

PATA: Asia/Pacific Visitor Arrivals Up 6% in September

December 8, 2011, Bangkok: The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) today released its preliminary results of international visitor arrivals into Asia/Pacific destinations¹ for September 2011. Figures at hand show a collective year-on-year increase of 5.7%, a decline of half a percentage point from the previous month's growth rate. For the first nine months of 2011, all Asia Pacific sub-regions maintained a positive performance, although at different levels of growth as follows:

- South Asia + 14%
- Southeast Asia + 12%
- Northeast Asia + 4%
- The Pacific + 1%

South Asia led the pack for the month of September with an 11% increase. It added nearly 60,000 more international visitors to the sub-region over the corresponding period last year. For the four smaller volume destinations reporting source market information (i.e. Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka) arrivals from Asia increased significantly in terms of both volume and growth rate. **The number of arrivals from Asian origin markets – supported by strong demand from China and India – was well above that of the European generating markets for the fifth consecutive month.** This was also influenced by a downturn in arrivals from the UK and Italy to various South Asia destinations.

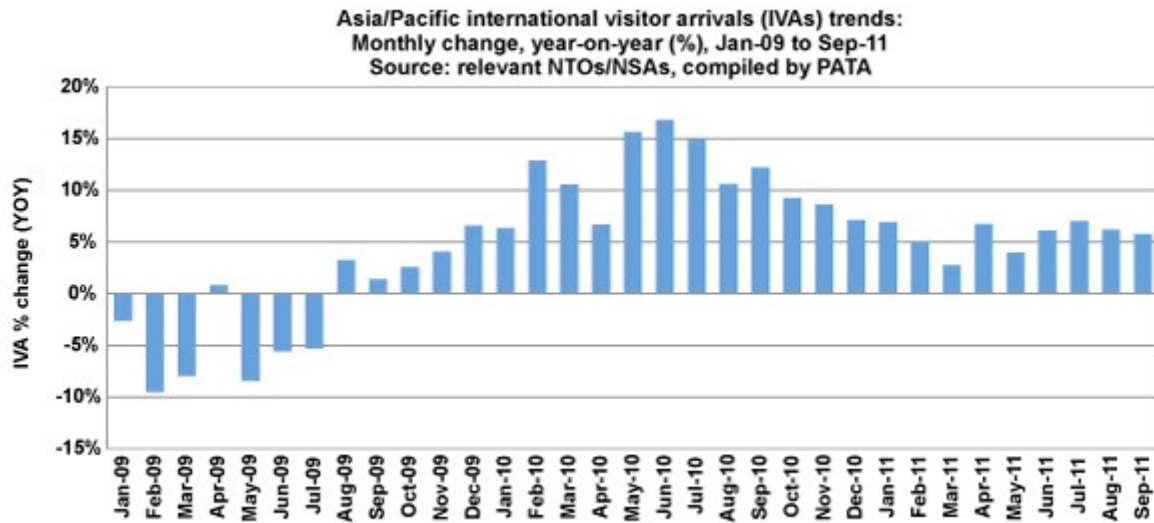
Southeast Asia registered a relatively slower growth rate of 9% in September driven in part by a strong negative performance by Vietnam (-13%). Even so, the growth rates into all other destinations remained relatively strong as can be seen by the individual country performances; Myanmar (+25%), Thailand (+23%), Cambodia (+21%), Indonesia (+16%), the Philippines (+15%) and Singapore (+9%). Malaysia is still unable to release arrivals figures for 2011 because of difficulties with a new immigration system.

International arrivals to **Northeast Asia** showed moderate growth for September with a collective gain of 5% year-on-year. Despite the slower sub-regional average growth rate, foreign arrivals into specific destinations, within the sub-region were very strong. Korea (ROK) for example saw a gain of +19% for the month. Macau SAR saw an +18% increase. Hong Kong SAR expanded by +17%, while Chinese Taipei reported a +10% gain. At the other end of the spectrum, however, China saw another relatively passive month of weak demand (+0.5%). Foreign inbound traffic into Japan (-25%) continued to improve progressively but still very slowly. Year-to-date growth in arrivals to this sub-region remains somewhat slower at 4% following a very strong increase of 12% in the January to September period of 2010. This downward shift reflects some softening in travel demand to the sub-region that can be attributed – at least in part – to the continuing uncertainty associated with radiation in Japan.

Travel demand to **the Pacific** remained sluggish during September with arrivals to the sub-region growing by only 1%. Growth for the sub-region was supported by the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand which saw an increase of +26% in foreign arrivals. On the back side of that however, the Rugby World Cup also had some role in dampening outbound from New Zealand to Australia, resulting in an overall decline of 9% for Australia during September. Most Pacific island nations recorded year-on-year increases in international arrivals for the month of September. The only exceptions were the Northern Marianas (-15%), Samoa (-14%), Guam (-6%) and the Cook Islands (-1%).

Martin Craigs, PATA CEO, said: "International arrivals momentum into the Asia/Pacific region continues to hold at a relatively strong average rate of around 6%. The rising tide is not, however, lifting all boats equally. A

few Asia Pacific destinations are facing difficulties and experiencing contracting numbers of visitors.”



¹Asia/Pacific is defined as including the following sub-regions for the purposes of press releases:

Northeast Asia = China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Korea (ROK), Macau SAR and Mongolia
Southeast Asia = Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam

South Asia = Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

The Pacific = Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Marianas, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

Results are preliminary; estimates are used for missing data. All comparative figures are year-on-year unless otherwise stated.

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