

“PROPOSAL OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ALGERIAN SAHARA”

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Abstract:

This article attempts to propose strategic orientations for the development of sustainable tourism in Algeria's Saharan region. The chosen methodology is based on an analytical descriptive approach aimed, on the one hand, at examining and clarifying the key concepts associated with this specific field, and on the other hand, at consolidating existing knowledge on the growing role of sustainable tourism in Algeria. Our findings underline the strategic importance of the Algerian Sahara as a key tourist destination, offering exceptional potential for Algeria's economic development and diversification. However, our analysis also highlights the urgent need to turn this potential into a sustainable reality.

Keywords: Tourism, sustainable tourism, Algeria, Sahara development.

JEL Classification Codes: Z32, O1, O2.

1- Introduction:

Tourism has become one of the most important and fastest growing industries over the past decades. According to the latest statistics from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the total contribution of the tourism industry to GDP amounted to 9 258,3 billion dollars in 2019 (10.6% of GDP), this contribution is expected to increase by 4% per year and reach 12,450.1 billion dollars in 2028 (11.7% of GDP). It has also become one of the most dynamic sectors in terms of job creation in the world, bringing the total number of jobs supported by the sector to more than 328 million jobs in 2019. It is also worth noting that the total contribution of the tourism industry to employment is expected to be around 413, 556 million jobs in 2028 (or 11.6% of total employment). Therefore, it is clear that the tourism sector represents a key driver for overall growth, diversification and job creation.

However, the development of the tourism sector involves a variety of actors, ranging from governments-which influence its development through policy intervention, infrastructure development, and regulation-to key private sector players. These include the many small and large local and foreign companies that provide supplies and services such as hotels, restaurants, transportation, local guides, and various leisure and entertainment services (according to Walker, 2004 as cited in Alhroot, 2007, p. 12). This diversity presents a dilemma. On the one hand, tourism creates linkages between different economic sectors and, therefore, is more likely to contribute to economic diversification. On the other hand, the diversity of different actors and activities adds to the challenge of creating a more sustainable sector, as these different actors and activities may have negative environmental and social-cultural impacts.

Algeria with its surface of 2 381 741 Km² has enormous touristic potential; it has all the assets that would make it an essential touristic destination. The Sahara alone represents 84% of its territory, it is endowed with magnificent contrasting landscapes like the Mزاب, the Hoggar, the Tassili n'Ajjer, etc. Recognized for its architectural style and its natural and cultural wealth, the Algerian Sahara has several regions listed as World Heritage by UNESCO. Nevertheless, and despite all these assets, Algeria in general and the Algerian Sahara in particular attract only a small fraction of tourists worldwide, which represents a

real loss of earnings, knowing the difficult times that the Algerian economy is facing. It has therefore become essential to exploit these cultural and natural riches while respecting the principles of sustainable tourism to ensure sustainable development and succeed where many other countries have failed by neglecting their natural, cultural and social heritage. From this introduction a question arises: **What strategic directions to advocate in order to promote sustainable tourism in the Algerian Sahara?**

With the aim of discussing the various points mentioned above, and in order to answer this question, the article has been divided along the following main lines:

1. Contribution of the tourism industry to the global economy;
2. Negative impacts of the tourism industry;
3. Transition to sustainable tourism;
4. Introduction to tourism in Algeria and strategic orientations for the development of sustainable tourism in the Sahara.

2- A glance at tourism:

Tourism is central in terms of economic, social, environmental, material and natural, human, financial, technological, and informational issues (Deery et al., 2012). The tourism sector has experienced a process of clarification for this last decade conceptually. The sector is going through consolidation of investigation and action tools. Previous appreciations of tourism have presented the significant impact of tourism on economy, society, quality of life and well-being at local, micro-regional or regional levels. It becomes for certain tourist regions one of the engines of the progress of the society (UNCTAD Secretariat, 2010).

The evolution of tourism has manifested quite slowly. Since the sixties and seventies, we have been able to observe an acceleration of tourism in the world (as shown in Table 1).

**Table N°1: The dynamics of the world tourist flow during the years 1950
– 2020**

Year	Millions of tourists
1950	25
1960	70
1970	160
1980	290
1990	440
1995	567
2000	674
2010	931
2019	1500
2020 (projection)	1560
2020 (reality, a decrease due to Covid 19)	398
2021	415

Source: UNWTO, World Tourism Barometer

2-1. Contribution of the Tourism Industry to the World Economy

Various research studies have highlighted the positive impact of international tourism on long-term economic growth, constituting a major source of foreign exchange, and playing an important role in stimulating investment in new infrastructure and competition between countries and businesses locally and internationally (Schubert, Brida, and Risso, 2011).

In what follows, we will review some of the conclusions drawn from previous studies conducted in the field of tourism in order to better understand this sector.

- According to the study by (Li and al., 2016, p. 2), "compared to industries, manufacturing and energy, tourism is an experience-based industry and has distinctive industry operating characteristics" ;
- The study by Jaziri and Boussaffa (2010) argues that tourism is now a means of protecting and enhancing natural sites with tourism potential, promoting culture and local heritage and reducing poverty;
- In the first part of Tetzschner and Herlau's (2003) study, the tourism industry has been recognized in the past as an important means of

providing strategic support for the sustainable development of local businesses. In the second one, the link between entrepreneurship, innovation, and tourism has a significant effect on the economy, following their respective direct effects on the economy. The important results obtained show the need to create social entrepreneurship in society to promote the development of local businesses ;

- According to the study of Rogerson (2001), there would be different governments that consider tourism as one of the important strategies for the growth of the state;
- For Zhang and Gao (2016), tourism has a positive effect on economic growth, it affects other sectors through spillover effects. "The tourism industry can stimulate economic growth by generating positive externalities in non-tourism sectors such as the manufacturing industry, the transportation industry, and the service industry services" (Zhang and Gao 2016, p. 226);
- Furthermore, Lee and Chang (2008) demonstrated that tourism development not only stimulates the growth of the sector, but also stimulates the growth of the entire economy (through these direct, indirect, and induced effects on other sectors such as the accommodation and restaurant industry, the retail industry, the transportation industry, the entertainment industry, the agriculture sector, and the construction sector) (see in Lee and Brahmasrene, 2013).
- For Ashley (2009), tourism is one of the most important economic growth sectors in Africa due to its geographical location.

However, according to Roberto and Tiffany (2015), Algeria ranks 138 in the area of tourism services infrastructure.

2-2. World tourism industry statistics

It is often said that the tourism industry is one of the most important sectors in many national economies, and probably accounts for the largest portion of the services sector (Rayman-Bacchus and Molina, 2001). In this regard, it is noted that according to the WDI (the years 2020 and 2021 are not taken into consideration in this paper due to the covid 19 pandemic):

- In 2019, the number of global tourist arrivals was 1,5 billion. Between 1999 and 2018, the number of global arrivals increased significantly from 638 million in 1999, to 978 million in 2010 to 1,441 million in 2018, increasing at an annual growth rate that peaked at 10.51% in 2004, and then fell back to 5.78% in 2018 to reach 4% in 2019 ;

- In 2019, the world's tourism receipts amounted to \$ 1,863 billion (US). The world's tourism receipts increased from US\$550,477 million in 1999, to US\$1.099 billion to US\$1.650 billion in 2018, with an average annual growth rate of 6.15% ;

- In 2019, the contribution of travel and tourism to global GDP was US\$9,258.3 billion. The contribution of travel and tourism to global GDP increased from US\$3,701.3 billion in 2000, to US\$6,108.6 billion in 2010 to US\$9,258.3 billion in 2019, with a CAGR of 5.08% ;

- In 2019, the contribution of travel and tourism to global employment was 328 M people. The contribution of travel and tourism to global employment increased from 257 M people in 2000, to 264 M in 2010 to 328 M people in 2019, with a CAGR of 1.31%.

The economic impetus of tourism can be studied from a number of different angles, including:

- a. Its direct effects such as "sales, employment, tax revenue, and income level", which arise from the immediate effects of tourist spending (Li and al., 2018) ;
- b. Its indirect effects such as "prices, quantity and quality of products and services, taxes and property, and social and environmental impacts" (Li and al., 2018);
- c. Its efficiency and productivity due to the economic resources allocated to reduce promotion costs in tourism sectors (Li and al., 2018).

As a result, the literature has considered tourism as an important cause of variation in economic growth in many countries.

2-3. Tourism's nuisances

According to Tolba, (1992, p. 171), "Tourism, like other development sectors, can have both positive and negative impacts on

tourist destinations. These impacts can be economic, environmental or social-cultural". Tourism has in some cases come to upset the fragile balance of nature. Public opinion is increasingly aware of the impact of tourism on the environment. This sensitivity to environmental problems is the result of unpleasant aspects that affect the host country in many ways: environmental, cultural and social.

2-3-1. Environmental nuisances

It is certain that tourism, whatever its form, profoundly changes the future of a population, more than any other economic activity. The development of international tourism, especially when it takes place between the North and the South, is undoubtedly a major factor of societal change since it impacts the host populations (UNWTO, 2013). In fact, unlike production and international trade of goods or services, tourism relies on the "transfer" of the consumer. It therefore involves direct contact between (Liu, 2000):

- Tourists and workers in many activities of tourism;
- Tourists and inhabitants (known as the "passive actors" of tourism) even if these contacts are often only visual;
- Tourists and production areas.

It is within this framework that the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) came up in 2002 with the question of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism and made a synthetic inventory which lists four main areas of impacts, namely: cultural shocks, erosion of indigenous values, ethical and social stress.

The impacts of tourism on the environment are numerous, significant and complex. Tourism development has indeed already degraded many ecosystems, particularly in the coastal and mountain regions known for their vulnerability.

a. Impacts on biodiversity:

Biodiversity is essential for well-being and for economic development. Globally, biodiversity is unfortunately degraded at a higher rate. The loss of biodiversity and the deterioration of ecosystems are caused mainly by land conversions, pollution, and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources with effects of climate change. It should also be emphasized that the environments that are the richest in biodiversity are also the most attractive environments for tourism and the

most sensitive to its impacts. Tourism development is often too rapid and too poorly planned, leading to sudden changes in landscape over short periods of time, particularly from the point of view of deforestation and the drying up of wetlands. Such disturbances (Brüggemann and al., 2002) lead to an irreversible loss of biodiversity, in contradiction with the provisions of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

b. Water and energy resources alteration

Tourism increases water supply problems by concentrating demand over short periods, especially in dry, sunny regions, preferred by tourists where these resources are already scarce. This puts pressure on conventional water resources and leads to situations of overexploitation. In addition, the infrastructure needed to meet this seasonal demand (tanks, transfer systems) is oversized the rest of the year. Tourism is also a big consumer of energy products involving very high expenses, which can increase the energy bill of the country, thereby penalizing the possibilities of development of other economic sectors (UNWTO, 2013).

c. The pollution generated

Pollution due to tourism can have variable origins. The different means of transport¹ (air, sea, road and rail) play a key role. In the Mediterranean Sea for example, it is estimated that tourism is responsible for 7% of total pollution. At the same time, the increase in pollution in these regions also has negative effects on the tourism sector (Lee and Brahmasrene, 2013, p. 71). On the other hand, Scott and al (2010) argued that the tourism sector could become a leading global source of greenhouse gas emissions in the future. In addition, every tourist consumes between 300 and 850 liters of water per day (WWF). This represents a particularly serious pressure on the environment, which can threaten human health and wildlife. Many tourist infrastructures are isolated and rarely connected to treatment networks, leading to massive discharges of wastewater into the sea and rivers. In all cases, if the water is not treated or recycled, it will necessarily cause pollution (Theobald, 2012).

2-3-2. Cultural nuisances

¹ According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 5% of Global carbon is due to air travel

The changes brought by tourism often affect local cultural values, in particular aspects of rituals, traditional ethnic rites. The result is described as “*reconstructed ethnicity*”, characterized by changes in values, with for example, loss of respect for sites and cultural objects. In addition, standardization affects equipment, landscapes, accommodation, food and drink and corresponds to the desire of tourists to find recognizable elements in an unfamiliar environment, such as fast food restaurants and renowned hotels. Losses of authenticity often manifest themselves by imposed cultural expressions according to the taste of tourists. The explanation lies in the fact that, tourists are satisfied with a glimpse of the local atmosphere and way of life by just only taking a short look at it (Theobald, 2012).

2-3-3. Social nuisances

Tourism is a powerful agent of social transformation. It constitutes one of the main opportunities for gathering cultures. Unfortunately, these meetings are accompanied by phenomena of acculturation, modernization, transfer of practices.

3- Sustainable tourism

3-1. Definition of sustainable tourism

According to the definition by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and adopted by the UN, sustainable tourism is: “*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, by meeting the needs of visitors, professionals, the environment and host communities*”.

The objective of sustainable tourism development was defined by Agenda 21 (Action plan for the 21st century) in 1992: “to make compatible the improvement of the environmental and social conditions resulting from tourism development with the maintenance of capacities for development for future generations”.

The principles of sustainable tourism were defined in 1995 by Committee 21 and updated in 2004 by the Committee for Sustainable Development of Tourism of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): they are applicable to any form and for any niche tourism up to mass tourism, in all types of destinations. According to these principles, sustainable tourism must:

- Make the best use of environmental resources, which are a key element in tourism development, while preserving essential ecological processes and helping to save natural resources and biodiversity;
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, preserve their built and living cultural assets and their traditional values and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance;
- Ensuring viable long-term economic activity that provides equitably distributed socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, including stable employment, opportunities for benefits and social services for the host communities, and thereby contributing to the reduction of poverty.

3-2. Major dates and sustainable development

1972 - "Limits to Growth": MIT² report to the Club of Rome. It is the first study asking the question of sustainability for our economic system.

1987- Brundtland Report: Definition of the concept, bases and conditions for implementing sustainable development.

1992- Earth Summit in Rio: Introduced the concept of “environmental diplomacy”, with important results: Agenda 21, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, creation of the Commission for Sustainable Development.

2002 - World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg : Meeting of a hundred heads of state, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), leading to the adoption of an action plan on poverty and impoverishment, consumption, natural resources and their management, globalization, respect for human rights ...

2005 - Kyoto Protocol: Discussed in 1977, this international treaty aimed at reducing greenhouse gases was ratified in 2005.

2017- International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, proclaimed by the UN.

² MIT- Massachusetts Institute of Technology

2022- The IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme on “Sustainable Tourism through Festivals and Events” held virtually on may.

2022- World tourism day 2022 “Rethinking tourism” which going to be held on 27th September. Object: putting people and planet first and bringing everyone from governments and businesses to local communities together around a shared vision for a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient sector.

4- Tourism in Algeria and strategic orientations for a sustainable tourism development in the Sahara

Algeria is one of the few countries to have many characteristics to be a successful touristic destination: a very pleasant Mediterranean climate; attractive beaches and coasts; diverse desert landscapes; a welcoming population; impressive archaeological sites; and an image of an exotic and mysterious country. However, many obstacles have been noted (Boukhobza 2021; Belkaid, 2010) such as:

- Poor quality of tourist services provided at reception and catering facilities, as well as transport;
- Lack of mastery of new market techniques by travel agencies;
- Difficulties in obtaining banking facilities and bureaucracy, leading investors to refrain from investing;
- Lack of the use of information and communication technologies;
- Lack of security and stability;
- Lack of reception facilities and qualified staff;
- Lack of coordination between the various agencies throughout the country, which will encourage tourists to turn to foreign agencies offering the best quality of service. quality services.

According to official statistics (WDI), the Algerian travel and tourism sector records in 2019:

- A contribution of US\$11.9 billion to GDP, with an average annual growth rate of 8.11%;
- A contribution of 3% to employment growth;
- 2.86 million arrivals at the national borders, with an average annual growth rate of 7.56%.

Today, the travel and tourism sector continues to develop in Algeria despite the country's huge oil and gas industry. However, the government is now looking to develop this important sector, with a particular focus on Saharan and cultural tourism. Since 2005, Algiers has reformed its legislation to facilitate foreign and local investment in the tourism sector. Initial results have been achieved with the creation of 5-star hotels and 16 international airlines serving more than 28 airports in Algeria (TourismeAlgeria.com).

4-1. Algerian Saharan tourism

Algeria has an exceptional touristic potential, both by size, diversity of landscapes, the degree of preservation and the cultural and historical heritage present. The Algerian Sahara is one of the most important touristic destinations in Algeria, the Great South is a flagship destination at the international level. Hiking is not the only way to discover the Sahara, in fact, there are many ways to discover it, including camel trekking or 4x4 vehicles, or formulas combining hiking, camel trekking, and 4x4.

The Algerian desert is located in the north of central Africa and is part of the Sahara desert. The desert occupies more than four fifths of the Algerian territory. Its expansion starts from the Saharan Atlas, more or less as a stone desert and the more you go inland, the more it becomes a desert of sand dunes. It is considered among the best on the planet. Among the places unavoidable in the Sahara, we quote:

- **Tamanrasset:** is the chief town of the wilaya of Tamanrasset, located at an altitude of 1,400 meters in the Hoggar mountain range. This city is notably known to have been the place of residence of the desert pilgrim, Charles de Foucault (Routard.com);
- **Timimoun:** located in the middle of the Goumrara region, which is part of the Grand Erg Occidental. It is one of the most uninhabitable parts of the Sahara because of the incredibly high sand dunes that move constantly, day after day, across the hot sandy plains of the desert. However, despite the region's formidable reputation, Timimoun manages not only to survive, but to do so in style (Algeria.com);

- **Djanet:** main city of the southeast of Algeria in the wilaya of Illizi. Capital of the Tassili, Djanet is also an oasis populated mainly by Tuareg ajjers (Routard.com);
- **Ouargla:** Located in the southeast of Algeria, Ouargla is considered as one of the oldest and largest wilayas of the country. It was the former wilaya of the oases which included the current wilayas of El-oued, Ghardaïa, Biskra, Tamanrasset, Illizi and Laghouat. Since antiquity. The region of Ouargla still preserves historical sites and vestiges, and it produces the largest quantity of oil in Algeria (saravoyages);
- **Béchar:** the wilaya of Béchar is the most visited region of the Algerian Sahara with a multitude of tourist sites. Taghit, a locality with essentially tourist vocation, it is called 'The enchantress'. A qualifier that fits it like a glove as this touristic destination is fascinating by its old ksar, its huge dunes, its houses in red 'toub', its green palm grove, its thousand-year-old rock engravings, its traditional guest houses and the legendary hospitality of its inhabitants (VVA.com).

The government has therefore begun to realize the importance of tourism in the Sahara as a vector for economic development, and has begun to invest in the construction of hotels in the southern region, particularly in Tamanrasset, Adrar and Illizi. Its development plan also included several incentives designed to develop a multitude of economic activities and encourage investment in the wilayas of Adrar, Illizi, Tamanrasset and Tindouf (Hosni, 2000).

Two essential priorities are needed: to develop and improve the infrastructure and tourism products, and to improve the image of the country through marketing actions at the international level. However, it should be remembered that poorly planned tourism can have strong negative long-term environmental and social-cultural impacts, but the development of thoughtful policies can minimize and sometimes even eliminate negative impacts. Tourism can be a very positive way to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental life of the country.

Algeria will therefore have to find a balance, on the one hand, between the exploitation and sustainable management of its natural and cultural

resources and, on the other hand, between the need of tour operators to generate profit and the protection of the Saharan environment against all forms of irreparable damage. Algeria has in this sense a real advantage, since it can rely on the experiences of other destinations as the experience of Tunisia which revealed the drifts of mass tourism, and draw lessons in order not to reproduce the same mistakes.

4-2. Challenges and strategic orientations for the development of sustainable tourism in the Algerian Sahara

Several researchers (Froger, 2010; Hosni, 2000; Theobald, 2012) have proposed strategic orientations that can serve as a basis for tourism policy in the Sahara. Based on that and on our specific context, these strategies could be adapted to the Algerian context as follows:

- 4-2-1. Promote at the national level, a tourism policy respectful of sustainable development, particularly in the use of natural and cultural resource
- The local populations must be truly attached to their natural and cultural resources and thus have the will to develop them. To do this, the Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts will have to encourage the participation of local populations in the development of tourism. It will have to promote all the forms of the Algerian craft industry which is characterized by an incontestable richness and an astonishing variety as well in the forms, as in the techniques and the decorations such as: the Tuareg jewel; the carpets of Ghardaïa, Biskra, El Oued, Mzab; the copperware in Ghardaïa and Tindouf; the basketworks of the Touat West Saharan and Hoggar; the embroidery in Mzab and Hoggar...etc;
- Create new innovative products designed to meet the needs of different tourism concepts: such as adventure tourism, eco-tourism and discovery trips;
- Ensure that hotels and touristic infrastructures are designed to blend in with the local environment and respect the design rules and traditional architectural styles of the Algerian South and draw inspiration from these styles such as the Ksourian architecture which represents an undeniably rich heritage, and which can be found, for example, in Bechar, the Mzab valley, and in the South-East of Algeria. The local materials, climate and water resources must be

studied and taken into account when designing the various tourist and hotel infrastructures.

- It is also appropriate to control access to vulnerable historical sites, and devote time to the maintenance of these places such as the M'Zab Valley in Ghardaïa, and the Tassili n'Ajjer in Illizi endowed with more than 15,000 historical drawings and engravings, both of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

4-2-2. Preserve the cultural and natural heritage for future generations

The present generations have a duty to leave to future generations a Sahara that is not irreparably damaged by human activity. They must therefore consider the potential consequences of the various tourism-related projects undertaken, and ensure that tourism and economic development remain sustainable and equitable through the prudent and appropriate use of available resources.

4-2-3. The role of stakeholders

- The survival of the tourism activity depends on the coordination between the different stakeholders. This is more challenging and important to achieve the sustainability of the tourism industry. Its development must be guided by more dialogue, cooperation and partnership between the private and public sectors. According to Selin (1999) Collaborations between different stakeholders allow for successful planning, tourism management, marketing, product development, training and education in this sector. The process of collaboration and partnership is the key element in planning and managing tourism products, partnerships are at the heart of sustainable tourism development (see in Hadach and Tebbaa, 2015).
- It is also important to ensure that tourism development is a partnership between local and regional communities, as well as the private and public sectors and local populations. The existence of alliances and partnerships is a necessary condition for the success of sustainable tourism experiences.

4-2-4. Educate, train and inform the public and private managers and ensure that local populations are aware of principles of sustainable tourism

- Professional training and informative seminars should be organized for all local tourism actors who may meet or be in contact with tourists (local officials, guides, drivers, camel owners for tourism, hotel and restaurant staff, craftsmen, maintenance staff of tourist sites and museums, etc.);
- The establishment in the southern regions universities and private schools specializing in tourism and hospitality, incorporating the principles of sustainable tourism. This would allow to train local young people to the professions of tourism and to integrate them thereafter in the tourist development of their regions;

4-2-5. Encourage the development of alternative forms of tourism
Here are several categories of alternative tourism:

- *Outdoor tourism* for those who want to get closer to nature and the elements;
- *Ecotourism* for those who want to understand in depth the different ecosystems through visits to national parks and nature reserves, such as the Ahaggar National Park located in the Hoggar Massif or the Tassili n'Ajjer National Park located in the Tassili n'Ajjer Massif in Djanet in the wilaya of Illizi;
- *Extreme tourism* for those who want to test their physical limits: for example climbing the peaks of the Hoggar;
- *Solidarity tourism* which is based on the respect of the person, the cultures and the nature with the objective to benefit directly to the pay of the South and the local populations.

4-2-6. Respect the local customs of the residents and the tourist sites of the Sahara

- Tourism can foster closer ties between people and provide insight into other cultures. However, locals living in or around the sites visited by foreign tourists may be offended by their very casual styles of dress. Tourists should therefore respect the traditions of the local people and the religious sites they visit such as mosques and zaouias;
- Tourism actors (tour operators in sending countries, travel agencies in receiving regions, guides and local representatives) must inform tourists of the traditions of the regions visited in the Algerian Sahara, and make them aware of the need to respect the environment, the

cleanliness of touristic sites and the cultural and natural heritage of the Saharan sites visited.

4-2-7. Role of the Algerian government

- The state must develop standards and regulations for environmental and cultural impact assessment, monitoring and auditing of various tourism development projects. These different regulations and fiscal policies should promote alternative forms of tourism;
- Develop appropriate techniques and tools to analyze the impact of tourism development projects on heritage sites and ancient monuments;
- The State could delegate rights over high-value natural assets to local communities. Thus, it retrocedes to the communities land rights on attractive areas in terms of tourism;
- Promote visa facilitation while investing in domestic tourism;
- Improve the scope, sustainability and quality of physical transport by imposing strict regulations on transport in core areas, and promote traditional means of transport specific to the Algerian Sahara such as camel transportation.

In short, the strategic orientations proposed to promote the sustainability of tourism in Algeria are crucial to ensure the harmonious and lasting development of this key industry. By focusing on preserving the fragile ecosystems of the Sahara, promoting tourism that respects local cultures and establishing incentives to encourage sustainable practices, we can create an environment conducive to economic growth while preserving our natural and cultural heritage. These conclusions are in agreement with many other studies which also highlight the importance of sustainable tourism for Algeria (Behnassi, 2008; Belkaid, 2010; Dahmoun, 2021). It is imperative that these guidelines are implemented in a coordinated manner and with continued stakeholder engagement, to ensure that tourism in Algeria contributes positively to the well-being of local communities and the protection of our environment for future generations.

5- Conclusion :

With more than 1.5 billion international tourists today and a forecast of 1.8 billion by 2030 (Hall, 2019), tourism is a sector of hope with its

multiple socio-economic benefits and broad influence on a wide range of sectors.

We have tried to highlight through this article the importance of tourism as an engine and a catalyst for development and economic diversification. Thanks to the analysis of different reports and studies, it has been found that tourism is one of the most dynamic sectors in terms of job creation and contribution to GDP. Many countries and regions, both developed and in development, have adopted tourism as an integral part of their economic development policy, in order to boost their growth and diversify their economies.

However, tourism must be sustainable to be economically sustainable. A quality environment is the basic foundation for sustainable tourism development. The needs of tourism must not be met in a way that is detrimental to the social and economic interests of the people living in the tourist areas, to the environment or especially to the natural resources and the historical and cultural sites, which are the fundamental attractions of tourism. Long-term and environmentally friendly planning is therefore a prerequisite for maintaining a balance between tourism and the environment.

Moreover, the objective of this article has been to study the tourism sector in Algeria with a focus on the south of the country, because the Sahara represents in this context one of the main assets of the country, thanks to its unique landscapes and its natural, cultural and social heritage. It would be absurd not to take advantage of these assets to create value and make the Algerian Sahara one of the most attractive tourist destinations. To this end, we have suggested a multitude of strategic actions to be undertaken in order to develop a sustainable and profitable tourism. By adopting environmentally-friendly practices, involving local stakeholders and raising visitor awareness, Algeria can not only benefit economically from its Saharan heritage, but also actively contribute to the conservation of this precious resource for future generations.

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