

New Year's Greeting by JATA Chairman Hiromi Tagawa 2019, The Year of Challenge & Try

In 2018, the number of overseas travelers grew to almost 19 million despite the occurrence of incidents and risks during the year. On the other hand, inbound and domestic travel suffered from the impact of natural disasters in different parts of the country. Through the “Fukko Wari” (demand stimulus campaigns), JATA supported the impacted regions helping them get on the road to recovery.

Last year was the “Year for Preparation”. Our efforts were focused on the introduction of the new departure tax, a large-scale bankruptcy prevention system, and a registration system for inbound tour operators to ensure high quality of inbound travel products. Thankfully, these new systems were set in operation and have been running smoothly.

JATA will continue to provide guidance on the most effective application of the funds gathered through the newly-introduced departure tax so that we can consequently achieve the 40-million and 60-million inbound visitor goals.

This year, against the background of a mature domestic market and a fast-growing inbound tourism, travel agencies will develop and set up independent platforms for their customers' personal data protection. JATA will initiate a “First Overseas Experience” project aiming at stimulating youth travel to foreign countries. In the field of domestic travel, our members will work on offering theme-based tours, long-stay packages and other new tour products.

Tourism EXPO Japan has become the world's largest event where professionals from the travel and tourism and other related industries get together to appeal to potential travelers. This year, it will be held out of Tokyo for the first time. The capital city of Kansai, Osaka, which will host the World EXPO 2025, will be the venue of Tourism EXPO Japan 2019. Along with the new forms of tourism, the expo will exhibit the cordial yet pragmatic character of Osaka and the Kansai region and become a fruitful and fun business experience.

This year will mark a number of important events. Osaka will host the G20 meeting and Yokohama will welcome the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7). After thirty years of reign, the Emperor of Japan will abdicate and relinquish the throne to his eldest son and the 2019 Rugby World Cup will be held in Japan. As the world listens to news from Japan, tourism exchange is expected to further increase its momentum. It is our belief that the growth of two-way tourism will deepen mutual understanding and contribute to the preservation of world peace.

As regards the sustainable development goals adopted by the United Nations Member States, tourism is to play a major role in their implementation. JATA as the representative and leader of the industry, is committed to achieving the goals. Our motto this year is “Challenge”. In the true spirit of rugby, let us make this year the “Year of Challenge & Try”.

We are looking forward to your guidance and support for our endeavors.

Hiromi Tagawa
Chairman

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