

JATA International News Letter

June 2026

Remarks by Mr. Yuji Hara, New Chairperson of JATA

My name is Yuji Hara, and I have been appointed as a new Chairperson of JATA. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the exceptional support you have consistently shown for JATA's activities. I am committed to doing my utmost to further the development of JATA and its member travel agencies, and I would be grateful for your continued support and guidance.

While uncertainties remain in the travel environment, including developments in the Middle East, Japanese outbound travel journeys in April 2026 reached 1,042,100, up 8.4% year-on-year, and remained above the one-million level.

Inbound tourism also continues to show steady momentum. Although slightly below the previous year's level, the latest monthly figure marked the highest so far, this fiscal year, reflecting a generally positive trend.

The Government of Japan has also approved the "The Fifth Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan" and has begun implementing new initiatives to promote tourism, including the enhancement of mutual exchange through the expansion of outbound travel. JATA is actively involved in these initiatives and is working together with its member travel agencies on a wide range of activities. In this newsletter, we also highlight the initiatives of each division, and we would be pleased if you could take a moment to review them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yuji Hara".

Yuji Hara, Chairperson
Japan Association of Travel Agents

Remarks by Mr. Hiroyuki Takahashi, Former Chairperson of JATA

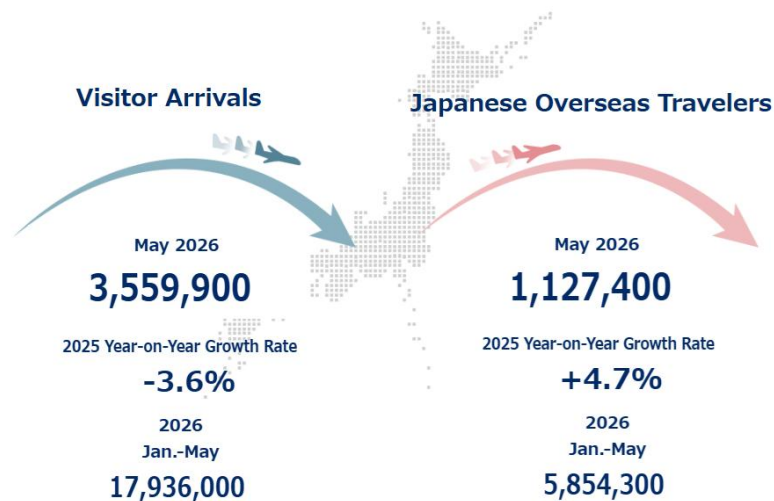
We would like to express our sincere appreciation for your continued support of JATA's activities. I would like to inform you that I will step down as Chairperson at the JATA General Meeting in June 17th, upon the completion of my term and appointed as a JATA Executive Advisor. Since my appointment in December 2021, I have received tremendous support from all of you, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude. Under the new Chairperson and leadership team, JATA will continue to dedicate itself to its work, and I sincerely appreciate your continued support and guidance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hiroyuki Takahashi".

Hiroyuki Takahashi, Executive Advisor
Japan Association of Travel Agents

Japan Travel Market Statistics

May. 2026 Visitor arrivals to Japan and Japanese Overseas Travelers



Source: JNTO statistics.

For more details please visit: <https://statistics.jnto.go.jp/en/graph/#graph--latest--figures>

JATA's Key Activities

Outbound Travel Promotion Division

Initiatives to Promote Outbound Travel to Australia and Palau

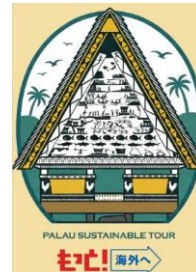
The Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) Outbound Tourism Promotion Council (JOTC)* has been promoting sustainable outbound travel to Australia since fiscal year 2025. In fiscal year 2026, we will build on our achievements to date and expand the value of sustainable travel to a new destination: Palau.

In Australia, participating travel companies have developed and promoted tours featuring sustainable destinations such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Blue Mountains. By joining these tours, travelers can contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). From fiscal year 2026, JOTC will further expand the range of eligible sustainable tours and explore extending its carbon offset program to individual travelers. In addition, the initiative period has been extended through March 2028 to ensure the continued promotion of sustainable travel. For group travel, JOTC also promotes socially responsible travel programs for corporate and school groups through initiatives such as purchasing carbon credits (ACCUs) and tree-planting programs. A common logo mark is displayed on these tour products and proposal materials, making it easy to identify them as part of the sustainable travel initiative.



Furthermore, Palau has been attracting growing attention since the launch of direct flights in October 2025. The country has also introduced measures that allow travelers to participate in environmental conservation, such as an environmental tax upon entry and the signing of the “Palau Pledge.” In light of these developments, as Palau is a destination actively committed to environmental protection, JOTC has decided to implement a sustainable travel promotion program in cooperation with the Palau Visitors Authority.

This program will develop content focused on nature and environmental conservation, as well as culture and peace. Following a pilot program involving participating travel agencies (currently five companies), we plan to expand the program to other companies in the future. As part of the program, a dedicated sustainable logo mark will be established in cooperation with the Palau Visitors Authority for use on relevant products and proposal documents. Through this initiative, we aim to enhance the value of travel by encouraging participation in socially responsible activities, while expanding outbound travel to Australia, a leader in sustainable tourism, and Palau, a nation with a strong commitment to environmental conservation.



*About the JATA Outbound Tourism Promotion Council (JOTC)

The JOTC secretariat is operated by the JATA Outbound Travel Promotion Division. The Council is a cross-industry organization comprising the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), airlines, travel agencies, airport operators, embassies, and other stakeholders. It brings together these sectors to implement a range of initiatives aimed at promoting outbound travel.

Contact Information:

JATA Overseas Travel Promotion Department

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Proposal Submitted to the Japan Tourism Agency for Sustainable Inbound Tourism Development

The Inbound Travel Promotion Division compiled and submitted a proposal entitled “Toward the Sustainable Development of Inbound Tourism: Achieving the Goals of the Fifth Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan” to Commissioner Murata of the Japan Tourism Agency.

In preparing this proposal, we identified key issues through the “Survey on Attitudes Toward Expanding Inbound Tourism,” which the Committee for the Promotion of Inbound Tourism regularly conducts among tourism-related businesses and organizations, and outlined necessary actions.

Our proposals are centered on three key areas: “attracting visitors to the region,” “human resources development,” and “international education,” and we have submitted the following specific requests for each.

1. Attracting visitors to the region

- Strengthening efforts through integrated public-private promotion
- Implementation of an “Inbound Destination Campaign” that focuses on selected wide-area regions and promotes multi-year, intensive initiatives ranging from content development to the improvement of distribution and sales environments.

2. Human resources development

- Support for a “Sub-Guide Program” that allows newly certified tour guides to accompany actual tours and gain hands-on experience.
- Establishment of a new certification system for foreign residents in Japan to help secure multilingual guides and address the chronic shortage of guide personnel.
- Establishment of unified standards for adventure guides
- Support for the employment and retention of international students and other foreign residents in the tourism industry

3. International education

- Subsidies for exchange-related expenses (such as lunch costs and transportation expenses) to reduce the financial burden on host schools and promote the expansion of inbound educational travel

JATA will continue to collaborate with its member travel agencies to attract international visitors to regional areas across Japan.



Vice Chair Ishida (JTBGMT) and Committee Member Iso (Tobu Top Tours) of the Committee for the Promotion of Inbound Tourism submitted the proposal to Commissioner Murata of the Japan Tourism Agency.

Domestic Travel Promotion Division

Initiatives to Organize Meetings to Expand Domestic Travel Demand and Promote Regional Tourism

The Domestic Travel Promotion Division views the recovery in tourism demand as an opportunity to promote tourism to regional areas in collaboration with local partners. In this update, we would like to highlight several key initiatives scheduled for next month.

1. Morioka-Hachimantai Area (Iwate Prefecture) Meeting

Tourism operators and other stakeholders from the 12 municipalities in the Morioka-Hachimantai region will jointly host a business matching event with travel agencies in the Tokyo metropolitan area to promote the region's attractions. The event will feature individual meetings, with participants from the Morioka-Hachimantai region visiting the booths of Tokyo-based travel agencies.

In addition, the event will provide original menus prepared using ingredients from the Morioka-Hachimantai region, offering participants an opportunity to experience travel, local cuisine, and cultural performing arts all in one setting.



2. Rural Farm Stay Regions and Travel Companies: Meeting for the Domestic Market

A meeting will be held between travel companies and rural farm stay regions, which are expected to become new travel destinations in the domestic travel market. These regions are designated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) as areas promoting farm stay-based tourism in rural fishing and farming communities. In addition, meetings targeting the educational travel market and the inbound travel market are also planned in the future. JATA will continue to provide business matching opportunities for its member companies and advance initiatives to expand the domestic travel market and attract visitors to regional areas.

International Affairs Department

Attending the PATA Annual Summit 2026

The PATA Annual Summit (PAS) 2026 took place from May 11 to 14, 2026, in Pohang and Gyeongju, Republic of Korea. The International Relations Department, which operates the secretariat of the Japan Chapter, participated as the representative of the PATA Japan Chapter. This year marked the 75th anniversary of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), and the summit served as an important General Assembly featuring the election of a new President and a change in the Executive Board. At the Board of Directors meeting and General Meeting, Henry Oh, Chairman of Global Tours, was elected as the new President, and a new executive structure through 2028 was approved. In addition, from Japan, Shuichi Kameyama of JTB Research Institute was elected as a Standing Director, and Professor Kumi Kato of Wakayama University was re-elected as a director.

During the summit period, a special reception marking the 75th anniversary of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) was also held, during which long-standing member organizations and companies were formally recognized.

From Japan, ANA (member for over 50 years), JATA, Okinawa Tourist, Tobu Top Tours (member for over 60 years), and Kinki Nippon Tourist (member for over 70 years) were recognized, and JATA received an award for over 60 years of continuous membership.

The summit featured lively discussions on topics such as “Resilient Tourism,” “Sustainable Tourism,” “Digital Tourism,” “AI and the Future of Tourism,” “Trends in the Chinese Market,” and “Halal Tourism.”

Particular attention was given to workforce development for the effective use of AI, ensuring the reliability and integrity of data, and addressing the impacts of climate change on tourism and potential adaptation strategies. These discussions provided valuable insights into both the challenges and opportunities facing the tourism

industry, offering participants a deeper understanding of the issues shaping its future development.

As the importance of tourism exchanges in the Asia-Pacific region continues to grow, JATA and the PATA Japan Chapter will further strengthen collaboration with members both in Japan and abroad to support the development of Japan's tourism industry and foster greater mutual exchange.



Greeting from the New
Chairman, Mr. Henry Oh



75th Anniversary Panel



Awards Ceremony Highlights

UN Tourism Secretary-General Meets with the Three Organizing Bodies of Tourism EXPO Japan

In May 2026, Ms. Shaikha Al-Nuwais, the new Secretary-General of UN Tourism, visited Japan to attend a United Nations meeting and, whilst there, held talks with representatives of the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA), the Japan Travel and Tourism Association (JTТА) and the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), the organizers of Tourism EXPO Japan (TEJ). UN Tourism and JATA have signed a memorandum of understanding regarding cooperation on tourism events, and on this occasion, they exchanged views on collaboration for TEJ, which will be held in Tokyo this September.

At the outset, Mr. Takahashi, Chairperson of JATA and Chair of the TEJ Executive Committee, congratulated Ms. Al-Nuwais on her appointment as Secretary-General. He also reiterated his request for cooperation on collaboration within TEJ and requested that a delegation be sent from UN Tourism. In addition, Mr. Saimyo, the president of the Japan Travel and Tourism Association, stated that the Japanese tourism industry would provide support to the UN Tourism Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) in Nara City. Mr. Manabe, Acting Chairman of the Japan National Tourism Organization, also gave a presentation on the 'VISIT JAPAN Travel & MICE

Mart', a major international business matchmaking event for inbound tourism to Japan, which is being held in conjunction with TEJ.

Ms. Al-Nuwais expressed her gratitude to the Japanese participants and stated that TEJ is a highly significant tourism event in the Asia-Pacific region, adding that she would like to give serious consideration to collaborating with TEJ.

Although time was limited, the meeting was concluded with a constructive exchange of views in a cordial atmosphere.

The JATA International Affairs Department is currently coordinating specific areas of cooperation with UN Tourism. We will continue our efforts to strengthen our collaboration ahead of the event in September.



Tourism EXPO Japan Promotion Office

Toward Tourism EXPO Japan 2026 — Showcasing the Changing Nature of Travel to the World

Tourism EXPO Japan (TEJ), one of the world's leading travel and tourism trade events, will take place at Tokyo Big Sight from September 24, bringing together tourism professionals, industry leaders, and stakeholders from across the globe to explore new business opportunities.

The theme for 2026 is "The Changing Nature of Travel."

Against the backdrop of technological advancements, diversifying values, and evolving lifestyles, the nature of travel is undergoing a major transformation. As new styles of travel continue to emerge—ranging from journeys that rediscover local destinations and foster learning to wellness-focused experiences and opportunities for global connection—Tourism EXPO Japan 2026 has attracted strong interest from tourism organizations and companies around the world. We are pleased to announce that all exhibition spaces have now been reserved.

With participation expected from more than 60 countries and regions, TEJ2026 is poised to serve as a premier global platform for tourism business exchange and collaboration.

Registration for industry attendees begins on June 25, and preparations are underway for scheduled and open meetings. (Reference: <https://www.t-expo.jp/en/biz>)

One of the highlights of this year's event is the "TEJ Collection: Travel Your Way, Expand Your World." This initiative introduces 12 new travel styles that connect "travel," "purpose," and "people." Including the newly established themes of "wellness tourism" and "gastronomic tourism," we will propose a wide range of travel possibilities tailored to the needs of today's travelers and promote the value of the travel and tourism experience to the world. We will feature a wide range of themes, including drive tourism, stargazing tourism, content tourism, academies, cruises, adventure tourism, sports tourism, tourism and the SDGs, "Tabi no Hiroba" (Travel Plaza), and workation and "learcation" (learning Vacation), presenting new growth areas in the tourism market.

The "TEJ Ministerial Roundtable," a forum for discussing global tourism challenges, will be held for the ninth time this year. Under the theme "Reimagining the Future of Tourism-Investment Strategies for Regenerative Tourism," the event is expected to bring together ministerial-level representatives from approximately 10 countries and regions, as well as representatives from leading international tourism organizations, including UN Tourism, WTTC, and PATA. (Reference: <https://www.t-expo.jp/en/biz/program/conference>)

The 10th Japan Tourism Awards received 271 applications (a 12.7% increase year-on-year), reflecting a strong response to sustainable and innovative tourism initiatives from both Japan and abroad. Award-winning entries will be announced in early August. (See: <https://www.t-expo.jp/en/biz/program/award>)

Tourism EXPO Japan 2026 will, as a platform that anticipates changes in the global tourism market, bring together tourism stakeholders from around the world to co-create the future of travel, and foster new opportunities for international collaboration and business development. We look forward to welcoming you.

You can find an overview of the "Japan Tourism Awards" at the link below:

<https://www.t-expo.jp/en/biz/program/award>



JATA Column



In this section, we introduce useful information, practical tips, and key regulations under Japan's Travel Agency Act and related laws that may be helpful to our readers. In the previous article, we briefly explained the difference between organized tour contracts and arranged tour contracts. This time, we will take a closer look at organized tour contracts.

One of the most distinctive features of organized tour contracts, including both subscription type and order-taking type, is the concept of itinerary management. In organized tours, travel agencies not only design the itinerary but are also responsible for ensuring that the tour is operated according to plan (or as closely as possible in the event of unforeseen circumstances). This duty is referred to as the "itinerary management obligation."

However, "managing the itinerary" does not mean that the travel agency must continuously monitor travelers' activities throughout the entire trip or constantly check whether the itinerary is being followed in real time. The Travel Agency Act defines the following four measures as requirements for itinerary management:

- (1) To ensure that the travel services specified in the travel itinerary are reliably provided to travelers, measures such as confirming reservations and arrangements must be taken before the start of the trip.
- (2) To carry out the necessary procedures at the destination to enable travelers to receive the services specified in the travel itinerary. Examples include assisting with hotel check-in procedures and confirming meal arrangements at restaurants.
- (3) In the event of unforeseen circumstances arising during the trip that require changes to the travel services specified in the itinerary, to arrange alternative services and undertake the necessary procedures to enable travelers to receive those services. Examples include arranging alternative transportation when a scheduled transport service is unexpectedly canceled, or securing alternative accommodation when travelers are unable to stay at the originally planned hotel due to overbooking or other reasons.
- (4) To provide instructions regarding meeting times, meeting locations, and other details necessary to ensure a smooth trip for groups traveling together.

Regarding items (2) and (3), in the case of domestic travel, a travel agency is not required to take these measures if, prior to the conclusion of the travel contract, it informs the traveler that such measures will not be provided and issues a document

evidencing the traveler's right to receive the relevant travel services (such as an airline ticket, train ticket, or accommodation voucher).

In addition, among those who accompany tours and perform these itinerary management duties (commonly referred to as "tour conductors"), the person serving as the chief tour conductor must have completed a designated training program and possess the practical experience required by law.

However, itinerary management duties do not necessarily have to be carried out entirely by a tour conductor. Such duties may be performed by local representatives at the destination, or the travel agency may establish a contact point that travelers can access at any time during the trip.

Because arranged tour contracts do not include itinerary management obligations, organized tour contracts may be the better option for travelers who require more extensive support, particularly if unexpected situations were to arise during the trip.



Courtesy calls and Visits to JATA

May 26th (Tuesday)

On Tuesday, May 26, Ms. Olga Kuriyamaki, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Greece, and others visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260526_greece/

May 21st (Thursday)

On Thursday, May 21st, Lion Group Chairman Wang, Lion Travel Japan Co., Ltd. Representative Director Li, and five other representatives visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260521_lion/

May 18th (Monday)

On Monday, May 18th, Maria Ozeł, Director of the Polish National Tourist Office, and others visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260518_poland/

April 13th (Monday)

On Monday, April 13, Peruvian Commercial Counsellor Ernesto Lopez visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260413_peru/

April 7th (Tuesday)

On Tuesday, April 7th, Maricarmen Martí Villarreal, Director of the Nuevo León State Government Tourism Board, and others visited JATA.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260407_mexico/

April 7th (Tuesday)

On Tuesday, April 7th, a delegation from the Palau Tourism Bureau visited the JATA headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260407_palau/

February 19th (Thursday)

On Thursday, February 19, Mr. Mundandamo Kaweza, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of Zambia in Japan, visited JATA headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260219_zambia/

January 13th (Tuesday)

Enrique Ruiz, Tourism Counselor at the Embassy of Spain and Director General of the Spanish National Tourism Board, visited JATA Headquarters.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/260113_spain/

* For courtesy visit records prior to this, please visit the JATA website.

<https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-active/courtesy-visit/visit2025/>

JATA's online Magazine "JATA-Komi"

JATA describes the daily activities of Headquarters and regional offices on this website.

https://www.jata-net.or.jp/about/jata-information/mog_jatacomi/mog_jatacomi_index/?lang=en

*The linked articles on the JATA website can be translated into Japanese, English, Korean, traditional Chinese, and simplified Chinese. If the language is not translated properly, please click the Google Translate button (see below) and select your preferred language.

Please select your language (English, Chinese and Korean are available)
at the above "Google translation"  button.

For Companies Based Overseas

Join us as an Overseas Allied member!

JATA welcomes you to join us as an Overseas Allied Member. You can get more details about the membership and application from the link below.

<https://www.jata-net.or.jp/english/whats/join-us/>

If you are looking for JATA membership for a business based in Japan, please check the link below.

<https://www.jata-net.or.jp/page-2298/>

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Written by JATA International Affairs Department

If you have any comments or inquiries regarding this newsletter, please use the following email address:

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