



# ANTOR – JAPAN

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES IN JAPAN  
駐日外国政府観光局協議会

February 2021

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

■Title: GENERAL MEETING 2021 Vol.01

■Date: January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (Tuesday) from 2pm to 4pm

■Tool: ZOOM Meeting

■Participants:

### **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. Fumihiko Sakakibara, General Manager, Macao Government Tourism Office (Director)
- Mr. Jaime Alejandre, Director, Tourist Office of Spain
- Mr. Yoshiaki Fujimura, Marketing Manager, Tourism Authority of Thailand
- Mr. Yasuhiko Yokoyama, Section Chief, Philippine Department of Tourism
- Ms. Michiko Saeki, Marketing Manager, Tourism Malaysia-Tokyo
- Mr. Stepan Pavlik, Director, Czech Tourist Authority - CzechTourism Japan
- Mr. Raul Guerra, Japan & South Korea Regional Director, Catalan Tourist Board
- Ms. Anchi Chen, Taiwan Visitors Association, Tokyo Office.

### **Allied Members:**

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

*The General Meeting 2021 Vol.01 has been held with Video Call (using Zoom 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 sending greetings to all participants for the first meeting of the year 2021. He shared his regrets to have not been able to meet all face to face and the meeting had to be held as an online meeting because of the continuous situation with the COVID-19 worldwide. He was asking everyone's condition and who was working from home by respecting government state of emergency. He emphasized the importance of keeping sharing information about how the COVID-19 is still influencing the outbound travel. He focused on the theme of how and when the market recovery might happen this year despite the number of the new cases was increasing and the hope that the new vaccines would be one of the triggers of the improvement.



## 2. Minutes:

### FRANCE

For the moment, no major improvement in France. The number of flights is still limited to 10 a week comparing to last February which was 46.

The discussion and main questions with the head office are:

1. When travelers would be back in the market?
2. Are the Olympic Games taking place in Tokyo this year? Is it going to have some big changes?
3. Is it possible to organize a business trip with clients in Japan?
4. Will vaccinations be a trigger to start the market again?
5. Do we have to change the market to FIT or Group to recover faster? From where?

It has been said that sometime during March or April, some tests travel might be organized by some Japanese administration and authorities to bring again tourists for leisure first.

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, it is planned to have the torch run as a kickoff for the OG countdown. However, there are not specific strategies from the Japanese government announced.

Regarding the trades, since most of all destinations are classified in level 3 zone, Japanese government is warning travelers to stay in the country and asking to travel agents to avoid sending customers abroad. However, the travel agents can sell products but need to announce the rule for 14 days quarantine after coming back to Japan. Which creates difficulties for customers to travel.

Regarding "Go to Travel Campaign", it might start again from March until June with new rules. It will be important to pursue this phenomenon and start thinking about the marketing strategies for after the COVID to make people travel again even if we do not know when the end would be yet.

Regarding Vaccinations in Japan, it is said that some vaccination campaign is planning for all including foreigners living in Japan. In France, it is said 70% of the population will get vaccinated by the end of August.

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## **JATA**

Vaccination schedule in Japan (planned for now) has been announced:

Late February: for Medical Center and doctors.

Late March: for people over 65 years old.

Late April: for people with some disease.

Late July: for all.

Regarding FIT and Group travel, Japanese government might start to work on with an inbound small group, in early March and at the same time, group from Japan to overseas. However, the government does not know which countries to start with the test because the level is still high everywhere. JATA is still under discussion to organize some events at the Japanese airports by paying a lot of attention on the dates to do not end up like "Go to Travel Campaign".

More than 1000 staffs who were working at travel agencies went to work at Go to Travel offices and had to change their work because of the lack of salary. For example, last year in May, when JATA organized a webinar, they targeted 1300 people from the tourism industry but at the end of December 2020, the number decreased to 500. And, during the Go to Travel Campaign season last year, many travel agencies that were selling overseas destinations for outbound tourism had no choice to shift they product to domestic destinations.

## **SPAIN**

Nobody knows what is going to happen and signals are not very positive yet. Two days ago, the President of Spain announced about the forecast of recovery of tourism in Spain, it would be by the end of summer. That information has been published in in all newspapers throughout the world. For Spain, summertime is essential and receives lots of tourists to the beaches with the sun.

On the next Wednesday, Thursday and Friday a small feature will be launched online about Spain., There will be three days online meeting with all sectors. A special panel discussion will take place for ASEAN, Eastern and American market. Hopefully seeing some recovery from this summer and autumn seasons.

Regarding vaccinations, it might take long because in Spain it needs to be taken twice and leave 15 days between. Vaccinations might be one of the ways to restart the market however it is still just a hope to do not see people wearing masks anymore in 2021 or in 2022.

Regarding FIT or group travel, group might be easier. Especially for example, documents for the COVID-19 test and Visa to travel and to re-enter the country.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

From one-point, vaccines can solve the problem, but there is also some news about new types of COVID, which the vaccine is 50% less effective. And in this case, it is difficult to say the market will restart again. Therefore, the question might be if the world will be able to manage, not only the vaccination, as soon as possible but also to keep this on lockdown, and keep these quite a long time.

## **GERMANY**

The head office has already made certain market survey, regarding this issue and based upon this forecast, run by the tourism research marketing company in Germany. It is expected that the recovery of tourism demand at least from Japan to Germany will be recovered fully up to 2024. Germany expects an 86% of recovery until 2023 compared to the tourism volume in 2019. They assume that the tourism in leisure will be recovered much faster than the business. However, the questions might be how the Japanese market would react. Japan is one of the

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most sensitive market for security issues.

However, if Japanese customers are back, the tourism industry might be fully recovered. The discussion on 2-way tourism's aspect is a key issue for the tourism industry because airlines cannot relaunch passenger flight operation fully when the passenger traffic exists only on one way. Inbound traffic should be recovered at the same time as outbound to assure sound passenger flight operation. Japan, as an island market, needs international flights back to secure outbound tourism business recovery.

Regarding FIT or Group tour for Japanese tour operators such as Hankyu, JTB, Club Tourism etc., after facing this situation, the big group of 30 to 40 people is not realistic anymore. Participants should be less than 10 people. The business model for group business might start changing from the usual model. Therefore, destinations which used to get in FIT demand will recover much faster than destinations which were not be able to deal with FIT demand. Germany is one of the typical round-trip destinations, and now Germany is trying to work and create new product for FIT to survive the situation.

## **MACAO**

Regarding the questions of FIT or Group? The group idea comes from the travel agencies. However, as a general trend, traveling style is more moving from group to FIT. As a travel agency, it is easier to manage group and health condition, but the price might be too expensive for some travelers who prefers to travel independently. Or it could be a risk to travel in a group. However, cruise is becoming safer because it is now easier to manage PCR test before getting on the ship for example. It can be promoted as the safest way to travel now.

The safeness should be more announced worldwide to make travelers confident to travel again even it would take some time. However, the desire and demand of traveling do still exist, and it is important to keep promoting its attractiveness somehow.

But the situation is getting worse and the head office in Macao told the Tokyo office to freeze work now and save budgets instead of using it in small pieces, until the right time to invest again when the market comes back for better results.

## **THAILAND**

In Thailand it is discussed that the visitors might come back after October. But the total number will be just only around 25% compared to 2019. FIT might be the major target for the reason of repeaters. Thailand receives a lot of golfers. They can spend two weeks in a golf course without going out to make quarantine. Other travelers from Japan can enter without visa with a certification of entry. But anyhow, 14 days for the quarantine is required which is one of the difficulties to make Japanese to travel. But the golfers travel plan is successful depending on the traveler's budget.

According to the survey to the Japanese market, they are still very interested traveling abroad but without 14 days quarantine in both countries, destination, and home country.

Therefore, after the situation would improve, the market will grow fast and might be back to normal very fast depending on the conditions and repeaters. The flights numbers would be the key issue to recover. Narita and Haneda is quite active for flying to Thailand, TG has 3 flights a week from Narita, JAL & ANA have daily flights from Narita and Haneda, Osaka 1 flight a week. However, only about 10% as a load factor.

## **PHILIPPINES**

1. The Makati Shangri-La in Philippines would close temporarily starting next month, aside from downsizing its workforce, due to continued low business levels caused by the

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pandemic. The prolonged timeline of restrictions on leisure businesses, such as hotels, has resulted in increasing financial pressure on the Makati-Shangri-La's business in the Philippines.

To help ease the burden on personnel who would be downsized, it said they would receive a "fair compensation package that is higher than local statutory guidelines" and extending health care coverage and grocery support until December 31 this year.

2. Philippine lawmakers are considering establishing a vaccine passport program that would help the government keep track and easily identify Filipinos record of inoculations against the COVID-19. The vaccine passports shall primarily be digital in form but shall also be available through printed copies to ensure accessibility for all.

This would allow the government to monitor the distribution of vaccines, their effects on people, the overall effectiveness of the immunization program and to gather data for post-market surveillance. The vaccine passports shall contain standard information such as the manufacturer, brand name and batch number or other identifier of the COVID-19 vaccine; date of vaccination, name of the hospital, health center or health facility where the vaccines was received; and name, signature and licensed number of the duly licensed physician, nurse or other health worker administering the vaccine.

The benefits could include international travel, non-essential domestic travel, local checkpoint and quarantine exemptions and access to business establishments allowed to operate during the "new normal."

3. Philippines is open to tie-up with neighboring countries to create "international travel bubbles" that would promote inter-country travel and tourism amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Those international travel bubbles would require and demand strict enforcement of health and safety protocols through the establishment of proper infrastructures certified jointly with partner governments to ensure "symbiotic and harmonious results. Whenever feasible, the Philippines is willing to tie-up with neighboring countries first with proximity as main consideration.

## **CATALUNIA**

The Catalan market is small as a country located in the middle of European Union.

There is not direct flights between. From this point of view, not only we need to be safe country, but also neighbors or at least the countries where the customers will go via needs also to be safe. Regarding the group or FIT travel, if it will be packages with one with just one country or several countries. Most of the customers usually visited not only Czech Republic but also Germany and Austria or combination of two to three countries in the region so, from this point of view, to do something together will be important.

## **ANA**

ANA has just released the schedule for the fiscal year of 2021 as it is below press release.

<https://www.anahd.co.jp/group/en/pr/202101/20210126.html>

16 destinations that postpone have been decided are the destinations included in the press release. Destinations that are not included in this, such as Frankfurt, London, Paris, will be announced in the next release, scheduled to be released within this month.

At the end of this topic, Chairman Mr. Mazenq made an important remark that if ANTOR-JAPAN would like to organize a collective activity or some other ideas how to perceive 2021. ANTOR-JAPAN must find how to make this situation into a positive one after this problem would be solved with vaccinations. ANTOR-JAPAN could give a general press release to encourage people to go abroad. And create some wellness to make people dreams to travel again.

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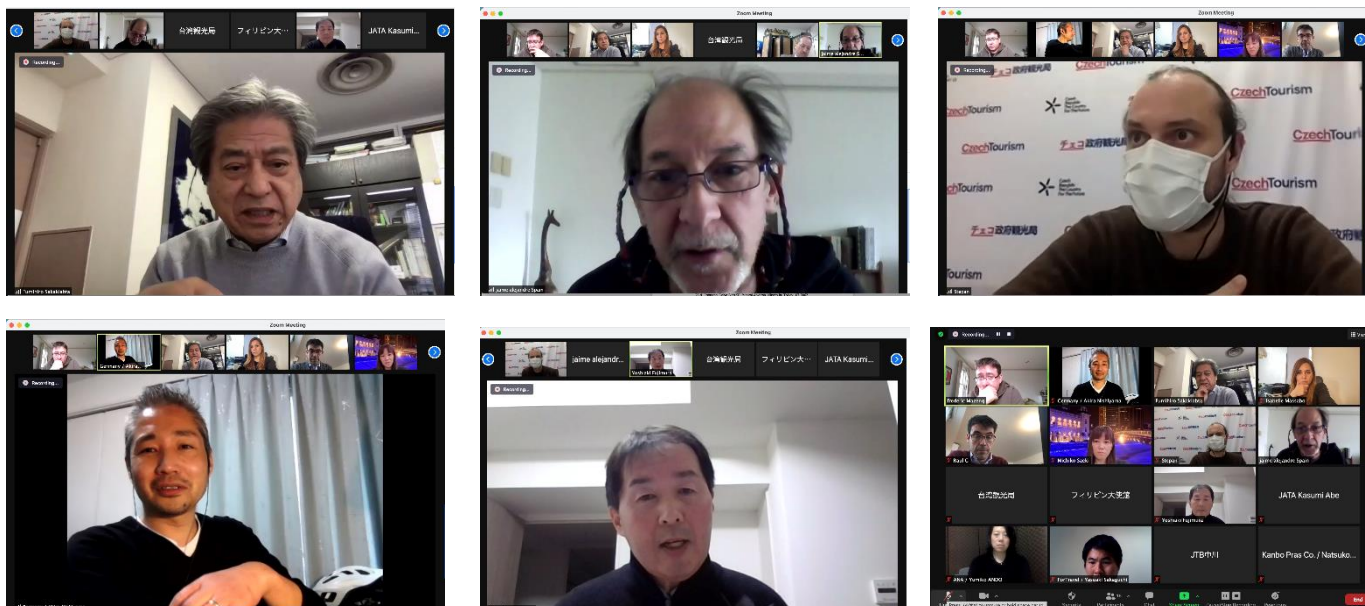
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ANTOR-JAPAN delivers its messages by exchanging opinions and information gathered to the Japanese Government, taking into consideration that ANTOR-JAPAN is the only effective body to apply reasonable pressure on the Japanese Government for further cooperation to promote outbound travel.



### 3. Next Meeting Approval

- Title: GENERAL MEETING 2021 Vol.01
- Date: February 22, 2021 (Monday) from 2pm to 4pm
- Tool: ZOOM Meeting

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