



# ANTOR – JAPAN

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

May 2020

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

■Title: GENERAL MEETING 2020 Vol.02

■Date: April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Monday) from 2pm to 4pm

■Tool: Zoom Meeting

■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. Fumihiko Sakakibara, General Manager, Macao Government Tourism Office (Director)
- Mr. Yoshiaki Fujimura, Marketing Manager, Tourism Authority of Thailand
- Ms. Oto Oliveira, Tourism Director, Turismo de Portugal
- Ms. Chizu Takaoka, Promotion Manager, Turismo de Portugal
- Mr. Stepan Pavlik, Director, Czech Tourist Authority - CzechTourism Japan
- Ms. Aso Satoko, PR & Marketing Manager, Czech Tourist Authority - CzechTourism Japan
- Mr. Michael Tauschmann, Director, Austria Tourist Office
- Mr. Niel P. Ballesteros, Attaché and Director for East Japan, Philippine Department of Tourism
- Mr. Jennifer Yamamoto, Marketing Assistant, Philippine Department of Tourism
- Mr. Tomasz Fiedorowicz, Director, Polish Tourism Organization
- Mr. Tadahiko Narita, Country Manager, Visit Indonesia Tourism Officer, Japan
- Ms. Naomi Takahashi, Chief Marketing Officer, Visit Indonesia Tourism Officer, Japan

### **Allied Members:**

- Ms. Kasumi Abe, Outbound Travel Promotion Division, JATA
- Mr. Akihiko Hosaka, Outbound Travel Promotion Division, JATA
- Mr. Takeshi Kureyama, Sales Division, JTB Saitama Branch
- Ms. Yumiko Ando, Marketing Tourism Action Department, All Nippon Airways Co.,Ltd.
- Mr. Yoshio Iimura, Tokyo Branch Sales Division, Kanbo Pras Corp.
  
- Ms. Isabelle Massabo, Secretary General, ANTOR-JAPAN

*The General Meeting vol.02 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 asking everyone's condition and who was working from home by respecting government recommendation. And he mentioned about how the COVID-19 did influence the outbound travel worldwide. He stated discussion about this virus and asked to all members what ANTOR-JAPAN could do to be useful in such a situation. JATA has planned to organize a webinar expecting 250 travel agents to attend where speakers will explain new strategy activities to recover this crisis, how to support market growth and about what Ryokan industry is trying to do to generate business. Mr. Mazenq has been asked to give some voice representing NTOs while the webinar with the theme of "How do NTOs arrange for the Japanese market and what we do expect from Japanese tourism industry?"



## 2. Minutes:

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

#### AUSTRIA

The biggest question in general is "when is the industry would come back and then what would be safe for traveling?" It is important to ask the agents when the situation would go back to normal and start doing marketing. According to several agents, it is said that they are not planning to do anything to summer, and they are already focusing on autumn for their next program. We are afraid that the group business is not going to be starting again before autumn this year.

#### JATA

It is difficult to recover before September. Closer countries such as Korea and China, would maybe the first to start recovering but, for long distance like European countries might be for next year. Why China and Korea first, it is because JTA will start promoting for inbound travelers first but also for Japanese travelers to overseas a well. We have heard that around 80 travel agencies have closed because of the COVID-19. This number might increase however we hope the government could make some supports to make them survive. It is said that maximum the salary of 160 days (8 months) of each company's employees might be guaranteed.

#### PHILIPPINES

To compare the case of SARS in our current situation, SARS was detected its spread in November 2002, but the peak of the spread came about in March and April 2003, that was 5 months after its detection, as a consequence Japanese outbound travel started to decline, and registered a negative growth rate until February 2004. Now using the SARS pattern, the peak of COVID-19 will be in June this year and outbound travel will continue to register negative growth until first quarter of next year. Then recovery might happen in 2nd quarter of 2021, which will start with domestic travel. For international travel, we will expect higher airfare due to the increase of travel insurance premium.

#### GERMANY

We have already discussed about three different scenarios for recovery in Germany. We expect middle May for the end of shutdown. And up to the end of September this year, we expect the certain recovery process. Up to the end of next year's June, we expect catching up the business, and for the real normalization of the situation we expect up to the end of June 2022 which means two more years to recover completely. However, we do not think we would get the 100% recovery

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in terms of the turnover. Based upon the realistic scenario, we expect up to the 80% of the turnover, comparing to 2019. According to two internal discussions, nobody wants to discuss especially for overseas market yet. For the recovery process, it will start with a real local tourism, domestic tourism, the neighboring countries, and the long-haul destination. Therefore, the German government expects the recovery up to June next year. For Japan, the real recovery process comes much later because Germany will first focus on the neighboring markets and we are also depending on the airline frequency. This may remain for certain years until people really get over the anxiety for the being infected again.

Since Japanese are not allowed to come into the EU area, we do not know when this regulation will be put down. We are also concerned on this kind of political decision.

We think the promotion phase to Japan will come at the end and neighboring countries promotion speed comes earlier and faster because it is much easier. So, European continent must have certain criteria to be a kind of joint recovery.

## **FRANCE**

It the sounds logical that short distance markets will bring more customers faster. However, for example for France, if we start promotion in Italy from September, it might be difficult to imagine that French people would be happy to receive a lot of Italian tourists. And because the crisis for the economy, industry, business, travelers will not have enough budget to go on vacation in France to spend. We are not certain that local people would like to receive them yet. In Paris, there are many luxury and high-end hotels, expensive cabarets. We do not see so much travelers from Germany, Belgium for this kind of places. It is more people from Japan, Brazil, China, Singapore, and Australia, which means visitors from long distance.

That means we need to do long distance promotion much faster to do not loose these places either. Looking at short distance tourism, the market is more focused on "mass". If we need to make test for the virus to each to be sure for their safety, it is not so realistic. So, we are wondering if we are going to move to a system where we only do promotion to high-end travelers only who can afford for having tests. And we basically let go to mass market because we imagine that it will not be so successful. But, if we will not consider the mass market, there would be no reason to focus on short destinations.

## **THAILAND**

In Thailand, focusing on the airlines, the first ones will come back on July.

It will not be same as before. And regarding the travelers, we are considering the process of who will come back first. We think the business would be is first, second would be FIT which is not using the travel agency and travel on their own, next the packaged tours and then the group tours. According the information we have just received from our agent, the new bookings would be coming after December. We are agreeing to imagine that domestic should come back first, the short-haul, and the long-haul. After all, we think to receive back tourists after October, in autumn. However, this pandemic makes us worried and cared about health, especially we do care about people's distance. The Thai government might ask some certifications to prove that you are not carrying COVID-19. However, if we would need to issue this kind of certifications, it would be very complicated to get back to our normal travel. We are now discussing how to recover and we especially focus now on FIT as the first step. We hope that JATA could create more travel demands for the overseas joining with ANTOR-JAPAN. We expect JATA to lead us for tourism industry recovery.

## **MACAO**

In Macao, we have only 45 cases. And in the last 19 days, no new cases. Macao is ready to receive tourists. However, we must consider from which country they are coming from because we do not want people coming in with the virus. We must consider that Japan and Macao both are safe.

To prove the safety, vaccine and the medicine must be developed.

As for the economy we are expecting a huge recession. Hundreds of agencies might bankrupt in Japan. The government and JATA, should put some regional support for the agencies to make them survive. By seeing this economic situation, we must consider safety first.

And when the economy situation will be back to the normal, then our market would get back too.

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However, there is a big shift in the world because of this virus. People are working from home; many things have been changing. Travel agencies says some of the market might be back, business, FIT, package tours and group tours... but this is the traditional way of thinking. The way of booking will change so fast. Travel agencies should develop new system and we expect new products from them adjusting the future market. At this moment, we must go directly to the market to target FIT without them. We need to change the old fashion in the tourism industry.

### **POLAND**

Each day, the situation is getting more and more serious like in Germany, Italy, France, and Spain. However, there is no clear information. We do not know exactly why only these areas are more hit and no other places. We are now all in the situation that everyone needs to respect and obey to each countries' rules and restrictions, so the tourists will be safe. It will be not reasonable to close the borders yet, because in fact, where you are, which nationality you are, it does not matter. What is important is what kind of measures as a person and as individual is undertaken to protect themselves from coronavirus and we must put pressure on the government to make some funding soon. Regarding the travel agencies, they should inform the customers, what they should do to be safe while traveling.

### **PORTUGAL**

First point, talking about traveler's safety, Emirates is now implementing a test for passengers. After the test, if they can confirm that they are not contaminated, they can get inside the plane. This could be a step for safe traveling. Emirates is willing to be the first company to prove safety. That could be one of the solutions for tourism recovery. What we are working on now in Portugal is to create a stamp which proves that rules for safety are followed. The stamp will then be put in several places like hotels and other places, following WHO rules and National Health care System.

Second point, regarding about short-haul destinations and internal tourism, we have been talking with colleagues in South Korea, and they are already experiencing some bookings. Still internal market but it seems they are ready and feel safe to travel.

Third point, in European countries we feel that the client's mindset about traveling is changing with the virus. They are thinking about the environment, people, staying in more cozy places, instead of big and huge places/hotels. So, we wonder if in Japan we will face this shift in the mindset too and how can destinations adapt to this fact.

## **B) What can ANTOR-JAPAN suggest JATA and travel agencies?**

### **MACAO**

We start marketing from a FIT market, but the present JATA members (travel agencies) are not focusing much at FIT market however, we need them to be between us and consumers. We encourage them to develop new products to cover new demand from FIT. It would be necessary to change their system and the factor without denying the existence of travel agencies.

### **GERMANY**

Once the recovery gets started, tour operators will own a new business model to adapt new situation otherwise they will automatically close. We should encourage them to just rethink and suit to the new tourism industry situation. Only travel agencies which would be able to manage that, will survive. And they will become a new market leader.

However, we do not have any idea what would come in. Everything is possible, everything is wide open. Therefore, constant market research, market and consumer survey, would be one of the crucial issues that JATA would work on during the recovery process. The market survey can show the mindset change. It is the time to make actions. We see a real challenge worldwide because we never expect like a minus 90% decrease of business in the past. We are in a real emergency.

### **FRANCE**

Some agencies have a lot of power in branding in Japan which means trust. Seniors are more confident traveling with these major travel agencies especially for the safety. Japanese customers tend to be conservative in their choices, they have sometimes difficulties adapting new system.

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The market surveys are very interesting to understand mentalities faster, but it costs a lot and usually it is made in a small scale. It would be interesting if big travel agencies or airline companies could joint projects to get a bigger data to share with all. ANTOR-JAPAN could help to gather all the data too. However, it will be some personal information, so it might be difficult to manage the survey from several countries. We should prevent separation of personal data.

## **POLAND**

We suggest ideas below:

- Open frontiers
- Promote safety: specific rules, procedures among individuals, in the tourist venues
- Not fuel xenophobic anxieties
- Check the travelers before getting on the plane by governments/airport authorities
- Promote safe/safer countries
- Promote the “code of conduct for a safe tourism”

## **PHILIPPINES**

The question would be who will shoulder the expenses for the COVID-19 test. Will it be absorbed by the government, by the airlines, or by the passengers, would the passengers be tested twice, at the airport of origin and at the destination, this must be addressed.

At the end of this meeting, Director Mr. Sakakibara made an important remark that we should discuss with JATA to cancel this year’s Tourism Expo Japan in Okinawa to avoid the risk of bringing virus again from several countries. We do not know how many flights would bring participants and the government is not providing visa for the moment. We should wait for this situation to be more positive and ANTOR-JAPAN might encourage people to go abroad.

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.



### **C) Next Meeting Approval**

The date of the next General Meeting will be announced within days.  
(Planned to be on June 2020)

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