



## JFCCT Tourism Committee

### *Summary Report for JFCCT Chamber Members March 2015*

Tourism the first quarter of 2015 started well overall.

The continued political stability in Thailand bodes well for a relatively good year ahead. Confidence in Thailand as a destination has improved.

The economies in USA, Japan, Asia and part of Europe are improving. Unfortunately the strong Baht and the even stronger US Dollar does not help to boost tourism. Worst affected is the Russian Rubel causing a sharp decline in Russian visitors. This has severely affected destinations such as Pattaya and Phuket. There are signs that other countries are picking up the slack in destinations such as Phuket even though most European and Asian currencies have also depreciated against the Baht. On the positive side is that lower fuel prices will lead to more competitive pricing of airfares as well as promote more growth in some of our traditional markets.

The net effect will be an increase in visitors from most of Europe and Asia with a decrease seen mainly from Russia.

Our next Tourism Committee meeting is slated for 21 April. At our Tourism Committee meetings of 17 February and 17 March several topics were discussed:

Several of our Chambers have asked us to advocate foreign language assistants to Thai guides, as there are insufficient Thai guides speaking Chinese, Russian, Korean, Dutch, etc.

We have had many complaints on the difficulty with the processing of visas on arrival, resulting in long queues as well, as for countries without Thai Embassies that are unable to obtain visas in their countries. The Tourism Committee will work on advocacy to introduce E-Visas for easier entry into Thailand.

We have had many reports about traffic accidents with tourists vehicles due to poor standard of vehicles, speeding or drivers being over worked. Existing laws should take care of this and we will advocate for better implementation of existing laws.

We are preparing a paper to the Minister of Tourism, Khun Kobkarn as our input into her "Tourism Road Map 2020". Later this month

As safety and security are of prime importance to drive tourism we are also planning a follow up seminar of the Safety and Security seminar that we held in October and November 2013 that resulted in the Mekhong Declaration.

With the full integration of AEC by the end of 2015 we plan to work together with the AEC Committee and possibly others to have a seminar on how this affects the Tourism Industry.

Overall we can say things are looking a lot better and brighter for tourism into Thailand.