

## **Record note of Discussion of IATO Interactive Meeting and Presentation on The Connaught on Nov 28, 2020 4pm on zoom.**

Mr. Pronab Sarkar welcomed the TAJ Group team to coordinate with IATO in the launch of their refurbished The Connaught, New Delhi – IHCL SeleQtions. The Taj Team of Ms Azmin Signaporia, Mr. Robin Rajput, Ms Sonali Chauhan, General Manager made their presentation and our members asked questions on category of rooms, pricing and if it will change with the view from the rooms, conference facilities, parking of coaches, cuisines and the Pet hospitality feature.

Mr. Rajesh Mudgill thanked the TAJ Team for their presentation and informed the members that regular weekly reports are being sent to them and they may please share their thoughts. The questions raised by Mr. Amaresh Tiwari, A T & Seasons Vacations Travel Pvt. Ltd. and Mr. Rajeev Kohli, Creative Travel have been received by IATO and will be replied at the earliest. IATO is moving in the positive direction he said and then opened the house for interaction.

Mr James Kodianthara, Concord Exotic Voyages, wanted to know the development regarding SEIS and what IATO can hope for? *To this Mr Sarkar said that IATO is in touch with the government, there is no news yet. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December there is a meeting with the Ministry of Commerce, IATO will raise the issue once again and shall come back.*

Mr. Amaresh Tiwari said that the Ministry of Tourism is not participating in EIBTM Barcelona this year, whereas they should and secondly the Ministry does not use the nomenclature of DMC (Destination Management Company) and instead continue to use the term and address as Inbound Tour Operators. In the International Market the nomenclature of DMC is in vogue and it should be adopted by the Ministry of Tourism. *Mr Sarkar said that IATO will take it up with the Ministry of Tourism on both the accounts as mentioned. With regard to participation in EIBTM Barcelona, President asked Mr. Amaresh Tiwari to send an email with details enable take up with the Ministry.*

Mr Sunirmol Ghosh said that the Government of India should make public Covid protocols for incoming tourists as within 2 to 3 months the FTOs will finalise their brochure hence it is necessary to put India back on the tourist map. *To this Mr Sarkar said that the think tank at the Ministry of Tourism is working on International Global Marketing plan, they have asked for inputs from IATO and IATO will give them their marketing plan. He asked Mr Sunirmol*

*Ghosh to let IATO know the countries that are open for tourism with India on reciprocal basis. In today's meeting Secretary Civil Aviation was very positive on the issue and requested Mr. Subhash Goyal to brief the members on it. Mr Ghosh reiterated that we should send the message to the world at large that we are open. Mr Sarkar said that the government is looking at those on reciprocal basis initially.*

Mr Goyal said that Civil Aviation, Tourism, Commerce, Health, Finance and Home are the focus ministries. Every Saturday we aim to have a speaker from these Ministries, a joint working group with Civil Aviation and Tourism to be formed, presently the aim is to convert the International Air Bubbles into scheduled flights so that they are all reflected in the GDS and agents can book them and E Visa to countries on a reciprocal basis where we have Air bubbles arrangement, Tour Operators and Travel Agents should not be stuck with liabilities in case an Airline goes down financially because we are booking in advance. Besides the above the suggestion of ICPB to have reception counters at the airports to facilitate tourist movements was well taken by Secretary Civil Aviation and we have to send a proposal to him regarding the counters and areas to be sanitised. Refund issues were also taken up in earnest and the formation of a Task Force was indeed a big announcement. *Mr. Sarkar added that the Secretary Civil Aviation mentioned that Tourism is an economic activity and is keen to open up airlines, will speak to Ministry of Home on the issue of opening up visas on reciprocal basis. By December 70% of the Domestic Flights will be in operation with the new normal, gradually International is likely to open up where we have air bubble agreements, IATO will give their suggestion on the proposed Civil Aviation – Tourism Task Force and requested members to give their inputs on this plus regarding Domestic and International Flights so that we can write to him in a document form from FAITH.* Mr Goyal stressed that every Saturday such a meeting will be organised and requested members to send in their questions in advance.

Mr. Sanjay Basu said that Ministry of Commerce or the Ministry of Health should project a date by when the inoculations will be carried out. This message needs to go to the world so that the world may know that by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 India is an open destination. A firm date needs to be projected. We need to be sure and not speculative and must expedite the government to some planning, projecting and committing. *To this Mr Sarkar said that we have written to Civil Aviation, Home, Tourism, PMO to request announce a date for opening up tourist visas in the next 3 to 4 months as it takes 6 to 8 months to start business. IATO is hopeful as dialogue has already stated. Global promotion to start with neighbouring*

*countries first and gradually it will go to the other markets. Europe is not a target viewing the present conditions there, we are monitoring and requested members to give their suggestions and follow our weekly reports.* Mr Basu reiterated that IATO and FAITH must strive to get a date, the date of inoculation projected and announced irrespective of what is happening in Europe or elsewhere. *Mr Sarkar said that IATO is pursuing their demand with the government.*

Mr James said that we should file a writ in the Supreme Court with respect to extension of Moratorium for a 2-year period and a clear cut directive on SEIS. Mr Najeeb said that with respect to extension of moratorium we can file a directive with the Reserve Bank of India. *To this Mr Sarkar asked to send to IATO the directives / relief that is sought from Supreme Court or RBI so that IATO lawyer can vet it and we can take it forward.* On a request from Mr Sarkar, Mr. James said that he will give a crisp, to the point note on the subject by Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Mr Sarabjeet Singh said that he did not attach much benefit to come with the moratorium or SEIS announcements. It is better to watch and hear the announcement by the government. What is of importance is to see how the government will take the case forward as to how they plan to restart overseas marketing in the post Covid era.

Mr Navneet Arora\_said that there is very less attendance in the IATO interactive meetings.

*Mr Sarkar said that with respect to International tourist flow initially we can start on a reciprocal basis and then open up to other countries. We are set to offer Ministry of Tourism ideas on Global Campaigning and requested our members to give their ideas but hardly our members respond with their ideas.*

Mr Sarabjeet Singh\_said that he had long back in July suggested that a core group pf 20 to ideate on key issues, offer suggestions, which can then be placed before members, discussed and then a final shape can be given by the EC post which it can be put up to the Ministry of Tourism to take it forward.

Mr Najeeb said that during IATO meetings suggestions can be given, a decision can be taken by the EC and we go forward with it. We cannot confront the government as it will not be good for us in the long run because our industry is a very sensitive industry.

*Mr Sarkar said that let the decision rest with him, we shall select people, take their input, make a paper on this and share it with the members.*

*Mr Mudgill said that as President has agreed to the suggestion by Mr Singh, let us leave it to the EC*

Mr. Amaresh Tiwari suggested that we can have a document prepared by a reputed agency like KPMG, McKenzie, IIM a kind of a SWOT analysis that shows our thoughts and how much we can contribute and submit it to the government. *To this Mr. Mudgill said we have done this kind of study many times, the government will take the path they deem fit, we should take suggestions from those who have given years of experience to our trade.*

Mr. O P Mendiratta said that free vaccine should be given on International arrival from April 2021 onwards and certificate issued. *To this Mr Sarkar said that before travelling to India vaccination will have to be done and the passenger has to have the certificate so India does not have to give any Free Vaccine on arrival to International passengers.*

Mr James stressed on Moratorium, SEIS, open up borders with bilateral arrangements as a short term measure. We should take legal action to make the government listen to us, Mr. Sarabjit cemented that we should avoid legal path as it may jeopardise Industry efforts and antagonise Government, and if court decide on 2% SEIS then we have to accept court order or we may have to wait for years to get the judgement, *to which President mentioned that he should not repeat the things and give chance to others also to speak.*

Mr. Sunirmol Ghosh said that we should avoid price cutting now in the markets that we operate and should be fair and brave enough to put a profit for ourselves so that in future we take care of ourselves in times of need.

Mr Raj Bajaj said free vaccine should be given to Inbound Tourists from April 21 to April 22. It will offer some encouragement to the tourism industry.

Mr Najeeb thanked all the members for their active participation, and requested that we should ensure that more members join such IATO meetings with their ideas.

The meeting concluded with thanks to the Chair

XXXXXX

---