Civil Society groups represent under-privileged sectors of society such as indigenous peoples, child rights, environmental protection, human rights, gender violence, health, and many more. Their studies and reports play an active check and balance role on corporations and governments.
Objective

Promote an understanding of the role of civil society groups.

Learning Outcome

How to work with them in advancing the UN SDGs agenda
Supported by the MFA

Press Release: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Government Agencies Working Together Towards SDGs

On 5 September 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand organised the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals (OEWG for SDGs). The OEWG aimed to serve as a platform for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to raise relevant issues and allow government agencies to share, discuss, and exchange ideas. Approximately 70 representatives from the public sector, academia, and the Civil Society attended the meeting.

The meeting was an interactive dialogue between CSOs and the government on working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), and SDG 13 (Climate change). The meeting discussed in depth (1) the role of women and climate change and (2) education for all small-sized schools in local communities. Moreover, the OEWG attendees were informed of the results of the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), attended by the Thai Delegation. The meeting was also informed of the preparations for the SDG Summit, to be held under the auspices of the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations, during 24 – 25 September 2019.

As coordinator for SDG 17 (Means of Implementation and Global Partnership) and Chair of the Working Group on Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Thailand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is determined to work with CSOs
Supported by ASEAN
They do not want just development, but DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE.
Five Foundational Shifts:

• Redistributive Justice
• Economic Justice
• Social and Gender Justice
• Environmental Justice
• Accountability to Peoples
These five shifts provide the foundation of a new development framework that is just and equitable. There are many proposals for community-driven economies that focus on well-being of peoples and planet. They all require a shift from global over-consumption, and to ensure the right to development for women is respected, must include redistribution of existing resources. Elements that can assist in creating the shift to Development Justice could include:

The elimination of tax havens, tax holidays, trade mispricing, profit shifting or other tax avoidance and the creation of a global tax floor. Create additional taxes on harmful practices including finance speculation, arms trade, shipping and extractive industries.

An end to measuring growth and focus instead on wellbeing. Shift from the international poverty line of $1.90 a day to the international ethical poverty line, which quantifies the scale of socioeconomic change needed to eliminate absolute poverty and addresses the scale of over-consumption in the developed world.

Establishment of new, democratic, global and national accountability mechanisms for governments. Support a binding treaty to regulate transnational corporations. Allow localised, democratic civic decision making around the use of resources.

Provide universal public services for education, health care - including sexual and reproductive health care, water and sanitation, and sustainable energy.

A reduction in military spending with funds redistributed to public services and goods.

The provision of a universal social wage and social protection which would provide all humanity with a dignified standard of living regardless of their employment, citizenship or other status.

The implementation of all obligations detailed in the Beijing Platform for Action and the sustained presence of strong, autonomous feminist movements.

Investment in Decent Work in sustainable, low carbon industries like care and community work, community services, life-long education. Establish a living wage for all, including the informal sector, which would reduce the gender pay gap.

Respect union and collective organising rights, and increase the number of workers protected by trade unions.

The redistribution of paid and unpaid care work. A commitment to Decent Work for all could allow working hours to be reduced. Care work should be supported by the state and be shared amongst community members. This would reduce the dependence on women’s unpaid and undervalued labour.

An end to land grabbing and redistribution of land captured through concessions made without community consent and Free Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples. Support local land sustainability and agroecology - food production that builds on local ecological systems to enable Food Sovereignty and retain bio-diversity while sustaining community and environmental wellbeing.

Introduce Energy and Resource Democracy allowing local people, particularly women, to make decisions over the use of local resources and the best way to fulfil their needs.

Eliminate the use of fossil fuels in developed countries, and phase out in other countries depending on the developmental needs. Invest in renewable energies, supporting local production and management. Support communities to manage, preserve and restore forests, as well as eliminate the use of harmful chemicals.

The elimination of Intellectual Property Rights that prevent lifesaving medicines, renewable technologies and technological advances from being shared and expanded. Instead support open source technologies and knowledge sharing designed for social good.

The abolition of Free Trade Agreements and the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) arbitration system that give corporations the power to override national laws and policies. Instead focus on Solidarity Agreements that commit states to acting together in the shared interests of their constituents.

Join us in making Development Justice a reality - a future that the vast majority of peoples want, a course of global equity, of ecological sustainability, of social justice, human rights enjoyment and dignity for all.

For more information about the Development Justice model go to http://www.apwld.org/bangkok-civil-society-declaration-from-inclusive-to-just-development/

This UN meeting on “tackling tourism development issues” was held in October 1991. So why is it still an issue?
This paper was presented at German travel agents conference in 1990. Why is it still being discussed?
This paper was presented by Dr Kriengsak Charoenwongsak, Executive Director of Institute of Future Studies for Development, at a Thammasat University conference in July 1996.

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC-DRIVEN TOURISM ON THAI SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A. H: Maslow’s theory of the Hierarchy of Needs indicates that apart from basic needs such as food, housing, clothing and medicine, human beings also have emotional needs. Maslow alleges that human beings have insatiable needs because of the motivation to seek gratification by innovating in response to internal needs, comprising partially of curiosity, entertainment, comfort, recreation. Such inherent needs have motivated millions of people to travel to new territories to satisfy their desires.¹

As people temporarily move from their original habitat to new locations to fulfill the above objectives, the travellers are called tourists. These tourists come with money for expenditure, the intention to relax from their routine work, the desire to learn and experience new things which cannot be found in their countries. Furthermore, they come with national cultures and practices which differ from recipient countries. On the other side, recipient countries need to welcome tourists as if they were honored guests of the country. As hosts of the country they need to make their guests comfortable by recommending tourist places, accommodation, travel modes, food, and shopping facilities.

An important factor in promoting tourism is “bread and butter” factor. “Economic” is considered the most important factor in vigorously enhancing the recipient country to welcome tourists and meet their needs in exchange for money. The increased income results in a higher standard of living. Thailand has welcomed tourists with the major factor being economic. The gates for tourism in Thailand have opened and brought in large amounts of income for the country. Statistics show that Thailand’s top foreign exchange earnings come from tourism even while comparing it to the leading export of the country. According to the Bank of Thailand’s BE 2535’ statistics (the first year in the execution of the 7th National and Economic Development Plan), Thailand’s income from tourism amounted to 108,000 million baht and in the year BE 2537 the income from tourism rose to 145,211 million baht while income from exports of textile which was the highest source of external trade income totalled 132,772 million baht only.²

Tourism has expanded significantly due to the economic factor which further directly and indirectly influenced social and cultural change. People are different; therefore, each language and culture inherently manifest their own distinctions. Whenever two cultures meet, cultural confrontation occurs in both values and practices. Consequently when travellers meet local people, cultural fusion occurs between the visiting culture and the local culture, creating a new behavior pattern for people in Thailand with both desirable and undesirable consequences.
PATA held its first Sustainable Tourism Conference and Mart in 2002. How much progress has been made since?
Prostitution, paedophilia and sex tourism is widespread. Why is it never discussed at industry events?
Tourism watchdog groups have long been warning of its social consequences. Why are they never included on conference agendas?
The following slides show just some of the watchdog activities undertaken by Tourism Concern, a U.K.-based NGO.
SHOULD YOU GO ON A CRUISE?

More and more people are going on a cruise - whether on small ships around Scotland or the gigantic new cruise ships that dominate the Caribbean seas. But is this form of tourism ethical and sustainable? Is it acceptable ethically to take a cruise?

CONTINUE READING
SHOULD YOU VISIT AN ORPHANAGE?

Visiting an orphanage has become part of the itinerary for many travellers, especially in places such as Cambodia, where some orphanages even promote themselves as "tourist attractions". Luke Gracie, Alternative Care Manager from Friends

CONTINUE READING
SHOULD YOU RIDE AN ELEPHANT?

An elephant ride is a popular tourist activity, especially in Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal and other parts of Asia. It is also becoming popular in some regions of Africa. The appeal of such treks is clear - the elephant is the largest land mammal, it's intelligent, and

Also now on Travindy
YOUR HOLIDAYS, THEIR HOMES

Knowing that local people are happy to have you stay is the secret of an enjoyable holiday.

Your holiday destination is a place where people live, people who may have different values and sensibilities to your own. Opening your mind to new cultures and traditions is

CONTINUE READING

Also now on Travindy
Demand that London hotels treat their staff fairly and pay a living wage

It is a national scandal that London, in terms of hotel workers, is now one of the most “unethical” tourist destinations in the world. In comparison in New York, which has many similarities to London, the hotel workers have safe, secure and very

Also now on Travindy
On September 26, 2018, Tourism Concern announced its shutdown due to lack of funding. Some soul-searching is in order: The Travel & Tourism industry spends billions of dollars on marketing and advertising but does not support groups playing a useful check-and-balance role.

Many other civil society groups are active worldwide in advancing the cause of sustainability.

They deserve to be treated as partners rather than critics and adversaries.
Civil Society groups are good at using the media to expose harmful environmental practises, such as coal-fired power plants. This was a protest press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand.
Events such as this go a long way towards enhancing the sense of urgency and shaking off public apathy and complacency.
Trade Unions are also active on behalf of working people at the grassroots level.
The following slides feature quotes from a speech by Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to climb Mount Everest, at a November 1983 PATA conference in Nepal. Worth reflecting on the words of warning, the time-lapse since then and whether they have been heeded.
It is a great pleasure to be present at this PATA Conference in Kathmandu. My home country is New Zealand, in the centre of the South Pacific, but there is much in common between New Zealand and Nepal. The countries are similar in size; they both have relatively small populations; they are largely hilly in nature with many rivers and lakes; and they both have fine mountain ranges- perhaps the New Zealand mountains cannot compare with the great giants of the Himalayas but they are superb peaks for all of that. One major difference is that New Zealand is surrounded by the ocean whereas Nepal is encompassed by the great land mass of Asia.
But the problems are certainly enormous. Regional and commercial interests exert tremendous pressure to mold Government views - often with little interest in the long term view and the welfare of our future generations. Our only hope for the future must lie in a strong and well-informed public opinion and in those devoted people who work so energetically to protect our world from unnecessary exploitation and pollution. In the long run it is all up to us!

Those involved in tourism and travel have a greater responsibility than most in the protection of the beauties of our world. Your impact is so tremendous - you bring people and finance; you can create or destroy an environment ..... and even a people; you can enhance or despoil any environment. In your world short term profit is simply not good enough - you must look far into the future for the general betterment of mankind.
Environmental problems are really social problems anyway. They begin with people as the cause, and end with people as victims. They are usually born of ignorance or apathy. It is people who create a bad environment - add a bad environment brings out the worst in people. Man and nature need each other and by hurting one we wound the other. There is so much that needs to be done to halt the destruction of our world environment - so many prejudices to be overcome and self-interest to be enlightened. How can it possibly be changed in the time available?
Development is a popular word today but careless and unwise development can be far worse than no development at all. Great care is needed to ensure that any development is in the long term interests of the local people and their environment. So I have become a keen, and I hope, a practical environmentalist.
THINK!