



# ANTOR – JAPAN

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES IN JAPAN  
駐 日 外 国 政 府 観 光 局 協 議 会

July 2020

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

■Title: ANTOR-JAPAN GENERAL MEETING 2020 Vol.03

■Date: July 3rd, 2020 (Friday) 10:00-12:00

■Place: JATA Meeting Room 4F

■Attendees:

### **Active Members:**

- Mr. Frederic Mazenq, Director, Atout-France France Tourism Development Agency Japan Office (Chairman)
- Mr. Akira Nishiyama, Regional Manager Asia and Australia, Germany National Tourist Office (Vice Chairman)
- Mr. Fumihiro Sakakibara, General Manager, Macao Government Tourism Office (Director)
- Mr. Yoshiaki Fujimura, Marketing Manager, Tourism Authority of Thailand
- Mr. Oto Oliveira, Tourism Director, Turismo de Portugal
- Ms. Chizu Takaoka, Promotion Manager, Turismo de Portugal
- Mr. Stepan Pavlik, Director, Czech Tourist Authority - CzechTourism Japan
- Mr. Niel P. Ballesteros, Attaché and Director for East Japan, Philippine Department of Tourism
- Mr. Yasuhiko Yokoyama, Section Chief, Philippine Department of Tourism
- Mr. Tomasz Fiedorowicz, Director, Polish Tourism Organization
- Ms. Marjorie L. Dewey, Managing Director – Japan, Visit California
- Ms. Michiko Saeki, Marketing Manager, Tourism Malaysia-Tokyo

### **Allied Members:**

- Ms. Kasumi Abe, Outbound Travel Promotion Division, JATA
- Mr. Akihiko Hosaka, Outbound Travel Promotion Division, JATA
- Ms. Chihiro Koyama, Sales Division, JTB Saitama Branch
- Ms. Yumiko Ando, Marketing Tourism Action Department, All Nippon Airways Co.,Ltd.
- Ms. Natsuko Matsumoto, Tokyo Branch Sales Division, Kanbo Pras Corp.
- Mr. Yasuaki Sakaguchi, Sales Division Manager, for Travel
- Ms. Isabelle Massabo, Secretary General, ANTOR-JAPAN

*The General Meeting vol.03 has been held at JATA and with video Call (using Zoom Meeting) participants who were not able to join the F2F meeting due to the COVID-19 situation.*

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## 1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARK

At the outset, Chairman Mr. Mazenq began the meeting by mentioning that the situation of the COVID-19 keeps influencing the outbound travel worldwide, it does not show any improvement and it is a historical experience for the tourism industry. He explained the reason for the absence of JTA to the meeting. Japan Travel Agency is working for the "GO TO CAMPAIGN" which is designed to help the struggling tourism and restaurant industries. This campaign benefits a traveler with a coupon equivalent to half of a product price or up to 20,000 JPY a night through travel agents and the results will show a lot of interesting abilities about tourism of travelers in Japan. July 3<sup>rd</sup> was the last day for companies to apply so JTA staffs were not able to join the meeting.



## 2. Minutes:

### A) Discussion about each NTO's situation and opinions as ANTOR-JAPAN.

#### FRANCE

After discussing with Trade, travel agencies in Japan will basically send costumers abroad if only the destination's warning level is 1. As for business and group trips, they will accept if the level is 2. MOFA warned JTA if travel agencies send customers to the level 3 area, MOFA will not be responsible. So, they avoid sending travelers in level 3 areas. Recently EU re-opened the borders for Schengen space however the areas are still in Red zone so it would still be hard to send Japanese customers. If they fly to these destinations, they will have to get the PCR test and quarantine for 14 days when they will fly back to Japan. As for the numbers of passengers last month, France counted only 3 Japanese tourists who came from Belgium by car. In term of growth, it would give an interesting result next year. In Korea, the situation is worse, lots of travel agents closed and 90% of contact in trade are lost. Comparing to JATA, KATA focuses only in inbound and the results cannot expect to be better soon. Therefore, Japan's outbound efforts and situation are "better" than in other countries for now. It is also interesting to focus and follow the difference between predictions on how they count people affected by COVID-19.

Following the official numbers of contamination is extremely low comparing to other destination like in UK for example. In UK there is 17 times cases more than Japan. So, Japan has a potential to be the best customers soon. Talking about the group size, it will go down in average. In France it was used to be 20-25 and it might be a smaller group of 7-10 people. Which might cause difficulties for hotel bookings. The other difficulties might be for air ticket pricing which are getting extremely expensive until the situation will get better.

ANTOR-KOREA is trying to set up a meeting with KTA (as JTA in Korea) to discuss for a better solution for quarantine and other. Therefore ANTOR-JAPAN should try the same with JTA for Japan.

#### POLAND

The EU is trying to open the borders, Poland is basically waiting for the decisions of the Japanese government to find out how to work with the tourism industry between both countries. The number of Japanese visitors in Poland is not clear this year, it might be almost zero. PTO is still on working with some B to C campaigns hoping for the next year's activities. By using social media, PTO keeps contact with the customers for a beautiful destination input. Recently PTO has challenged some series of webinars to end up in a big success to exchange some experiences and thoughts with the travel trade and plants. It also helped to deliver some information about the current situation and find out potentials after the current times. Mr. Fiedorowicz announced he will return to Poland and his assignment in Tokyo was over earlier than planned. He mentioned in his speech that it was very nice experience to have some conversations with members of ANTOR-JAPAN and it was very valuable to exchange thoughts and actions with other NTOs.

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## **USA (CALIFORNIA)**

USA has 25% of the deaths from coronavirus in the world and the highest number of cases. California was one of the first states to lock down and to take aggressive action against the disease. 75% of the state now is closed again. Bars and restaurants were supposed to be opening in July, Disneyland was scheduled to open in two weeks however that all has been put on hold. Visit California was supposed to do a "in state travel campaign" like what Japan is doing with the "GO TO CAMPAIGN" to launch this week. But it has been put on hold for at least three weeks or a month. The fourth of July in America is the biggest holiday of the year. But the beaches will all be closed in California and same for beaches in Florida. In Texas, the situation is very bad. CNN announced that in San Antonio in Texas, they had 10 calls for young people who needed to be put on ECMO and the hospital had only three beds only for three people. From the tourism side, all the states are trying to do "in state travel" to promote within their state or very close by their state. Drive travel is what everyone is focused on. People do not want to get in airplanes. Memphis is never had to go into a full lockdown. They still had hotel occupancy of up to 30%, even during the worst of times. However, they have had budget cuts and a budget fight will happen, but they have done much better than many places around. For California offices around the world are closed.

California is not a revenue model that is supported by state government but supported by the industry. It all relies on tax assessments from hotels attractions restaurants, shopping, and rent a car. Currently, Visit California is just waiting for next moves and staying in touch with others. Ms. Dewey represents 15 different US states or cities however, she represents now the 10 states in the Mississippi River country region from Minnesota to Louisiana and Virginia. The largest destinations are not working such as Las Vegas, California, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

The association of representatives of all the travel industry in the United States has lobbied the US government. There was a lot of stimulus money that was paid to major corporations and small medium sized businesses and the chambers of commerce, DMO, tourism related organizations across the country. But almost everyone that Visit California was working with three months ago has been fired. The tourism industry in the United States has taken the biggest hit, more than 50% of the workers in the industry have been fired. However, it is the most hopeful industry in the world. People are still so upbeat, there is some positive mind that things are going to return. The United States never closed to Japanese. Japanese have always been able to visit the US, even during the worst of times, they were the last travelers in California and in Las Vegas. Even when the level three warning came out there were still young Japanese people, because it was spring graduation holidays. Business travel are still taking place. One of the issues that the airlines are telling now is about the PCR test at the airport. In Haneda, there are not enough testers, so they are limiting the number of people. The ministry is going to put more testers into the airport so they can speed that up because they must keep the economy going.

## **PORTUGAL**

Turismo de Portugal has been trying to launch a campaign "#Cantskipopening" and running it especially focusing on European travelers. Since recently the borders have been re-opened for tourists and the campaign will finally be launched. In Portugal, prefectures take different measures to accept tourists in their land. For example, in Madeira Island, tourist needs to get a test and wait for 12 hours in a hotel instead of doing the test and wait for 14 days quarantine. The government suggested to get the test 48 hours before the flights, and they take the charges for the test. However, the rules are not completely clear yet regarding Japanese tourists as there are no direct flights. The health authority has not announced it either which non-European countries are allowed to enter. Within Portugal, travelers started to use caravans to go somewhere, the growth is +600%, which shows that there will be a different travelling pattern.

## **PHILIPPINES**

Starting with the good news, Philippine destinations are now fully rehabilitated, which rehabilitation would be very hard to accomplish without travel restrictions. Philippine destinations are now ready to accept international and local tourists, however, getting to the Philippine destinations is still the main concern maybe until the travel restrictions brought about by COVID 19, is lifted. In the Philippines, we follow the same health protocols being observed and practiced by almost all countries to contain the spread of the virus, our authorities see to it that everyone is wearing face mask and observe social distancing. This set of travel protocols will make international travel more expensive, for instance, airlines will limit the number of passengers to the level of safety so as not to contaminate just in case one passenger happened to be asymptomatic. Hotels are advised to accommodate 50% of its capacity, which would render hotel rates to increase to at least keep the business running. The tourism industry will first focus on domestic travel and might implement the "Travel Bubble" or "Travel Corridors". Every province has their own restrictions. For example, there are under "GCQ" = General Community Quarantine and "ECQ" = Enhance Community Quarantine. People are getting confused because they do not know exactly which

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place has lock down. The schedule for flights is never finalized, flights could be cancelled at the last moment because of the lack of passengers. The Philippines is still placed in level 3 area. Only business travelers are accepted for the moment, but it is still difficult to enter the country due to the irregular flight schedule. Vaccines would be only the biggest solution to solve this travel schedule irregularity in the Philippines.

**USA:** Ms. Dewey mentioned about the vaccines progress in the United States as well. The government negotiated a couple of companies that are testing now. They are making vaccines already and there would be a large stock after few tests. They have planned to start to use it in January with millions of vaccines available to vaccinate people. Even if those vaccines do not work, the government will take all the burden. The hope is that there would be something by January, but it might take another six months or a year for everyone to get vaccinated so that travelers could move safely.

## **GERMANY**

Based upon a travel research company, 154 Japanese people have visited Germany in May and 121 people in April. Germany looks to increase more frequency from July, although the logistic might be complicated. According to the EU decision, there will be no border restrictions for 14 countries. However, the German government decided to squeeze it into 11 countries including Japan. But Japan is still a safe and potential market so everything will depend on the measures for the restrictions of traffics taken by the Japanese government and authorities. The Germany Travel Mart, workshops and seminars are usually held during May but for this year, the event has been postponed to next year. Instead of that, Germany did a "VIRTUAL" Travel Mart in the middle of June which ended in a great success and that became the idea for JATA to launch the same event in a couple of months. 450 buyers from 49 countries and 250 German suppliers joined the Travel Mart. They also set up an online platform for appointment registration and received 5,700 appointments in advance although they used to receive over 20,000 on the physical event. However, it is still a good result despite this situation and especially for overseas market like Japan, China, Korea, and Southeast Asia with 6-7 hours' time lag.

Since the border has just opened to neighbor countries, Germany is preparing to launch a new campaign in Europe called "Dreams become Reality" which announces, "It is time for us to travel again". The content is more oriented to nature tourism and avoid city visits and long distance round trip within the countries.

However, the head office in Germany decided to close overseas offices including Australia, Southeast Asia, Singapore, Brazil, Chili and Argentine until the end of this year or forever. In Germany, the tourism industry is a strong sector but there are other strong sectors such as Car production, Chemical production etc., which are still working to get financial support from the government and do a lot of lobbying. Therefore, the tourism industry is not the main industry to be supported by the government but still the strongest market to recover. German National Tourist Office consists of 2 different types. 12 offices are controlled and connected with the head center. But 19 offices are private marketing offices with contracts which will not be guaranteed by the head office and that marks a severe situation.

In Japan, domestic travel tours demand started to increase especially for seniors or retire people market. The reason is because Japanese seniors have enough budget to spend for luxury and safe tours. Which might prove besides targeting group or business travelers, it would be an interesting market to focus and expect some fast recovery in Japanese Tourism soon.

Mr. Tomasz Fiedorowicz asked how the ANTOR members do see the improvement for the flight's situations in Japan.

- **GERMANY:** The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Germany for examples is making tough lobbying to Japanese government to change the border restrictions for business traffics and do not depend only on nationalities but for residencies for foreign expatriates who comes back to Japan for business.
- **FRANCE:** To keep the number of flights is still a difficult issue. For example, the flights nowadays are not fully booked by passengers however it can be used as cargo. Most flights have an agreement already with Japan to carry passengers but if it is full for cargo, and it is demanded to turn it into a passenger plane, a new agreement has to be signed, and modify the plane interior which would cost a lot and take time. Therefore, for Japan it is better to keep few empty passenger flights to avoid making new agreements from zero.

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## **THAILAND**

Thailand website has usually 600,000 access but in April and May it have decreased to 200,000. However, the number of followers to TAT Official SNS keeps increasing again every month. Regarding the survey they have made just after the Golden Week, with the theme of "After the COVID-19, where do you want to go?", the results were, first was Hawaii or Guam, second was European countries and third was short distance destinations such as Hong Kong, Macao. Korea and Southeast Asia. Which proves hope and demands for travelers in Japan.

Thailand is still under the state of emergency, extended until end of July. The number of the contaminated people was around 3,170 however, recently there are zero patients. Thailand operates a good management for tourism industry and TAT initiates "Amazing Thailand" for Safety and Health Administration certification program with local hotels, restaurants, shopping areas, etc., with all the industry which the economy got hit by this virus. TAT provides certification with some guidelines of the Ministry of Health to get prepared to welcome back the foreign tourists. Between Japan and Thailand there is still not flight available. But from July 1<sup>st</sup>, the aviation bureau negotiated to allow travelers who comes back for the reason to meet families and many businessmen are also included. So, they may be allowed to fly back to Thailand. However, the regulation is still not clear and PCR test or quarantine are required. TAT's expectation for Japanese travelers and flights are around in September. Reservations are already booked for the end of this year by group tours so there is still hopes to recover the tourism in Thailand.

Meanwhile, TAT does activities with Thai food and started Virtual Travel Mart in Asian version which is accessible 24hours.

## **MACAO**

People in Macao want to travel to Hong Kong, but when they across the border they must be gone to quarantine for 14 days and get the test. And they must spend again 14 days when they come back.

So even for a few hours short trip, they must stay 14 days x 2 at the border.

In Macao, the first infected person got discovered in January. Five days after that discovery, the government closed all the gates. The total of affected people was only 45. And for three months, there was no new patient. So, the government decided to open to the international market in condition to take the test at the entrance. The 46<sup>th</sup> patient was a worker from Philippines who did not really matter to stay 14 days at the border because he was planned to stay long in Macao to work. But because of this situation, the government again decided to close the gates except for the Chinese and people from Hong Kong. In Macao there is nobody sick for more than three months and it is a safe country, however they don't accept Japanese travelers yet to avoid the virus coming inside the country. In May, Macao received 16,000 visitors, which is 99.5% minus compare with last year. And those who arrived in Macao are people who was going to work in Macao, so they accepted staying 14 days quarantine. The government rented huge number of rooms in hotels including Sheraton to keep them stay 14 days which was enough capacity comparing to the case in Japan. Then another headache is the situation in Hong Kong.

The same law has been accepted by Macao citizens in 2012 but they did not do any reaction like in Hong Kong. It is hard to say how the tourism will be affected with this new law in HK to Macao soon.

Regarding the local travel agency with tour guides, Japanese speaking tour guides started to leave from the industry, due to the lack of tourists from Japan. Something to recover the market should be discussed soon to motivate Japanese clients to travel in groups to maintain the market and traffics.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

The situation in Czech Republic is slowly recovering in terms of domestic tourism. The country invites a lot of foreign visitors from neighboring countries. Regarding the decision of the EU to allow 14 countries to Europe, the government took some restrictive approach and it has been reduced the list only for 8 countries and the government has implemented the "traffic system" dividing countries into green, orange and red areas. Among the 8 countries on the list, only Montenegro and Serbia are actually "green". And for the other six countries, in terms of reciprocity does not allow Czech citizens to enter the country. For Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, there is no updated information from the government. As for CzechTourism they are trying to secure as much budget as possible to launch some campaigns in Japan in a collaboration with South Korean Foreign Office focusing on nature parks and active tourism. For Korea and Taiwanese market, they are planning promotion for the Honeymooners.

## **For Travel**

"For Travel" operates a travel revue website like "TripAdvisor" for Japanese market. The number of pageviews for overseas destinations began to decrease from January this year, due to the influence of coronavirus over the last few months. Online traffic to overseas travel has been around 35% only. However, looking by region, the numbers

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are for Asia 30%, Europe 35%, North America 32%, and China is about 30%. On the other hand, for domestic travel pages view has recovered to around 60%. Recently, some messages like "I have been unable to travel so I've decided to go to spend time at hot spring" are posted on "For Travel" website. Mr. Yasuaki Sakaguchi emphasized that he felt the desire to travel has not disappeared. Japanese travelers still have budget and aim to travel again. At the end of his speech Yasuaki asked directors to keep sending out information which motivates and gives excitement to travelers and do not hesitate to consult them to conduct a survey to solve troubles.

### **ANA**

One questions has been asked from Ms. Yumiko Ando which was:

Who will participate in Tourism Expo this year among ANTOR-JAPAN members?

- Okinawa in October: Thailand and Philippines.
- Tokyo in January: Only Thailand for the moment.

At the end Mr. Mazeng emphasized that ANTOR-JAPAN should think to deliver its messages by exchanging opinions and information to the Japanese Government, taking into consideration that ANTOR-JAPAN is the only effective body to apply reasonable pressure on the Japanese Government for further cooperation to promote outbound travel. What ANTOR-JAPAN can do now to save NTOs and from this situation by knowing that Japan is still a potential market in the world?



### **3. Next Meeting Approval**

The date of the next General Meeting will be announced within days.  
(Planned to be in late August 2020)

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