

Media Briefing
PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart 2016
Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn
Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand
Friday, 19 February, 2016, at 09.45-10.45 hrs.
Doi Tong, Dusit Island Resort

Sawasdee khrap and good morning,

Distinguished media delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai tourism industry, it is indeed an honor and privilege to host the PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart 2016. We would like to thank PATA for choosing Thailand, specifically Chiang Rai as the venue for this prestige event. Tracing back to 1999, Thailand once hosted the PATA Adventure Travel Mart and Ecotourism Conference in Chiang Mai.

TAT has realised the importance of Responsible Tourism for a long time; thus, we have been continuously committed to promoting Responsible Tourism. Although it takes time, some sacrifices, and ongoing effort from all stakeholders, we will continue to MOVE on. We are sure that with the long-term cooperation from all concerned parties, it will finally lead to Thailand's Sustainable Tourism.

In wanting to create greater awareness to uphold the principles of Responsible Tourism that will also create sustainability at all levels of society, we consider hosting the PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart 2016 in Thailand is one of our commitments to promote Responsible Tourism. TAT is pleased to welcome the chance for "Creating Experiences and Sharing Opportunities" in different views and ideas on how to ensure continued and sustained delivery of Responsible Tourism in the years and decades ahead.

TAT's initiatives towards Responsible Tourism

As part of our ongoing efforts, we have continuously spearheaded various initiatives that have addressed the greater need and awareness of Responsible Tourism.

7 Greens Concept

The Seven Greens is the Corporate Social Responsibility concept initiated by TAT in 2009 to establish a conceptual framework and umbrella theme for the implementation of green initiatives in seven areas as follows:

- **Green Heart:** to urge tourists to be socially responsible and environmentally aware as well as to be part of the global efforts to help protect and preserve the environment at all tourist attractions.
- **Green Logistics:** to encourage more environmentally-friendly tourism-related modes of transport to minimise a direct and indirect environmental impact.
- **Green Attraction:** to promote responsibly managed tourist sites that respect the environment.
- **Green Activity:** to promote tourism activities that are well suited to local communities. These provide visitors with engaging and culturally enriching experiences without compromising the integrity of the environment. This includes taking the carrying capacity into proper consideration.

- **Green Community:** to support community-based tourism in both urban and rural areas that places greater importance on responsible tourism management, and promotes conservation of the environment, local traditions and ways of life.
- **Green Service:** to urge all tourism-related service providers to create positive first impressions for visitors, and to win hearts and minds by attaining higher quality assurance standards while demonstrating respect, care and concern for the environment.
- **Green Plus:** to encourage volunteering activities to give benefits back to the environment and society.

In 2012, TAT began promoting guidelines of eco-friendly attraction management in major destinations, focussing on four pilot areas: Nan; Pai in Mae Hong Son; Chiang Khan in Loei, and Ko Samui in Surat Thani. We have gained positive feedback and cooperation from each pilot area. Many green projects range from small, medium to large units, and focus on sustainable management. At present, we have nearly 400 green hotels and 50 ready-to-market eco-friendly products around the country.

We have launched the Amazing Thailand Green Routes; such as, Samut Songkhram-Kanchanaburi, Loei, and Trat to encourage tour operators to promote products with a friendly environment for foreign visitors to experience local cultures, learn local traditions and lifestyles.

2 Decades of Thailand Tourism Awards

TAT initiated the Thailand Tourism Awards in 1996. We launched the Awards to reward creative and responsible tourism entrepreneurs, products and services that highlight Thai culture, protect the environment and contribute to society.

The Awards provide an important incentive inspiring Thailand's tourism operators to enhance their competitiveness, quality management, and excellence in standards of service. It is a way of upgrading the qualities of the tourism supply side.

The vast majority of the Award winners, especially the hotels and tour operators, have been small and medium sized enterprises, as well as the local communities. All of them are geographically distributed nationwide. The Awards presentation is held every two years on World Tourism Day on 27 September.

Some of these award-winning products have also won global awards; such as, Ban Mae Kampong (Mae Kampong homestay), a beautiful village in Mae On District, Chiang Mai, which won the PATA Gold Award 2010 in the culture category; Ban Na Ton Chan Community in Sukhothai, which won the PATA Gold Award 2012 in the heritage and culture category, and Ban Rai Kong Khing, a community-based tourism village in Hang Dong district, Chiang Mai, which won the Tourism InSPIRE Award 2015, as the best community-based tourism initiative.

In line with the key strategy to promote greater distribution of visitors and reduce congestion of the popular tourist spots, TAT has encouraged travellers to explore beyond the popular tourist destinations with specific campaigns including the 12 Hidden Gems, and the 12 Hidden Gems Plus.

These are only some of TAT's initiatives, which are part of our long-term commitment to promote Responsible Tourism, and we will continue to do so even more aggressively.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are all here for “Creating Experiences, and Sharing Opportunities.” Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism benefits the local people, promotes indigenous culture, heritage and wisdom, distributes local income, protects the environment, and rebalances the fruits of economic development. I am sure this conference and mart will go a long way towards helping the success of this endeavour.

In conclusion, TAT cannot achieve Responsible Tourism alone; this requires the cooperation from all stakeholders to join hands together to create the betterment of sustainable tourism. Responsible Tourism will be the key for the next decade, the key for the future of tourism that protects the community, and the environment. I hope I am not the only one and I hope “someday you will join us...and the World will Live as One.”

Thank you and sawasdee khrap.