

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN WORLD HERITAGE SITES AND NATIONAL PARKS**

We won't have a society if we destroy the environment.

~Margaret Mead~

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is widely regarded as one of the world's leading industries (George, 2007:3) and although the world is currently in a period of economic turmoil, this industry still plays an important role. In South Africa, tourism has shown a number of years consistent growth from 7.01 million traveller arrivals in 2009 to 8.339 million traveller arrivals in 2011 (SA Tourism, 2012a:16). It is predicted that tourism will contribute 9.6% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and employ over 120 million people (WTTC, 2011a:1) by the year 2021. In the case of South Africa, tourism is predicted to contribute 11.5% of GDP and employ over 1.7 million people by the year 2021 (WTTC, 2011b:1). International tourism has become an attractive opportunity for economic development in developing countries.

However, as international tourist numbers grow, so too do the range of negative effects associated with tourism (Berno & Bricker, 2001:1). Although the industry provides economic benefits, it also faces large-scale challenges such as environmental concerns with long-standing impacts (Hall, 2008:1). Neto (2003:212) and Berno and Bricker (2001:1) note that, in order to manage the negative impacts associated with tourism, it is important to adopt a sustainable tourism developmental approach.

The theory of sustainable tourism has gained increased attention over the past few years because of the generally positive reception of the concept. Although the concept is gaining in popularity, it is not without its debates (Nicholas & Thapa, 2009:842). It is,

however, generally agreed that sustainable tourism should be resolutely grounded in its parental paradigm of sustainable development (Sharpley, 2000:14).

This chapter aims to provide a literature overview of the concept sustainable tourism. The chapter is structured around four main sections. It will start with a description of the developmental overview of sustainable tourism, followed by a description of contemporary initiatives in sustainable tourism. The third section is related to South African guidelines for sustainable tourism. The chapter will close with a discussion of the various aspects of sustainable tourism by analysing the impacts of tourism on the economic, socio-cultural and natural environments.

## **5.2 A DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

Although studies on the relationship between the impact of human activities and the environment can be traced back to the 1970s (Budowski, 1976:78), the actual concept of sustainable development can be traced back to the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987, which published a report entitled “Our Common Future”, better known as the ‘Brundtland Report’ (WCED, 1987). Although this report does not specifically focus on the development of tourism, it does provide one of the first references that specify that development should take place in such a way that current needs are satisfied without compromising the possibility for future generations to satisfy their own needs. This is considered the foremost definition of sustainable development (Coetzee & Saayman, 2009:131; Hugo, 2004:341; Holden, 2008:148).

Muller (1994:132) and Murphy and Price (2005:178) describe sustainable tourism development as a multidimensional approach where each viewpoint is of equal importance, which should result in balanced tourism development being achieved. These viewpoints are:

- ✚ Economic wellbeing.
- ✚ Wellbeing of locals.
- ✚ Undisturbed nature and protection of resources.
- ✚ A healthy culture.
- ✚ Optimum guest satisfaction (Muller, 1994:132).

The discussion and debate around the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable tourism is significant. Nicholas and Thapa (2010:842) indicate the elusiveness of a standardised definition of the latter concept, as most of the progress within sustainable tourism has been associated with progress in the sphere of sustainable development in general.

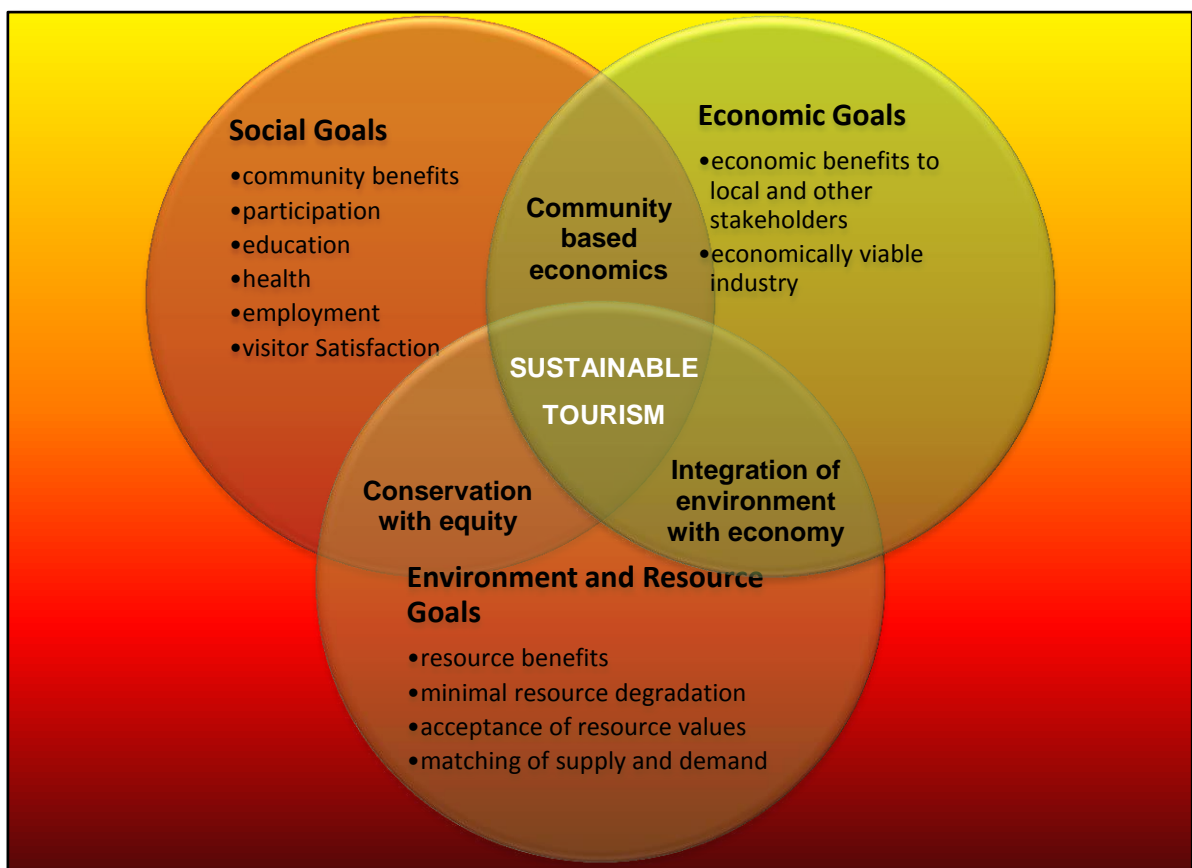
Although the definitions of the concept vary, some of these definitions will be analysed briefly. Although Inskip (1991:32-34) analyses the historical application of sustainable development and its application to tourism, one of the first definitions of sustainable tourism originated from Butler (1993:29), who mentioned that, in the context of tourism, an appropriate definition of sustainable tourism is "tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time". Others such as Hunter (1997:864) have proposed that sustainable tourism originates from the need to protect the environmental resource base for tourism, which involves the natural, built and cultural environments.

Sustainable tourism is a form of planning and management that looks at tourism holistically and addresses divergent interests such as ecological, financial, local community and tourism interests (Swarbrooke, 1999:10-11). Sustainable tourism should, in addition, meet the needs of local communities by improving their quality of life while satisfying tourism demands and supporting the long-term attractiveness of an area for tourism. With regard to quality, Yüksel, Bramwell and Yüksel (1999:358) mention that tourist satisfaction is the most important goal of sustainable tourism and that it should be taken into consideration when a tourism management framework is designed. Timothy (2000:21) provides some clarity on the concept by stating that:

Sustainable tourism is a forward-looking form of tourism development and planning that promotes the long-term health of natural and cultural resources, so that they will be maintained as durable, permanent landscapes for generations to come. The concept also accepts that tourism development needs to be economically viable in the long term and must not contribute to the degradation of the socio-cultural and natural environment.

As indicated earlier, Swarbrooke (1999) mentions the divergent interests of tourism and various environments. To illustrate the interrelationship between the economic, social and natural environments, Hall, Jenkins and Kearsley (1997:130), as cited by Murphy and

Price (2005:175), suggest the model depicted in Figure 5.1. The figure indicates that in order to gain the main objective of sustainability community-based economics, conservation with equity and an integration of the environment with the economy should be strived for. Social goals are orientated towards the achievement of a balance between community issues such as participation and improvements in healthcare and employment creation. Economic goals are orientated towards the achievement of profitability through commercial activities, while environmental goals are orientated towards the conservation of natural resources. Sustainable tourism is achieved when a balance between the social, economic and environmental goals is achieved. More particulars of these impacts will be provided in section 5.5 of this chapter. The achievement of sustainable tourism involves the application of responsible tourism practices (Hermann, Geldenhuys & Coetzee, 2011:9617), which, when correctly implemented, should achieve the three main objectives as detailed by Hall *et al.* (1997:130).



**Figure 5.1: Model of sustainable tourism principles.**

Source: Hall *et al.* (1997:130).

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2005:3) identifies a number of stakeholders that should be incorporated to make tourism more sustainable, namely tourism enterprises, local communities, environmentalists and the tourists themselves.

*Tourism enterprises* – Although these organisations strive for profitability, they should also be concerned about their image, relationship with staff and impact on the environment. Borges, Carbone, Bushell and Jäger (2011:14) note that this sector is vital to the success of tourism at a World Heritage Site. Very often these enterprises are not involved in the planning and operations of the site, resulting in a fragmented and poorly developed business environment that could cause problems with the sustainable supply of tourism services at such sites. Kontogeorgopoulos and Chulikavit (2010: 627) note that there has been very little research and focus on supply side perspectives, especially in ecotourism. It is imperative for these enterprises to be actively engaged when tourism planning occurs at such sites.

*Local communities* – These stakeholders seek increased prosperity without exploitation. Schreyvens (1999:245) cautions the use of community involvement in the planning and management of sustainable tourism in protected areas. This is due to local communities' ability to influence the professional daily management of the protected area and the possibility that the prospect of benefits could fuel suspicions and cause conflict within communities.

*Environmentalists* – These are concerned about the harmful impacts of tourism on the environment, such as pollution and over-utilisation.

*Tourists* – These stakeholders seek a good quality experience in a safe and attractive environment. It is imperative to ascertain tourism perceptions, as failure to identify and correct poor quality could cost a protected area its market share (Mabunda, 2003:7). Poria, Reichel and Biran (2005:162-178) emphasise the importance of assessing the motivations and expectations of visitors to heritage sites for effective management. They argue that tourism research should move away from the view of producers to the view of the consumers. The perceptions of tourists are important for understanding tourist behaviour at historical sites (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003:249). It is critical to assess the perceptions of visitors to these sites rather than merely assessing a site's physical

attributes (Poria *et al.*, 2003:249). The motivations of these visitors may play a role in the overall perception of the site and this should be and is an important theme in heritage tourism research (Richards, 2002:1048). Heritage sites' visitor motivator factors could include the following:

- ✚ Works of art and architecture (Shackley, 1999:69).
- ✚ Exploring one's genealogy or ancestry (McCain & Ray, 2003:713).
- ✚ Experiencing history from a specific point in time (Uzzell, 1996:219).

The interpretation of heritage provided at a site is a key component of the tourist experience that affects the satisfaction derived from a visit (Garrod & Fyall, 2000:682). This interpretation may include the way in which the heritage is presented and compared to the "real thing". Information on and research in this field is limited (Poria *et al.*, 2005:164).

At heritage sites the use of tour guides is one of the primary means of interpretation and information (Josiam, Mattson & Sullivan, 2004:453; Poria *et al.*, 2005:165). As such, tour guides are bound to have a significant impact on the tourists' experience, the length of their stay and the economic benefits obtained from the tourist visit (Cohen, Ifergan & Cohen, 2002:930). Weiler and Ham (2001:550) indicate that tour guides play an important role in the interpretation of a phenomenon in order to make the experience enjoyable and relevant to the tourist's expectations. This positive experience could result in improved tourist support for conservation and education programmes (Powell & Ham, 2008:487). Poria *et al.* (2005:165) note that although tour guides play an important role in the provision of information and the enhancement of the tourist experience, they cannot make a tourist "feel" the site in a specific way. This is primarily because tourists experience heritage in different ways, as heritage means different things to different people and as such their experience and perceptions vary (Ashworth, 1998:114) and it may not always be easy to identify and manage these perceptions.

The incorporation of all stakeholders has been identified as a key component of the successful development of sustainable tourism. The nature and fragmentation of the tourism industry often create challenges in tourism decision-making and this, combined with a multitude of conflicting stakeholder interests, requires careful management and planning (Berno & Bricker, 2001:1).

In the literature the terms “sustainable tourism” and “responsible tourism” are often used interchangeably (Hermann *et al.*, 2011:9617). Sustainable and responsible tourism have several similarities (Keyser, 2004:333; Hall, 2008), but the two concepts are distinguishable from each other; responsible tourism has a more immediate focus in the short term on environmental, economic and socio-cultural protection and upliftment, which should idyllically result in longer-term sustainability (NDT, 2002:8; Myburgh & Saayman, 2002; Hermann *et al.*, 2011:9617). Sustainable tourism has a more strategic and holistic approach to management compared to the tactical nature of responsible tourism (Liburd, 2010:4),

Responsible tourism can trace back its foundations to the consumer movement of the mid-1990s. At that time increased numbers of consumers (including tourists) had a tendency to prefer using products and services they deemed as being “responsible”. This responsibility had to do with the way the service and product provider managed their relationship with the protection of workers’ rights and support for local community initiatives such as charities (De Witt, 2011:35). The responsible tourism movement gained popularity as a result of global pressure on tourism companies to enhance their corporate image through corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Frey, 2007:317). In effect, if tour operators provide services in a responsible manner, they will ultimately make a positive contribution to the sustainability of the industry (Hermann *et al.*, 2011:9617).

The White Paper of 1996 (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), (1996) makes provision for the implementation of responsible tourism. In this regard, the White Paper stipulates the following regarding responsible tourism:

- ❑ Responsible tourism is a proactive approach by tourism stakeholders to develop markets and manage the tourism industry in a responsible manner in order to generate a competitive advantage.
- ❑ Responsibility towards the environment through a balanced and sustainable approach.
- ❑ Responsible tourism involves local communities through the development of meaningful economic relations.
- ❑ Responsible tourism involves respect and the protection of local cultures from commercialisation and over-exploitation.

- ✚ Within responsible tourism communities have a responsibility to become actively involved in the tourism industry.
- ✚ Responsible tourism ensures the safety, security and health of visitors.
- ✚ Employees and employers in the tourism industry have a responsibility towards each other as well as to the tourist.
- ✚ Responsible tourism makes provision for responsible trade union and employment practices in the industry.
- ✚ The government must act in a responsible manner in relation to tourism.
- ✚ Tourists should display responsible conduct in relation to the environment and culture of the country (DEAT, 1996).

Sustainable tourism has become a more widely recognised construct on overall tourism management with the strategy being adapted towards a more practically implementable tactical approach. The following section will analyse the development of sustainable tourism towards the present structure by analysing the various contemporary approaches to the topic.

### **5.3 CONTEMPORARY INITIATIVES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Since the initial developments regarding a theoretical framework for sustainable development in 1987, there have been a number of developments in the field by various national and international organisations. These initiatives will now be discussed.

#### **5.3.1 United Nations**

Since the release of the Brundtland Report in 1987, the United Nations has further considered the concept of sustainable development. The first major developmental step in this regard was the United Nation's hosting of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (better known as the Rio Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The most important result of this summit was the release of Local Agenda 21 (Agenda 21), which is considered by some to be a blueprint for sustainable development (Berno & Bricker, 2001:3). Agenda 21 consists of 40 chapters in four broad categories related to:

- ❏ Social and economic issues – This section addresses issues relating to changing consumer patterns, promotion of health, population change and sustainable human settlements.
- ❏ Resource conservation and management – This section addresses issues related to the effect of human actions on diminishing natural resources such as the protection of the atmosphere, fragile environments, conservation of biodiversity, control of pollution and management of waste.
- ❏ Strengthening stakeholder roles – This section addresses issues related to, among others, the role of children, the role of the youth and women, the role of non-governmental organisations and local authorities as well as the role of indigenous communities and farmers.
- ❏ Means of implementation – This section addresses issues related to the successful implementation of Agenda 21 and issues such as finance, science and technology transfer, education and the role of international institutions (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), 1992).

The plan for the implementation of Agenda 21 was further debated during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. Through the Rio Earth Summit and WSSD, three pillars of sustainable development are now acknowledged:

- ❏ **Social sustainability** involves the protection of human rights and equal opportunities for all people. Although this pillar focuses mainly on local communities, its general aim is to promote equal benefits from development and the alleviation of poverty.
- ❏ **Environmental sustainability** refers to the conservation and management of resources, especially those resources that are non-renewable.
- ❏ **Economic sustainability** refers to the ability to create a prosperous society by addressing the cost-effectiveness of economic activities. It essentially strives to create viable business (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2003:9).

The three pillars of sustainable development may be considered as interdependent and as such could complement each other (see Figure 5.1). There might also be situations where these pillars are in conflict with one another, but it is important to find a balance between them (UNEP, 2003:9).

### 5.3.2 United Nations Environmental Programme

Since the Rio Earth Summit, a great deal of attention has been given to the achievement of sustainability goals, which has been underlined by the United Nations (UN) (Berno & Bricker, 2001:3). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972 as an arm of the UN. The UNEP aims to “provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations” (UNEP, 2012).

Although Agenda 21 (UNEP, 2003:10) and the agreements resulting from the WSSD in 2002 do not specifically refer to the tourism industry, sustainable tourism has evolved mainly from these documents. In 2003 the UNEP endeavoured to rectify this omission by publishing *Tourism and Local Agenda 21*, aimed at stimulating sustainable tourism management through local communities (UNEP, 2003). This publication is divided into five parts respectively focusing on the context of sustainable tourism, the justification of Agenda 21, the key components of Agenda 21, the development of sustainable tourism and the analysis of case studies dealing with sustainable tourism.

### 5.3.3 Commission on Sustainable Development

The UN General Assembly established the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1992 to ensure the effective follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also referred to as the Rio Earth Summit. The commission is responsible for reviewing the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Rio Earth Summit declarations and the World Summit on Sustainable Development plan of implementation of 2002 (United Nations Economic and Social Development (UNESD), 2012).

The commission focuses on the following three aspects:

- ✚ The review of the progress made with recommendations and commitments contained in the final documents of the UNCED, namely Agenda 21, the Rio Earth Summit and the WSSD of 2002 on international, regional and national levels.
- ✚ The elaboration on policy and opinions about future activities in order to follow up on the WSSD and to achieve sustainable development.

- ✚ The promotion of dialogue and the building of partnerships for the achievement of sustainable development. This dialogue is to include governments, the international community and the major stakeholders identified in Agenda 21, including women, children, NGOs, farmers, business and the scientific community (UNESD, 2012).

#### **5.3.4 World Tourism Organisation**

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) is an arm of the UN and has its headquarters in Madrid, Spain. Its main purpose is to promote and develop tourism in order for the industry to become an important instrument for fostering international peace and understanding, economic development and international trade (Harris *et al.*, 2003:304). According to the WTO, sustainable tourism development should meet the following requirements:

- ✚ Tourism resources should be preserved in a way that allows them to be utilised in future while at the same time benefiting the present society.
- ✚ The planning and management of tourism development should be conducted in such a way that serious ecological and social problems are not triggered.
- ✚ The quality of the environment should be preserved and, if possible, improved.
- ✚ Tourism satisfaction should be maintained in order to ensure that destinations continue to be attractive.
- ✚ Tourism should benefit all members of society (WTO, 1998:20).

The WTO, through its initiative Sustainable Tourism for the Elimination of Poverty, which was launched at the WSSD in 2002, aims at reducing poverty by means of tourism. The initiative intends to enhance the wellbeing, social development and mutual understanding of local people through tourism. In addition, it seeks to create awareness of tourism in developing countries and to use the benefits of tourism from developed countries to fight poverty and promote sustainable development in the developing world (Holden, 2008:139).

#### **5.3.5 World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)**

The WTTC is an international organisation composed of senior managers from all sectors of the tourism industry. It seeks to work in conjunction with governments in order to

achieve the industry's potential for the realisation of sustainable development (Keyser, 2004:230; George, 2007:152).

The WTTC has seven strategic priorities that guide its policy-making processes:

- ✚ To assist in the anticipation and interpretation of future trends in tourism in order to visualise the future of the industry.
- ✚ To measure and communicate the strategic and sustainable economic future of travel and tourism.
- ✚ To promote a positive image of travel and tourism as a career path and a provider of job opportunities.
- ✚ To encourage the removal of barriers hampering industry growth by encouraging free access, open markets and open skies.
- ✚ To match the infrastructure provided and the demand for tourism.
- ✚ To develop access to capital resources and technological advancement for the industry.
- ✚ To promote sustainable tourism through industry responsibility in natural and socio-cultural environments (Keyser, 2004:231).

The WTTC launched the Green Globe initiative, which is directly linked to sustainable tourism, in 1994. This initiative endeavours to promote sustainable tourism through the identification of tourism companies that practise responsible tourism. The initiative is not sector-specific and any company in the industry is free to apply for accreditation. Green Globe additionally serves as a promotional tool for these companies to attract and retain an increasing number of tourists that are environmentally conscious buyers (Holden, 2008:229).

### **5.3.6 World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**

Although the WWF is not directly involved in the planning and development of tourism, it is known to have shown interest in the use of tourism for the achievement of environmental conservation (Edgell, 2006:22; Weaver, 2006:12). The WWF is more focused on the management of natural areas in order to promote sustainability. WWF South Africa has identified three primary aims:

- ✚ Conserving the biodiversity assets of South Africa.

- ❏ Ensuring that natural ecosystems and their services are appropriately valued and incorporated into sustainable development.
- ❏ Playing a pivotal role in developing countries by addressing the risks and opportunities associated with the threat of climate change (WWF, 2012:1).

Through financial and other donations the WWF provides means for the preservation of natural areas. One such initiative has been the partnership with Sappi (South African Paper and Pulp Industry) whereby the two organisations developed an aerial walkway in the Dlinza Forest in KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the project was to provide a facility to support education and awareness-creation efforts for environmental conservation, especially among school children. The facility is wheelchair friendly and by placing it above the forest floor the impact of visitors on the environment was minimised (WWF, 2009:1).

### **5.3.7 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

The UN, through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has held numerous conventions across the globe that deal with the consequences and the management issues associated with climate change. The UNFCCC is a direct result of the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 (UNFCCC, 2012). The conventions held annually by UNFCCC are known as the Conference of the Parties (COP). The first COP conference was held in Berlin in 1992 and one of the most recent, COP18, was held in Doha during November and December 2012 (UNFCCC, 2013). Although a number of countries subscribe to the conventions of the UNFCCC, including South Africa, the agreements reached at these conventions are not legally binding and countries are not obliged to ratify the respective agreements (UNFCCC, 2012).

One of the highlights associated with past COP conferences that may have an effect on natural area management is the declaration by the fifth World Parks Congress held in Durban during September 2003 where support was pledged for the active engagement by responsible parties for the:

- ❏ Promotion of protected areas as beneficial assets for sustainable development and conservation.
- ❏ Inclusion of all stakeholders in conservation and spreading the benefits generated beyond the boundaries of the protected area.

- ✚ Development of a global system that will focus on the closing of the gaps in protected areas.
- ✚ Improvement of planning and management to promote the effective management of protected areas.
- ✚ Increase in financial support by gathering resources from public, private and charitable sources for the maintenance of protected areas (IUCN, 2004).

Apart from specifying the guidelines for the sustainability of protected areas, the IUCN also provides a comprehensive classification system for protected areas, which include national parks (Mabunda, 2003:2). These classifications are indicated in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: IUCN Categories of protected areas**

Category		Description
Ia	Strictly nature reserve	An area that is protected mainly for science with minimal human interference.
Ib	Wilderness area	A protected area principally for wilderness protection.
II	National park	A protected area that is managed for the protection of ecosystems and for recreation.
III	Natural monument	A protected area that is managed mainly for the conservation of specific natural features.
IV	Species management area	A protected area managed primarily for conservation through management intervention.
V	Protected landscape	A protected area primarily for landscape conservation and recreation.
VI	Managed resource protected area	A protected area primarily managed for the sustainable utilisation of natural ecosystems.

*Source: IUCN (1994) as quoted by Phillips (2004:10).*

In addition to the above classification of protected areas, the IUCN provides details of the objectives for the management of such areas (Mabunda, 2003:3). South Africa's national parks fall into Category II (National park) and the primary management objectives of these areas are threefold: preservation of species and biodiversity, maintenance of environmental services, and tourism and recreation (Mabunda, 2003:3). Through the

analysis of management objectives, cultural heritage sites additionally fall under the objectives of the IUCN, under Category V (Protected landscape), where the three primary management objectives are listed as protection of specific cultural features, tourism and recreation and the maintenance of cultural attributes (Phillips, 2004:10; Dudley, 2008:20).

### **5.3.8 The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**

ICOMOS is an international organisation founded in 1965. Its primary goal is the conservation and protection of important cultural heritage sites. These sites fall into one of four categories, namely historic cities, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes and individual buildings. ICOMOS gathers research results and evaluates conservation policies for the preservation of cultural heritage sites. Additionally, the organisation serves as an advisor to UNECO in terms of cultural properties listed on the World Heritage List. The responsibility for advising natural heritage sites rests with the IUCN (Timothy, 2011:189; Uche-Okeke, 2008:10).

### **5.3.9 United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**

In 1973 UNESCO launched the World Heritage Convention (WHC), which is aimed at the inscription of sites around the world that have “outstanding universal value”. At that time tourism was not considered a major proponent of the declaration. At present there are 936 World Heritage Sites globally, eight of which are situated in South Africa (UNESCO, 2012:1; Tourtellot, 2006:114).

Countries with World Heritage Sites are obliged to follow a process that actively ensures the protection of the site(s). Timothy (2011:186) notes that countries often struggle to implement this requirement because of a lack of financial, political and technical capacity to manage, conserve and provide access to these sites. Uche-Okeke (2008:12) highlights this as a problem at MNP.

Governments, especially those of developing countries, often strive to have heritage sites listed by the WHC, due to the many advantages associated with the honour. Some of the advantages are general prestige, the solidification of national unity, legitimisation of government power and increased revenues from tourism (Timothy, 2011:187). World

Heritage Sites have the potential of enabling the economic sustainability of certain areas by increasing tourism flows and revenues (Yang, Lin & Han, 2010:827) although this is not the primary aim of WHC listing (Yang & Lin, 2011:455). However, this finding should not be summarily accepted, as the effects of increased tourism flows and revenue have been dismissed by some who have seen the opposite in their respective studies (Cellini, 2011:459). More studies are proposed in this area in order to determine the effectiveness of the WHC listing and improvements in tourism (Yang & Lin, 2011:456).

The above contemporary approaches towards sustainable tourism have originated in the international environment through global bodies. The next section will analyse the South African approaches towards the achievement of sustainable tourism.

#### **5.4 SOUTH AFRICAN GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Sustainable tourism in South Africa is guided by national policies and guidelines such as the South African Tourism White Paper (White Paper) and the South African Guidelines for Responsible Tourism.

##### **5.4.1 The National Department of Tourism (NDT)**

The White Paper was published by the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) in 1996, shortly after the country's transition into democracy. The document was created through a consultative process focused on the advantages and constraints of promoting and developing tourism in South Africa. It indicates that tourism is largely a forgotten opportunity for the country but it notes that the industry could provide the country with the capacity to rejuvenate other sectors of the national economy. It recognises the potential economic significance of tourism due to the industry's ability to generate employment, the fact that it is a labour-intensive industry, and its ability to develop the rural areas of the country. The paper also emphasises the potential of tourism to generate significant foreign exchange and create export markets while providing multi-industry linkages across the country (Spencely, 2003:6).

The White Paper indicates that, at that time, tourism predominantly focused on economic development and the benefits associated with such development. Tourism tended to ignore the effects related to socio-cultural and environmental impacts (DEAT, 1996:16). The White Paper refers to this tourism as “old tourism” and states that provision has to be made for a more sustainable approach to the development and management of tourism in South Africa.

The main goal of the national government through the White Paper is to manage sustainable tourism in such a way that it improves the quality of life of all citizens. The approach of DEAT combines the integration of tourism growth with acceptable environmental management and at the same time links job creation and rural development with appropriate environmental management (Matlou, 2001).

The South African Guidelines for Responsible Tourism indicates the responsibility of government and the private sector to involve previously disadvantaged people in the tourism industry. This is in line with developments in the tourism industry whereby tourists want to know that their activities do not have a negative effect on the natural environment but rather assist in the conservation of the environment and in sustaining local communities (Coetzee, 2004:45).

The South African Responsible Tourism Guidelines, as contained in the Responsible Tourism Manual, are described according to the three pillars of sustainable tourism: economic responsibility, social responsibility and environmental responsibility. The manual, although not a legally binding document, provides practical steps that should enable users to operate their businesses in a responsible manner (NDT, 2002:9).

A more recent development in the sustainable management of tourism is the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy of the National Department of Tourism. This strategy details the provision of a framework and blueprint for the development of cultural and heritage tourism in South Africa. It has the following four main aims:

- ✚ The provision of strategic guidance to sustain the integration and management of heritage and cultural resources into mainstream tourism in order to attain product development and sustainability.
- ✚ The utilisation of heritage and cultural tourism products to stimulate the sustainable livelihoods of local people.

- ❏ To raise awareness, increase education and profile the conservation needs of heritage and cultural resources for the attainment of sustainable tourism.
- ❏ To create an opportunity for the diversification of tourism products and the generation of a segment of heritage and cultural tourism in order to contribute to tourism growth (NDT, 2011:16).

#### **5.4.2 South African Heritage Resources Agency**

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) was established in conjunction with the Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999), and it plays an important role in the identification and management of national heritage in South Africa. The Heritage Resources Act, which governs the functions of SAHRA, does not specifically relate to the management of tourism at heritage sites, but in section 5.5 (SA, 1999:16) it does state that:

Heritage resources contribute significantly to research, education and tourism and they must be developed and presented for these purposes in a way that ensures dignity and respect for cultural values.

SAHRA operates within a framework of eight primary goals that can be summarised as follows:

- ❏ The coordination and monitoring of the identification of national heritage.
- ❏ The laying down of norms and standards to maintain the management of heritage resources.
- ❏ The encouragement and facilitation of the development of provincial structures to manage heritage.
- ❏ The control of the export and import of nationally significant heritage resources.
- ❏ The development of policy initiatives on the promotion and management of heritage.
- ❏ The nurturing of a holistic celebration of history.
- ❏ The creation of national policy for heritage resources management.
- ❏ The development of an integrated and interactive system for the management of these resources (SAHRA, 2012).

At a national level the management of MNP works closely with SAHRA, and at a provincial level with the Limpopo Heritage Agency (LIHRA) and the Limpopo provincial government. These agencies play a significant supportive role but are not directly involved in the management role of the site, which is the responsibility of SANParks. There has, however, been evidence of problems with the coordinated management-supportive relationship between SANParks, SAHRA and other national organisations (Uche-Okeke, 2008:48, 56).

### **5.4.3 Other initiatives**

At a local level, governments in South Africa have also provided input in the sustainable development of tourism. In August 2002, the City of Cape Town launched the Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism. This declaration was the result of the Responsible Tourism Conference of Cape Town Tourism and the Responsible Tourism Partnership, and resulted from an analysis of the guidelines contained in the Responsible Tourism Manual (Cape Town, 2002:1). The signatories to the declaration envisage to:

- ❑ Minimise the negative economic, social and environmental impacts associated with tourism.
- ❑ Generate greater economic benefits for local people.
- ❑ Involve local people in decision-making.
- ❑ Make positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
- ❑ Provide more enjoyable experiences for tourists.
- ❑ Provide access for physically challenged people.
- ❑ Make tourism more culturally sensitive in order to generate respect for local people and their culture (Cape Town, 2002:3).

In addition to the public initiatives, South African non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have also taken steps to move towards sustainable tourism. Two organisations that have been active in this field are Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTT) and the WWF. FTT is an international organisation that promotes sustainable tourism development through awareness creation, research and advocacy, capacity building and the FTT certification programme. The main aim of the certification programme is to reward and publicise the responsible business practices of qualifying tourism operators. FTT has identified five ways in which tourism could become more sustainable:

- ❑ Through increased knowledge and capacity building.

- ✚ Through the improved utilisation of resources through networking and partnerships.
- ✚ Through economic viability by using resources more responsibly.
- ✚ Through the reduction of leakages by improving local purchasing and employment.
- ✚ Through the support of historically disadvantaged entrepreneurs (FTT, 2012:1).

FTT strives to garner support for sustainable partnerships with private sector organisations and companies.

The preceding section of this chapter focuses on the developmental aspects of sustainable tourism and the various organisations that have played a role in this process. There has been considerable debate and discussion on the concept and theoretical paradigms of sustainable development but uncertainty still exists regarding the actual process and practice of managing tourism sustainably (Weaver, 2006:301). To build on the findings of Weaver, the following section of the chapter will analyse the various aspects associated with the impacts and application of sustainable tourism in protected areas and heritage sites.

## **5.5 ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AT HERITAGE SITES AND NATIONAL PARKS**

The achievement of sustainable tourism has been the objective of a number of studies related to the management of national parks and heritage sites (Coetzee, 2004; De Witt, 2011; Mabunda, 2003; Moswete *et al.*, 2012; Landorf, 2009). As mentioned previously, sustainable tourism is supported by three main pillars, namely socio-cultural, environmental and economic responsibility.

### **5.5.1 Socio-cultural aspects**

The impacts of tourism on society and culture are closely linked. In this case, “society” refers to the community, the nation and a community of people with common traditions and interests, while “culture” represents the practices of society such as roles, beliefs and material objects passed down from generation to generation (Cook *et al.*, 2002:313). The

impacts of tourism on the social (socio-cultural) environment manifest when people from different cultures encounter one another. These social impacts may be seen as instant changes within a local community's social arrangement, whereas cultural impacts are more likely to lead to longer-term changes in the norms, values, social relationships and cultural practices of a community (Diamantis, 2004:16; George, 2007:300).

Erlank (2005:381) notes that the impacts of tourism on both tourists and the local community are dependent on the context within which the interaction occurs. The economic and temporal relationships in cases where tourists and locals are seen as equals or where locals are seen as informants may influence the good or bad relationships that occur (Erlank, 2005:381). It should be noted that negative relationships are a result of the short-term experience of the tourist, the commercial purpose of the interaction and the status of the tourist (Holloway, 2006:200).

Font and Bendell (2002:1) mention that the social issues related to tourism go beyond labour relations and certification of employment, supply chain management, welfare and involvement in decision-making. Other issues related to the socio-cultural impacts should be addressed as well.

Table 5.2 gives a brief indication of some of the numerous positive and negative socio-cultural impacts that could occur during the tourist-local resident interaction in protected areas and World Heritage Sites.

**Table 5.2: Socio-cultural impacts of tourism**

Positive impact	Description
<b>Awareness creation</b>	Should appropriate interpretation tools be utilised, it would be possible to raise awareness among tourists and local communities so that they value and protect the site.
<b>Community development</b>	Tourism at World Heritage Sites (WH sites) could benefit local people by incorporating them in the local supply chain. This results in the utilisation of local products and services and capacity building and training of local people.
<b>Poverty alleviation</b>	Through the provision of job opportunities and the employment of local people in or around a WH site, the quality of life of those

	local residents may be improved.
<b>Sustaining local traditions</b>	When travellers make use of local products and services, it motivates local people to continue with their traditional occupations.  The achievement of a critical mass of interest in order to promote and preserve a society's culture.
<b>The preservation of historical sites</b>	In this situation, revenue is earned from tourism, which is utilised to preserve an area's history through the protection and preservation of historical and natural sites.
<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>The creation of unrealistic expectations</b>	Local communities at WH sites are often convinced by site managers and the tourism industry that the WH site will bring increased visitors and positive change, which is not always the case.
<b>Crime</b>	Tourists could be seen as easy targets for criminals due to their associated wealth and decreased security-consciousness while on holiday.  Local society could resent tourists and this could lead to criminal activity.
<b>Health issues</b>	Tourists are known to have introduced diseases to local communities.
<b>Cultural commodification</b>	This refers to the process whereby local cultures are treated as commodities, which could result in the erosion of cultural practices that then become meaningless.

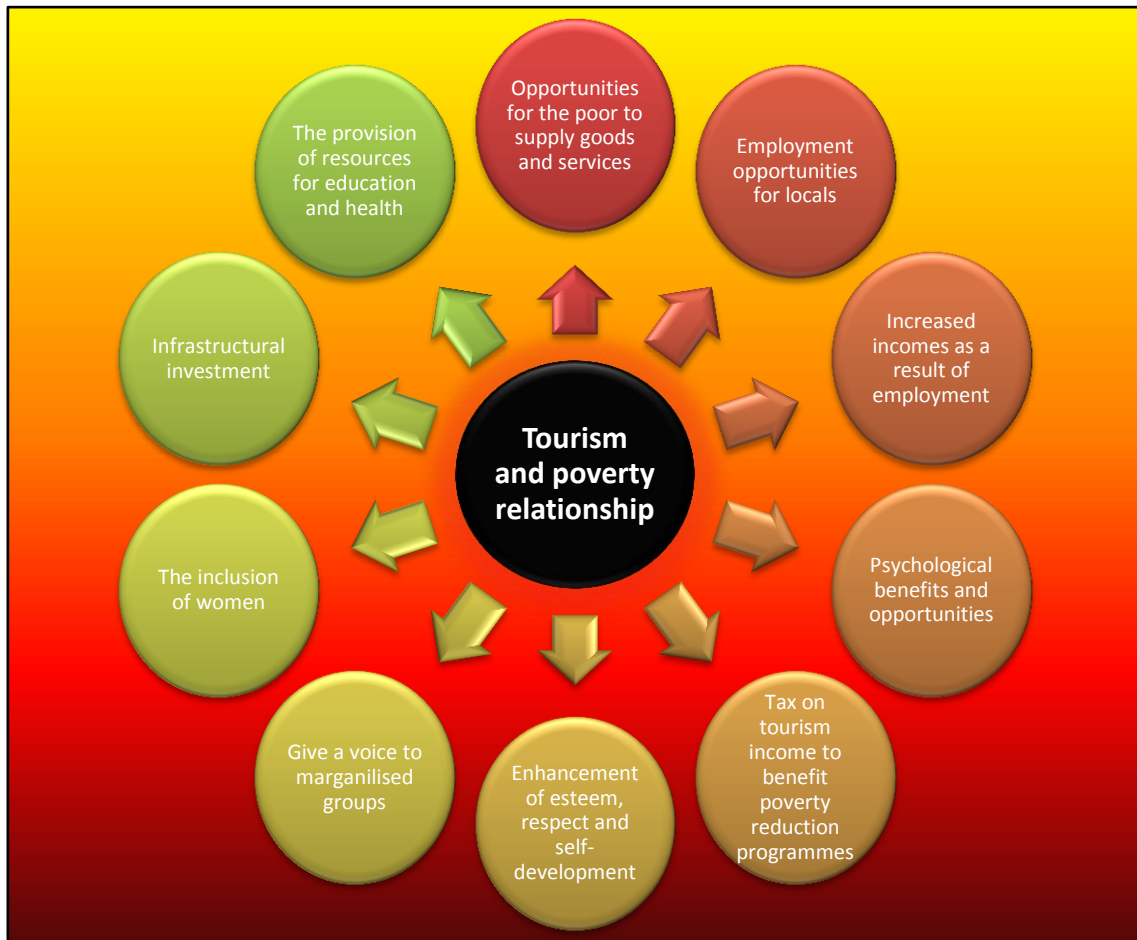
*Adapted from: Borges et al., 2011:8; Pedersen, 2002:34; Keyser, 2004:351; Coetzee, 2004:184; National Geographic Traveller, 2006:44; Cook et al., 2002:315, 318.*

The UNEP, through Agenda 21, has proposed measures to ensure that the benefits of tourism filter down to local people in order to spread the benefits of tourism and opportunities to all. The measures include:

- ✚ To promote employment opportunities throughout the local community.
- ✚ To provide necessary skills and training.
- ✚ To seek to improve the remuneration and conditions of employment of local people.

- ❏ To pursue equal employment opportunities in terms of race, gender, disability, etc.
- ❏ To make tourism and leisure facilities available to local residents (UNEP, 2003:24).

The NDT (2011:28) indicates that cultural and heritage tourism is known to sometimes neglect the interests of local communities whose cultural heritage has been commercialised for the utilisation of tourists. However, this form of tourism has the potential to generate significant decent employment opportunities for local people, which is a necessity to overcome the country's high unemployment rate (NDT, 2002:280. Gartner and Cukier (2010:224) analyse the tourism employment-poverty alleviation argument. In their argument they propose that, although tourism is a major contributor to job creation, it may not necessarily result in reduced poverty. Anand and Sen (1996) argue that sustainable tourism in the context of job creation may focus too much attention on the development of jobs for future generations and in this process present generations may not be prioritised. Therefore job creation should benefit the present and future generations and active measures should be in place to ensure that the benefits of poverty alleviation are obtained through this process. Tourism provides a wide spectrum of benefits that may result in the reduction of poverty in a local area. These benefits could include the provision of improved education, improved employment and the empowerment of women. Figure 5.1 provides a brief outline of these benefits.



**Figure 5.2: The tourism-poverty relationship**

*Source: Holden (2008:139).*

Apart from job creation and the alleviation of poverty, cultural and heritage tourism is known to have other positive and negative impacts. NDT (2011:35) indicates that positive social impacts could be, among others, the maintenance of local traditions, generation of finance to protect cultural resources and the generation of appreciation of heritage among visitors. On the negative side, cultural and heritage tourism may damage heritage when not appropriately managed and unethical tourist behaviour may adversely impact on local culture and heritage.

### **5.5.2 Environmental aspects**

Natural areas and sensitive landscapes are placed under continuously increasing pressures due to increased demands for natural resources. The exploitation and utilisation of land are being contested by a number of stakeholders, including

conservationists who wish to preserve environmental integrity, local people who require land for survival purposes such as housing, and developers of industries such as forestry, mining, agriculture and tourism. These areas possess crucial resources, including biodiversity, geological features, cultural heritage and water systems. These resources are often the strategic aim of developers for exploitation through production, for example, the mining of minerals or for consumption through activities such as tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999:49; Buckley, 2004:5).

Table 5.3 gives an indication of the environmental impacts that could occur during the tourist-local resident interaction in protected areas and World Heritage Sites.

**Table 5.3: Environmental impacts of tourism**

<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Tourism as a custodian of conservation</b>	Wildlife tourists are known to be receptive to conservation messages and they tend to support conservation messages and conservation initiatives.  Tourism assists in the long-term conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitats.  Tourism promotes the economic value of conserving the environment.
<b>The promotion of a good quality environment</b>	The existence and promotion of tourism in an area may result in local authorities promoting a good quality environment that will satisfy tourism demands such as cleanliness, safety and responsible use of resources.
<b>The enhancing of the local destination image</b>	Should tourists be pleased with the local environment, tourism has the ability to promote the destination to potential future tourists.
<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Climate change</b>	Tourism is considered a major driver of climate change and at the same time the industry is a victim of climate change due to restrictions based on carbon emissions and environmental taxes in some areas.
<b>Increased visitor pressure on natural</b>	Many WH sites suffer from the effects of high visitor numbers that are poorly planned and very rapid due to the popularity of these

<b>resources</b>	attractions. Results may be congestion, air, noise and water pollution, vandalism and the introduction of invasive species.
<b>Pollution and waste</b>	These problems are common at WH sites and are predominantly as a result of increased visitor numbers and poor infrastructure development.
<b>Redistribution of resources</b>	An indirect cost of tourism may come to light when resources previously designated for other uses such as agriculture are diverted from these uses and employed in tourism.
<b>Physical pressure on environment</b>	Most common in areas with mass tourism where tourists engage in regressive and less constrained behaviour. Often tourists are not aware that they are making a negative impact such as damage to historical sites through over-use and the advancement of erosion.
<b>Wildlife disturbance</b>	These effects could include disturbance of nesting birds, the frightening of animals, artificially attracting animals through the provision of food, fires and the gathering of plants.

*Adapted from: Himbira, Saarinen, Atlhopeng and Manwa (2010:278), Borges et al. (2011:8), Sebele (2010:146), Ballantyne et al. (2008:663), Pedersen (2002:31), and Holden (2008:98).*

Agriculture could have a negative impact on a protected area such as a WH site if it is not practised in a sustainable manner. Child (2004:22) describes the climatic conditions and natural ecology that make up the largest proportion of land in sub-Saharan Africa. This land often consists of African savannah, which, in the majority of cases, is not well suited to agriculture but has been exploited for agricultural purposes. More recently these lands have become the focus of a growing trend towards tourism through wildlife conservation and the hunting industry (Carruthers, 2009:247).

Today there are numerous areas that cater for wildlife preservation and tourism that exist alongside the agricultural industry. Ecotourism, nature-based tourism and hunting tourism have become more sought-after economic options in rural areas that would otherwise have been allocated to agriculture. Investing in tourism in these rural areas also create an opportunity for generating higher levels of income for local communities compared to other industries such as agriculture (Child, Castley, Knight, Gordon, Daitz, Johnson, Boonzaaier, Collinson, Davies, Grossmann, Holden, Kiss & Fearnhead, 2004:183).

However, in some cases agriculture may be the only sustainable form of economic activity in an area, according to Coetzee (2004:187).

Various researchers have made recommendations for minimising the environmental impact of tourism. Du Plessis, Van der Merwe and Saayman (2012:199), in a study of environmental practices at the Kruger National Park, note that visitors have proposed that the park be more active in the implementation of sustainable waste management practice and that the park should focus more on the use of renewable energy. They add that this study is unique to the Kruger National Park and that the environmental impacts of tourism on other parks should also be investigated. Lenhard, Coetzee and Sime (2010:461) note that the enforcement of environment- friendly practices is propagated mainly by higher management and that lower levels of management are often not aware of these practices. They suggest increased education and training of staff on tactical management levels to promote environment-friendly tourism practices.

Ballantyne *et al.* (2008:658) mention that not much is known about the interests, needs and preferences of tourists visiting protected areas. This relates more specifically to how aware are they of conservation issues, how concerned they are they about the possible environmental impacts of their visit to the area and whether they anticipate and accept the conservation messages they receive.

### 5.5.3 Economic aspects

Table 5.4 summarises the economic impacts that could result from the tourist-local resident interaction in protected areas and World Heritage Sites.

**Table 5.4: Economic impacts of tourism**

Positive impact	Description
<b>Economic diversification</b>	In some areas tourism is able to provide an economy with diversification, which entails an augmentation of the economy through the provision of additional products and services. Tourism may coexist with other industries such as mining and agriculture.
<b>Contribution to gross</b>	Tourism generates income that benefits the economic

<b>domestic product (GDP)</b>	output of a local area, province or country.
<b>Contribution to balance of payments</b>	Tourism is an export industry that generates incoming revenue, which cancels out money that leaves an economy through imports. Thus, the more revenue is generated from tourism, the more positive the balance of payments for an economy.
<b>Improvements in government revenue</b>	Governments generate income through taxes and fees, which is utilised to provide the local community with improved infrastructure and service delivery.
<b>The tourism multiplier</b>	This refers to the process of earning benefits from keeping revenue in a local economy. In this process revenue earned from tourism is maintained in the local economy through the purchasing of local factors of production. The longer the income remains in the local economy, the greater the long-term benefits.
<b>Generation of foreign exchange</b>	The generation of foreign exchange through tourism activities has the potential of being a major boost to local economies.
<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Inflationary impacts</b>	Due to increased demand, tourism causes inflation in the form of rising prices of goods and land. The presence of tourism at a destination increases the demand for accommodation, which results in an increase in the price of properties. Additionally, tourists' demand for food could lead to a rise in food prices.
<b>The effect of leakages</b>	This occurs when money is spent on imports and not reinvested in the local economy. In this process money leaves the local economy and the long-term benefits of maintaining income are depleted.
<b>Uneven distribution of benefits</b>	The income earned from tourism activities may not filter evenly to local people. In this process, the major revenues generated are earned by few people and in some cases the profits are removed from the local economy.
<b>Seasonality</b>	Tourism may not generate sufficient full-time employment

	due to fluctuations in tourism demand. This creates a large proportion of temporary employment.
<b>Overdependence of an economy on tourism</b>	Should a local economy become overly dependent on tourism, it could be vulnerable to unexpected economic crises such as recession, increased travel costs or terrorism.

*Adapted from: Vanhove (2011:223), Logar (2010:130), Keyser (2004:282), Pedersen (2002:34) and Loon and Polakow (2001:904).*

When an area is proclaimed a national park or a World Heritage Site it could result in economic gains, primarily as a result of increased tourism numbers. Weiler and Seidl (2004:360) note that a marked increase in tourism is associated with national park designation, while Buckley (2004:82) notes that an area receiving a World Heritage listing may reap the benefits from increased numbers of international visitors. These increased numbers of international visitors may have a positive impact on the local economy by bringing into the economy much needed foreign currency through expenditure on tourism services (Buckley, 2004:82). These expenditures result in revenue for individuals, local communities and local governments (Dantas é Sá & Mathier, 2011:61). Hall and Piggin (2001:104) found in a study of World Heritage Sites in Australia that two-thirds of sites surveyed reported an increase in visitor numbers as a result of World Heritage listing, with site managers referring to this increase as positive or extremely positive. However, Fredman *et al.* (2007:93) note that although a site may receive increased visitor numbers as a result of designation as a World Heritage Site or a national park, there tends to be a demographic change in these visitor profiles. These sites may attract larger numbers of local visitors who do not generate an increase in positive economic impacts in real terms. On the other hand, there could also be an increase in international visitors, which might lead to more positive economic benefits.

Increased commercial activities go hand in hand with a demand for human resources, as tourism is a labour-intensive industry (George, 2007:206). The success of any organisation is dependent on the quality of its employees and as such this economic resource should be developed (George, 2007:207). Tourism is an essential component in the development of a nation's human capital, since:

- ✚ Tourism is labour-intensive.
- ✚ It provides a variety of employment opportunities, from skilled to unskilled labour.

- ❏ Tourism contributes to the geographic spread of employment.
- ❏ Tourism employs more women and youths than any other industry.
- ❏ Tourism creates opportunities for the development of SMMEs (De Villiers, 2001:12).

The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries globally and its economic impetus in South Africa is continuously increasing with more tourists visiting the country every year. In order to promote the sustainability goals envisioned for the industry by a variety of organisations it is important to note both the potential positive and negative economic impacts of the industry.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a theoretical background of sustainable tourism at World Heritage Sites and national parks. The concept of sustainable development and management has been a subject of research and debate over the past four decades and numerous researchers have endeavoured to apply this theory to the domain of tourism. As a result of this process, the theory of sustainable tourism has evolved so that it is the cornerstone of various international tourism organisations and public organisations today. The application of sustainable tourism principles are widely used in present-day tourism research, including research conducted at national parks and heritage sites. Tourism managers should note the importance of sustainable tourism in their management plans in order to ensure the long-term social, economic and environmental success of their business practices.