



26th September 2014

VisitBritain and Japan National Tourism Organization signed MoU to promote tourism between the two countries in Tokyo

On Friday 26th September, Mr Ryoichi Matsuyama, President of Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) and Christopher Rodrigues, Chairman of VisitBritain signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Tokyo, committing both countries to the mutual exchange of experience and information in the field of tourism. British Chamber of Commerce in Japan hosted the MoU ceremony.

In anticipation of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, JNTO will execute the effective promotion of Japan to overseas visitors with the help of first-hand information and experiences shared by VisitBritain, the national tourism agency that succeeded in promoting inbound tourism to Britain through hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The MoU sees JNTO and VisitBritain build a cooperative system, with the ultimate aim of increasing the number of visitors travelling between the two countries.

In 2013, the number of foreign tourists visiting Japan reached 10 million for the first time in history. In the same year, Tokyo won the bid to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. 2014 marks the start of Japan's campaign to reach the even higher goal of attracting 20 million foreign tourists. Hosting the Games will present Japan with a golden opportunity to achieve this.

For VisitBritain, London 2012 marked just a start of a process which will continue over the coming decade as we seek to increase the current number of visitors to Britain from 32.8 million to 40 million by 2020 (you see 2020 is not just a target for Japan!). We are on the way to achieving that target – last year was a record breaking year, as Britain saw a 6% increase in visits and a 13% increase in visitor spend.

The first project is a Japan-UK tourism symposium, "Growth Strategy for Tourism, Making the Best Use of the Olympic and Paralympic Games" which will be held in London on 2nd October at the Embassy of Japan. Keiichi Hayashi, Ambassador of Japan to the UK and Rt Hon Sir Hugh Robertson KCMG MP, former Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Minister for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games will make speeches at the symposium. 2013 was a year of milestones for Japan's tourism.

David Bickle, President of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan, said, "It is a top priority of the BCCJ to promote business opportunities for British and Japanese companies in connection with the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Accordingly, we were delighted to be asked to host today's event, highlighting a landmark agreement to boost tourism between our two countries."

Ryoichi Matsuyama, President of JNTO, said "In 2013, Japan welcomed 10 million overseas visitors for the first time and we have started our working towards 2020. We are delighted to sign this MoU with successful Olympics host VisitBritain, and value the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games as an opportunity to transform Japan into a more tourism oriented country."

Christopher Rodrigues, Chairman of VisitBritain, said: “2013 was a record year for British tourism and contrary to popular belief, we didn’t experience a drop in Olympic year either. This agreement - with our friends at JNTO - will enable us to pass on invaluable knowledge and help deliver a lasting tourism legacy for Japanese tourism.”

About JNTO:

Affiliated with Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) was founded in 1964 with the mission of enticing foreign travellers to Japan. Since its founding, JNTO has effectively functioned as the Japanese government’s bureau of tourism.

JNTO maintains 14 offices in key cities around the world, through which a wide range of tourism related promotions are carried out. Each office is responsible for promoting travel and tourism to Japan; one of the most important functions is to help the travel industry encourage their clients to visit Japan.

About VisitBritain:

VisitBritain is the strategic body for inbound tourism, responsible for marketing Britain worldwide and developing Britain’s visitor economy.

A non-departmental public body, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, we work with partners in the UK and overseas to ensure that Britain is marketed in an inspirational and relevant way around the world. Our partners include government agencies such as UKTI and British Council, airlines and operators, global brands such as Samsung and the English Premier League as well as the official tourism bodies for London, England, Scotland and Wales.

Our priority is to deliver a four-year match-funded global marketing programme which showcases Britain around the world. This campaign aims to secure an additional £2 billion in visitor spend.

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