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PRESS BRIEFING BY WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

Given the proper support, international tourism would outperform agriculture and petroleum in terms of world exports, injecting some \$500 billion into the world economy, Geoffrey Lipman, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, said this evening.

Speaking at a press conference in São Paulo, he said that business and leisure travel had become one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors of the international economy. Tourism could potentially make a huge contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

However, current trade policies, as well as development and anti-poverty strategies, lacked coherence in dealing with tourism, he noted. There was a need for vision, political will and coherence to include tourism in institutional decision-making. Implemented properly at the multilateral and regional levels, tourism could create real human development, he said. Every poor country had a natural or cultural resource base positioned exactly where the tourism market was redirecting itself. By its very nature, the sector was also creating jobs for women, particularly in such countries as the Maldives and South Africa.

Henryk Handszuh, the organization's Chief of Quality and Trade in Tourism, said that developing countries must institute protective measures to prevent wealthier ones from taking advantage of them. They must balance such measures with others such as consumer protection.

Asked about the major barriers confronting the tourism sector, Mr. Lipman said they included currency restraints, onerous visa policies and travel advisories warning against terrorism and natural disasters.

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