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This Is PATA:
A Summary Of 40 Years Of Progress

Paper No.5
THIS IS PATA

A SUMMARY OF FORTY YEARS OF PROGRESS
BY THE PACIFIC RIM’S PREMIER TOURISM ORGANIZATION
PACIFIC ASIA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION
40 Years of Tourism Promotion
(1952 - 1992)

• Formation
On October 24, 1951 the then publisher of Honolulu Advertiser, Lorrin P. Thurston, cabled PanAm’s Regional Manager, South Pacific, William J. Mullahey, from Paris with the following message:

“PROCEED TO ISSUE INVITATIONS TO GOVERNMENTS AND CARRIERS TO ATTEND PACIFIC AREA TRAVEL CONFERENCE FOR PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING PERMANENT PACIFIC TRAVEL ASSOCIATION AND DETERMINE MOST CONVENIENT DATE FOR MAJORITY DURING FIRST THREE MONTHS 1952.”

Effectively, thus, the Pacific Asia Travel Association was founded through the foresight and energy of one man and his worthy associates. For a few months the organization was known as PITA — the Pacific Interim Travel Association, then changed to the Pacific Area Travel Association and finally in 1986 to the Pacific Asia Travel Association. January 12, 1952 is the official founding date in Honolulu of the first formal version of PATA — and January 12, 1992 will be formally marked as the Association’s 40th Anniversary.

Bill Mullahey’s role with PATA did not culminate with his joint founding of the Association. He was always a leading force within PATA — and in 1974 at the 23rd Annual Conference in Jakarta, Bill was responsible for recommending the Development Authority’s formation: “... the purpose and objectives which we seek ... will be addressed to the quality development of travel and tourism facilities and infrastructure development in all Pacific destinations. Quality is something that we feel not only pays dividends, but altruistically is good for the entire Pacific in a cultural, educational, developmental and environmental way. Quality, then, should be PATA’s first objective.”

• The Present
Since its initial founding in Hawaii in 1952, PATA’s efforts have helped to build the number of Asia-Pacific travelers from an affluent few to a mass market of millions. In 1990, 32 of PATA’s member countries received a total of over 47 million visitor arrivals for the first time.

This nonprofit corporation is comprised of over 2,200 worldwide travel industry organizations, including 77 government, state and city tourism bodies, 61 airlines and steamship lines serving the Pacific Rim, almost 600 hotel operators and about 500 travel agencies. Over 15,000 individual volunteers are members of 75 PATA Chapter organizations worldwide.

Business operations are overseen by the PATA Management Committee and the PATA Board of Directors, which are elected from all sections of the Association’s membership. The PATA Advisory Council, comprising specialists from the four main disciplines of research, development, marketing and education, plus others, is constituted as an advisory body to the PATA Board. Representing the Association’s non-Government and non-Carrier member organizations is the PATA Allied-Associate Council.

• Innovation is a PATA Hallmark
Innovative programs have set PATA apart as a unique service-oriented organization. Among the programs that PATA has introduced during its four decades:

• PATA Travel Marts — structured business and contact sessions in which buyers and sellers of travel meet to negotiate contracts for future business;

• The concept of heritage conservation in the Pacific-Asia Region emphasizing the positive interrelationship between heritage and tourism industry objectives;

• The PATA Gold Awards Program — internationally recognized annual awards honoring industry accomplishments;

• PATA Task Forces — teams of volunteer experts sent, upon request, to study tourism aspects of a particular country or region and to recommend action;
• Quality professional training programs — including Seminars, Workshops and Conferences. PATA was instrumental in founding the School of Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii, now regarded as offering among the best courses of study for the development of travel and tourism industry professionals.

• A community-level Chapter network numbering more than 15,000 travel-affiliated individuals — no other international travel and tourism body enjoys the sales support of so many committed volunteers.

• The PATA Annual Conference and PATA Chapters World Congress — yearly gatherings of international industry decision-makers.

The nonprofit PATA Foundation was founded in October 1984 to foster industry education, research and heritage conservation projects geared to the growth of Pacific tourism. The immediate objective was to develop a nucleus fund of US$350,000, and contributions in excess of US$200,000 so far have been received. The Foundation will draw on new resources to fund its projects that otherwise would not be economically feasible to operate.

To help its membership remain competitive, PATA has continuously reorganized its operations and developed new strategic goals. The Association’s current logo was adopted at the 1985 PATA Annual Conference. The logo symbolized PATA’s position as a forward-looking organization, while continuing to emphasize its Pacific base. Following this, in 1986, PATA became the Pacific Asia Travel Association to more accurately reflect its growing membership.

• PATA’s Relevance in the 1990s

Through its new organizational structure, PATA is helping its diverse international membership respond to change, and is concentrating its resources to:

• keep members informed of industry trends;
• offer professional advisory and planning services;
• spearhead conservation of Pacific-Asia Region heritage, culture, and the environment;
• develop an advocacy position as THE authority on Pacific Rim travel and tourism;
• contribute to the sustainable development of new and improved tourist attractions and facilities;
• influence investment policies on sustainable tourism development;
• improve travel trade and destination marketing skills;
• address major industry issues on behalf of its diverse international membership.

Effective July 1, 1987, and as recommended by a senior-level Review Task Force, the Association underwent a major reorganization. Four Divisional offices now operate in Sydney (Pacific), Singapore (Asia) and San Francisco (The Americas), and the new Europe Division — with the PATA Secretariat remaining at its San Francisco location.

To guide the Association and its diverse international membership in meeting the considerable challenges that the decade of the 1990s pose, a Presidential Task Force was formed in April 1989 to conduct a review of the Association’s structure, future role and objectives. Recommendations were presented to the Association’s voting members at PATA’s 39th Annual Conference in Vancouver, Canada in April 1990. Adopted as PATA’s ‘Direction 2000’ Plan, the future programs and activities of the Association as it represents its member organizations and liaises with its Chapters worldwide, are charted in this far-reaching plan.

Pursuing the ‘Direction 2000’ Plan objective that calls for the Association to be more issues-oriented and for the PATA Annual Conference to focus upon strategic issues, the 40th PATA Annual Conference in Bali, Indonesia in April 1991 was a particularly significant event for both PATA and the international travel and tourism industry.

Addressing the theme, ‘Enrich the Environment’, PATA ’91 brought together in Bali a diverse group of international environment and related specialists and the decision-makers of Pacific-Asia Region tourism. The resulting dividend was the adoption of the PATA ’91 Conference Resolutions — and a clearcut direction that the Association urges both its members and their industry peers and counterparts to follow in the coming years.

Forty years after its far-sighted beginnings in Hawaii, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) continues its unique representative and leadership role in the Pacific-Asia Region’s growing travel and tourism industry.
Recognizing:
PATA’s longstanding commitment as stated in the PATA Charter:

“the objectives of the Association shall be to encourage and assist in the development of travel industries throughout Pacific-Asia in a manner which recognizes the urgent importance to practice an environmental ethic that supports responsible conservation and restoration of Pacific-Asia’s unique combination of natural, social and cultural resources”; and

Whereas:
PATA’s members wish their Association to be the leader of, and authority on, travel and tourism in the Pacific-Asia area, with particular focus on aspects of the environment, conservation and heritage; and

Whereas:
Tourism and travel in Pacific-Asia continues to increase in volume and diversity at rates which could have an adverse impact on the social and natural environments of our member nations if not well managed; and

Whereas:
PATA has demonstrated both a desire and a capacity to work with appropriate local, national and international authorities to preserve and maintain the highest standards in travel and tourism management throughout the Pacific-Asia area;

Conference therefore resolves that PATA will:

1. promote and participate in both local and national planning procedures, not only in tourism planning, but in general land use and encourage mechanisms to ensure local authority compliance;
2. adopt the “Blue Flag” model of performance standards and incentives to identify, preserve and market PATA destinations in terms of all aspects of environmental sustainability;
3. (a) establish a PATA Antarctic Fund to promote knowledge and understanding of the benefits and effects of tourism in the Antarctic;
   (b) advocate a responsible industry perspective on Antarctic tourism through participation in appropriate international forums;
4. encourage and assist financial institutions to ensure their recognition of sustainable development as a criteria for financing;
5. urge PATA members to promote wherever possible the benefits of environmentally sensitive tourism.

In advancement of these resolutions, PATA will assess all its future business plans in the light of these resolutions raised at its 40th Annual Conference that concluded on 13 April 1991 in Bali, Indonesia.