

Press Release

27th March 2007

We at the South African Tourism Japan Office (Tokyo) are happy to hear that SAA and ANA have taken a giant step forward to making travel easier for Japanese tourists to South Africa.

The Japanese market is now growing every year, in 2005; we had 18.2% growth over 2004. It was record-breaking statistics, and in the past year from Jan 2006 to Oct 2006, we had 15.4% growth. This is very good proof that South Africa is now a "MUST DO" destination for Japanese travellers.

However we still have big barriers in selling SA in Japan, one of the top barriers is the long haul flight. In our market, over 50 ~ 60 year old travellers are very interested in South Africa and actually many seniors have travelled in SA. A convenient flight (Direct Flights) are necessary for them and off course it makes their travel easier and more desirable. We have lots of opportunities to get more numbers in to South Africa, however we are losing some numbers when they start thinking about the access to SA. We can confidently say that the accessibility is the one of the most important issues for the senior travellers, than the price of the tour. We are sure that this code share flight will alleviate their concerns. Well done to SAA and ANA for this !!

This will help S A Tourism Japan so much, by increasing numbers from the Kansai region because this area is the second largest market in Japan, about 30% of arrivals come from this area. It is not easy to grow the numbers from this area because; it is a completely different market from that of Tokyo. We hope we can find new innovative ways to break these barriers with positive steps like these. S A Tourism will have our annual Japan and Korean event, Travel Trade Workshop 2007, in Osaka on 14th June 2007. We will get more attention from the travel agents because of this agreement in the Kansai market.

S A Tourism's, Bradley Brouwer, Country Manager Japan, said that this will be a great opportunity to promote South Africa more in this market and a great opportunity for SAA to establish their position in the Japanese market. Brouwer had a meeting with the SAA Manager for Japan, Mr Yutaka Onoda to make stronger partnerships for South African Airways & South African Tourism. Mr Onoda talked about SAA's ambition for the Japan market, he said, " SAA is still an off line carrier but we are ready to fly to Japan directly. Now SAA has a daily flight from HKG to JNB with the latest aircraft, A340-600, total 317 seats. Imagine, if we had a daily direct flights from Japan to South Africa, how many travellers will be able to fly a year!! Mr Onoda said, " we will try hard to get the opportunity for a direct flight and we will talk to Japanese travel agents to sell more SA to show how much this market needs a direct flight.

Mr Brouwer, South African Tourism Japan, shared his idea and said, we, South African Tourism Japan office want to support South African Airways all the time not only because it is the national carrier but the fact is the Japanese travellers experience starts on the flight and ends on an SAA flight. We, SAT & SAA need to share and utilize the merits of both organisations, to develop and increase tourism demand by providing new products meeting the customer needs and demands with convenient access.

We have taken a great step forward, and we will strive to get a direct flight from Japan to South Africa Bradley said.