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**Philippines**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

15 November 2013

### **PH receives support from international tourism bodies**

The Department of Tourism (DOT) expresses its sincere appreciation to the outpouring of messages and support from partners in the international travel community such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) for the Filipino people affected by the recent Super Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan).

In a press release posted on their website, UNWTO expressed readiness to support the Philippines in any tourism-related recovery program for the affected areas and called for support by contributing to the ongoing relief efforts of the various United Nations (UN) agencies operating on the ground. The UNWTO, as the leading international organization in the field of tourism, is the UN agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism.

“UNWTO is confident that despite this tragic occurrence, the tourism sector in the Philippines will continue to strive and make a key contribution to the development of the country”, UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai said.

On the other hand, PATA has been in contact with local and national tourism officials in the Philippines to offer moral support and practical help. It has set up an online appeal to raise funds for the Philippines and earmarked US\$10,000 (subject to normal approvals) for the Philippine disaster relief fund. PATA has also briefed the Asian Wall Street Journal on the need to maintain business confidence in the Philippine tourism sector and its essential role in economic development.

PATA, a membership association committed to promote the responsible development of travel and tourism in the Asia Pacific region, was graciously and generously hosted by the DOT and Philippine tourism industry when it brought back its travel mart to Manila last September 2012 held at the SMX Convention Center. Manila hosted the first ever PATA Travel Mart in 1978, where over 300 delegates gathered to experience Asia Pacific's first industry trade event.

“PATA believes that tourists booked to visit the Philippines should contact their travel agents and pay attention to government travel advisories, but continue wherever possible with plans to visit the Philippines. The best way to help is to donate and keep travelling to boost the Philippine visitor economy...PATA stands ready to offer additional help to the Philippines and is in contact with charitable agencies such as AirLink to establish additional tools for recovery,” Mr. Martin J. Craigs, CEO of PATA, said.

In a personal letter addressed to Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez Jr., Mr. David Scowsill, President & CEO of the WTTC, expressed his “deepest sympathies for the extraordinary human losses in the Philippines as a result of the Typhoon Haiyan...Although we are not equipped to help directly, we are indeed ready to stand with your colleagues from PATA and ASEAN to help support their outreach.”

“We are grateful that relief contributions continue to arrive day by day from here and abroad. The support from various sectors since day 1 has been overwhelming. With the assistance from UNWTO, PATA, and WTTC, we have shown that the tourism industry is not only an engine of economic growth and development, but it is also a compassionate and supportive community. The outpouring of support from the international community, especially from these tourism organizations, is proof positive that travel and tourism has transformed the world into one community, ready to stand by each other not only in times of festivities, but more importantly during times of great difficulty and challenges,” Tourism Secretary Jimenez said.

“We are optimistic that the country’s tourism will bounce back in no time at all. We thank our foreign guests and visitors for their patience, support, and understanding during Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), and we hope to see them again in their future travels to the Philippines,” Secretary Jimenez added.

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