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STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL  
UNION OF OFFICIAL TRAVEL ORGANIZATIONS

Note by the Executive Secretary

The statement reproduced below is transmitted  
at the request of the International Union of  
Official Travel Organizations.

STATEMENT

presented by

the International Union of Official Travel Organisations

to

the Fifth Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for  
Latin America

The International Union of Official Travel Organisations (IUOTO) presents its warmest greetings to the members of the Economic Commission for Latin America. It is pleased to pay tribute to the great and important work undertaken by the ECLA, and to the remarkable achievements which have already rewarded its efforts.

The IUOTO, which has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, would like to take this opportunity for presenting to the Economic Commission for Latin America the following statement:

- I. The aims of the IUOTO, as appearing in its Statutes, can be summarised as the promotion of tourist travel by all possible means, whether they involve the elimination of barriers which hinder its development, or steps directed at its actual increase.

The very great importance of tourist travel in the economic life of countries no longer needs to be demonstrated. As a means of earning foreign currency, it often brings about bigger returns than many exports. To quote one or two figures, foreign tourists, in 1950, left about \$ 43,000,000 in Cuba, \$ 10,000,000 in Japan and \$ 30,000,000 in the Union of South Africa. And it should  
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be stressed that the countries concerned lost no substance whatsoever in exchange for these amounts. In several cases it was possible to describe tourist travel as the "biggest single export" of a country.

Yet, the main advantage that tourist travel offers lies possibly not in its economic returns, but in the fact that it brings together people from all parts of the world and thereby promotes the mutual understanding which paves the way to a lasting peace.

II. To achieve its aims, the IUOTO groups together the governmental or government-sponsored organisations of various countries, one per country. Its membership includes at present 48 countries, from all parts of the world. It has created in its midst technical commissions, each of which deals, at the world level, with problems within a defined technical field of competence, and also regional commissions, that approach all technical problems from the angle particular to a region. It was indeed obvious that a large number of problems were of a regional nature and called for a regional solution.

III. Among the many achievements that the IUOTO can already be proud of, since it started its work after the Second World War, could be cited the fact that mainly through its efforts over 150 visas have been abolished throughout the world; the travel statistics compiled by the IUOTO and put at the disposal of the United Nations for reproduction in the U.N. Statistical Year Book; and an important study on the budgets allocated to publicity by

/governmental travel

governmental travel organisations and by important private firms of the travel industry.

It should also be pointed out that in the course of the year 1952, the International Institute of Scientific Travel Research was created under the aegis of the IUOTO. This Institute aims at establishing the scientific doctrine on which could be based future governmental and private travel promotion activities. One of the first research works undertaken by the Institute is a thorough and comprehensive study of the travel currents between Latin America and Europe. It should bear, among others, on the number of travellers, the areas and cities of their origin and destination, the income groups to which they belong, etc. This study is already well on its way.

As an example of the work carried out on a regional basis by the IUOTO, apart from the striking results already achieved by its European Travel Commission, mention should be made of its Asian and Far Eastern Travel Commission (AFETC). The IUOTO, which makes full use of its consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, had been for some time in close connection with the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East of the U.N. (ECAFE). Following these contacts, the wish was expressed by the ECAFE that the IUOTO should launch regional activities in this part of the world. The IUOTO then created its AFETC, and the ECAFE recommended that its members should join it. The AFETC started its

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activities last year, with the help of the ECACFE which sent an observer to its first meeting, and went to the point of handing over to the AFETC the whole of the travel promotion work that it had carried out until then. The AFETC set itself an important programme of action which is already being implemented.

An instance of the activities of the IUOTO in connection with its consultative status is the suggestion made jointly two years ago to the United Nations by the IUOTO and another international institution, the World Tourist and Automobile Organisation, suggestion which tended to the convening by the United Nations of an international conference for the conclusion of a world customs convention for tourism. The Economic and Social Council ordered a consultation of the governments on this point, following which the Transport and Communications Commission decided, in February 1953, to ask the Economic and Social Council to decide that this conference should be held in 1954. The World Touring and Automobile Organisation and the IUOTO had presented a draft customs convention together with their suggestion.

- IV. The IUOTO would be glad to be called upon by the Economic Commission for Latin America for its help in this region. It is ready and willing to bring to Latin America countries all the assistance in its power with a view to helping them to derive still greater benefits from tourist travel. The results that the IUOTO has been
- /able to

able to achieve in parts of the world where tourist travel is far less developed than in Latin America, give rise to the feeling that still better results could be achieved in this area, to the benefit of Latin America countries, both in the economic and social fields. In a limited sphere, the IUOTO has already sent some documentation to the ECLA.

The next annual Conference and General Assembly of the IUOTO will be held in Lisbon, in October 1953. An invitation to be represented at it will be sent to the Executive Secretariat of the ECLA, and the IUOTO would be gratified to enjoy at this Conference the presence of such a representative.

The IUOTO would be happy to bring its contribution to the remarkable work already carried out by the ECLA. It would also be happy to help bringing about, there as everywhere else in the world, the Fifth Freedom -- the Freedom of Movement.