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## ITB Lookup - Trend goal of sustainable Amazon faces destruction due to mass tourism

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Berlin / Quickborn - From 07 to 11 March opened again, the world's largest Tourism Fair (ITB) in Berlin its doors. 10 644 exhibitors from 187 countries presented their products and the beauty of their home countries. New trends have been presented and completed contracts worth billions. Increasing popularity experienced adventure travel, exotic cruises or sustainable tourism. Key words almost everyone knows, and yet could not be more contradictory. The search for clues in the 26 halls of the ITB could plunge us into a fascinating, sometimes shocking world. Could be translucent and not contradictory.



Vertreter der ACTO (vorne) und GIZ | Foto: Harald Petrul

With the scroll through the glossy brochures of the travel provider began in pristine and breathtaking landscapes, to foreign cultures and unique flora flora. They liked to crawl into the impressions immediately dive into the unknown. Letting yourself go. Immersion in a wholesome, magical and sustainable world. At least that was presented to trade visitors and the general public. Sustainable tourism is a buzzword with almost all countries and providers advertised. Most often, the word sustainability or ecological value is not the paper on which it was written. The reality is different. The best example of this is the emerging trend target Amazon. Far away, unusual and exclusive it is and it offers a special look exotic, the thrill and the adventure that many holidaymakers.

Specialist providers, cruise lines and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) have jumped on this train with. The ACTO has already been established in 1978 and serves as a regional body, which comprises the eight signatory countries of the Amazon Cooperation Agreement (Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela). Core mission of the organization is to coordinate the activities of the member countries for sustainable development of the Amazon region and for the benefit of their inhabitants. Sustainable tourism development has been identified here by the member countries as a common field of action.

High-profile representatives of ACTO used the ITB, to demonstrate the importance of protecting the Amazon and the promotion of its sustainable development. In this regard, three cross-border tourist routes have been introduced: the Amazonian water tourism route (Brazil, Guyana and Suriname), the Amazon-Andes-Pacific route (Bolivia, Brazil and Peru) and the Amazon water tourism route (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru). For each route there is a guideline and a green book, where the hot spots of the routes are listed, giving the visitors recommendations for environmentally conscious travel. This is in agreement with the designed five-point agenda which was approved in Lima (2010) and Manaus (2011) by the foreign ministers of the countries. The short, medium and long-term strategies of this agenda are:

- First Systematization of the regional tourism information
- Second Realization of cross-border tourist routes
- Third Development of community-based tourism
- 4th Promotion of tourism image of the Amazon
- 5th Development of a regional funding mechanism for tourism

All in all commendable approach towards sustainable development of the Amazon region. Firstly, the interest of the media representatives and organizations such as tourism-watch was awakened. Core questions on infrastructure, suppliers, and supply and demand were consistently answered positively, and eliminates any possible doubt. One might think. Although it was heard in almost every other sentence, the word sustainability, this topic has realistically in the shadows. What is this?

More tourism means more people and the creation or strengthening of a functioning infrastructure. The guests will be accommodated. Hotels, restaurants, pubs, cafes and nightclubs are to be built to satisfy the needs of the guests to contribute. The supply of food and beverages must be guaranteed. New tourist attractions must be developed. According to ATCO representatives including adventure trails in national

parks. And for more cruise ships have to carry on the rivers to the future tourist numbers can be.

The risks of this development will be dramatic. Villages and cities expand. The result: soft rain forest must for houses and roads. Enormous energy is consumed for electricity or the approach of creating food or beverages. Controversial hydropower plants will be realized and acted under the label of renewable energies. Sustained Greenwashing for peace of mind. The fact that tens of thousands of acres of most valuable rainforest destroyed forever and the indigenous population is distributed, this will simply disappear. In addition to coming to the local communities and a huge waste and waste water problem. And the increased river traffic poses its own dangers and raises questions. What can be used for ships? With what technology they have? How and where waste oil, waste and sewage is disposed of? Harald Petru the rain forest conservation project Chanchamayo posed these questions to the ATCO actors and got surprising answers. Thus, the representative of Guyana, Suriname, Ecuador, Bolivia and Brazil have unanimously reported that there were major problems in the past with illegal logging and mining. That these developments would be highly problematic, governments have recognized and taken the appropriate remedial action, such as the discontinuation of a mining project in Ecuador. The protection of nature and its biodiversity are of utmost importance and will promote the expansion of environmentally sustainable and community-based tourism, said the representatives.

On waste, sewage, or dumping of waste oil or water was not a word. The lance then broke Caroline Tippmann of the Society for International Cooperation (GIC), which represents the project in its function as Tourism Advisor within the ATCO. According to Tippmann, the ATCO only the framework for a functioning infrastructure. Everything else is the responsibility of individual municipalities and communities. Aha! The tourists get thus a Green Book recommendations for environmentally conscious travel while local authorities and communities to be left alone with their waste problems. This binding environmental standards must be set. Expertise, logistical and financial support must be guaranteed, such as the construction of sewage treatment plants.

Except for the expected tourism boom in the Amazon region of mass tourism has already taken catchment. Cruise ships in the superclass, among others, AIDA Cruises, Hapag Lloyd, Phoenix Cruises or Carnival Cruise Line, take the field on a regular basis. With fatal consequences. The floating glitter in the worlds of green forests represent an enormous environmental problem. Sun will need these giants on average 7 million liters of potable water and produce 800,000 liters of waste water, 130,000 liters of oily water and 50 tons of garbage, and the week. If you believe the Sun shipping waste water is treated, waste collected and disposed of properly. But there are still many black sheep who illegally dump garbage and sewage at sea or get rid of some money in Caribbean ports, where the improper disposal is ensured.

More problematic, however, the heavy fuel oil or fuel is an extremely high sulfur content. While many ships of the great shipping companies, the technology for cleaner, lower sulfur marine diesel engines to use, but this fuel is not available in Latin America. The consequence is an extremely high emissions of noxious gases and ungewaltschädlichen.

No doubt, the mightiest river in the world and its tributaries, and learn to drive is an extraordinary experience. But as the entire region has developed over the last 27 years is frightening, harrowing and shocking. As this trend continues we would like to imagine at all any more. First came the loggers, the soy and sugar cane barons, followed by cattle breeders. This is since the 1970s, the Amazonian forests by almost 50% gone or irreparably disturbed. Indigenous peoples have been displaced from their forest and cut some. And now finally comes the tourism ...

Tourism can be a chance to win the battle of the last forests of Amazonia. But this requires Cross-country standards of environmental protection and sustainability. Similarly, it must be ecologically and economically sound development ensured, and the observance of human rights, in particular the protection of indigenous peoples. In this context, it is not only called for the ACTO, but also national and international travel organizations, travel agents up to the individual agency. It is a challenge not only the hips of the individual communities and municipalities can.

A challenge is also the place the consumer and they should have. It is only important what and how much we want to see. Whether we perceive only the exceptionally beautiful, or even the dirt. Whether we are protecting the last whale, orang utans, parrots or pumas or she want to die completely. Whether we want to preserve the last natural paradises, or they completely give up the destruction. Whether we continue to allow that through the development of new tourist destinations of people displaced from their land, as resources of drinking water scarce, natural areas destroyed, child labor and promote human rights are violated. Sustainability begins at the bottom. Each individual can use his power as a consumer help. A power providers and policy forces to act and call of their duty. Together we can make it, that of sustainability is not only written and spoken, but that it is lived. A food and travel philosophy is rewarded, in which we in the future we have already visited countries and places to visit again able to dive again in their undamaged, strange and fascinating cultural and natural areas.