communities fully involved. We understood a positive message: we don't have to think about great numbers, as in Sharm el-Sheikh, but we know there are plenty of people looking for different things.

I hope these reflections will be useful for our future work.