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Communication of the Chairman of the Commission

Since the ancient tales of the Iliad and the Odyssey with such extraordinary adventures, going through the passage of Marco Polo when he told us the marvels of his travels in the Orient, and the dreams of Jules Verne that we can go all the way to the moon, the World has experimented an incredible fascination in traveling.

There have been travelers in all times and in all corners of the earth. First they travel on foot or using some kind of animal, later on bicycle, on train, boat and in our times by plane.

Leisure travelers are the newest ones in our existence as human beings. There are very old registries of business travelers, like Phoenicians, Egyptians, Chinese, Mayas, Incas, so many civilizations that travel from one town to other to exchange merchandises.

Wellness tourism is also very old: many antique civilizations did pilgrimages to sites of healing and wellness. Many times this tourism will join with religious tourism, because they were also old sanctuaries: Teotihuacán, Tikal, Machu Picchu and Chichen Itza.

As you travel, each one at its own time, we have open up humanities horizons, letting a better understanding of who we are y why we will always be united as one civilization.

Traveling is done in the inside and in the outside, because not only the body travels, but also the soul, that is why many times when you make a trip the body has already arrive to your land but the soul takes a little bit longer to return, because you keep recalling the aromas, food, people, views, adventures and so many other things you lived in other lands.

Not only the arrival has value, but also the journey itself is important, as we are told by Konstantino Kavafis (1863-1933), the renowned poet from Alexandria in his legendary poem The Journey to Ithaca:



When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,
pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge.
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
the angry Poseidon -- do not fear them:
You will never find such as these on your path,
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine
emotion touches your spirit and your body.
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,
if you do not carry them within your soul,
if your soul does not set them up before you.

Pray that the road is long.
That the summer mornings are many, when,
with such pleasure, with such joy
you will enter ports seen for the first time;
stop at Phoenician markets,
and purchase fine merchandise,
mother-of-pearl and coral, amber, and ebony,
and sensual perfumes of all kinds,
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
visit many Egyptian cities,
to learn and learn from scholars.

Always keep Ithaca on your mind.
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.
But do not hurry the voyage at all.
It is better to let it last for many years;
and to anchor at the island when you are old,
rich with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.
Without her you would have never set out on the road.
She has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.
Wise as you have become, with so much experience,
you must already have understood what these Ithacas mean.

We do not where the human need for exploring lands and cultures will takes us. In my country, in this precise moment, the Costa Rican astronaut and scientist, Dr. Franklin Chang, is testing the plasma motor that someday will take us to Mars and beyond.

The only limit on what's to come is the imagination of the human being, we must keep dreaming to reach new horizons, following the example of Jules Verne. Challenging man and women to transform their dreams in reality traveling in the inside and in the outside of each one, and without limits travel...

travel as the seagulls, like Jonathan Livingstone Seagull knowing that each journey is a lesson to be shared:

“As the days went past, Jonathan found himself thinking time and again of the Earth from which he had come. If he had known there just a tenth, just a hundredth, of what he knew here, how much more life would have meant! He stood on the sand and fell to wondering if there was a gull back there who might be struggling to break out of his limits, to see the meaning of flight beyond a way of travel to get a breadcrumb from a rowboat. Perhaps there might even have been one made Outcast for speaking his truth in the face of the Flock. And the more Jonathan practiced his kindness lessons, and the more he worked to know the nature of love, the more he wanted to go back to Earth. For in spite of his lonely past, Jonathan Seagull was born to be an instructor, and his own way of demonstrating love was to give something of the truth that he had seen to a gull who asked only a chance to see truth for himself.”

Indeed, travel as the wind does, without any understanding of borders or nationalities, given freshness to everyone in equal terms or as the sea travels to mix itself with other waters up to the point of making just one mass, at the end... to travel.

Thank you.