



CACCI

Tourism Newsletter

Volume 15

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Message from the Chairman



First and foremost I wish all our CACCI members and all tourism stake holders a very happy 2016!

It is with pleasure that I send this message to the very first newsletter for the year 2016. This is a time where there are many positive achievements by the global tourism industry with a continuous growth of more than +5 % achieved by the Asia Pacific region.

Even globally, the tourism Industry growth has been unique compared to many other industries. Over the past decade tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world.

Despite occasional setbacks during the year 2015, tourism has grown virtually uninterrupted. Many new destinations have emerged in addition to the favorites in Europe and North America. The number of new destinations that have opened up worldwide has turned tourism into a key driver of socio-economic progress with creation of jobs, enterprise expertise, revenue generation and improved infrastructure.

Long term outlook on tourism as per the United Nations World Trade Organization, worldwide tourist arrivals are expected to increase by 3.3% and emerging destinations by 4.4% in the next 20 years commencing from 2010 to 2030. The market share of emerging economies increased from 30% in 1980 to 45% in 2014 and is expected to reach 57% by 2030. International tourism receipts increased from US \$ 1197 billion in 2013 to US \$ 1245 billion in 2014.

Whilst appreciating all this growth and expansion in most of the countries, we must also make an extra effort to safe guard the natural habitat, cultural values and the environment to sustain the development of this industry, which has a great multiplier effect.

As a tourism professional for more than 3 decades, I am very happy to be a part of this exciting time for tourism, through our great organization CACCI. I am confident that CACCI will provide a great platform for the growth of the tourism industry particularly in the Asia pacific region.

Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty
Chairman, Asian Council on Tourism



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Tourism Session Exchanges Views on Promoting Regional Cooperation at Hong Kong Conference

In conjunction with the 29th CACCI Conference held on October 29-30, 2015 in Hong Kong, the Asian Council on Tourism (ACT) organized a successful breakout session under the leadership of ACT Chairman Mr. Anura Lokuhetty from Sri Lanka.

After his opening remarks to welcome all delegates, Mr. Lokuhetty made a presentation on the latest trends of tourism in Asia. Taking Sri Lanka as a case study, Mr. Lokuhetty spoke about the world tourism and its continuous growth over the last few decades, as well as the future growth as per the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and its projections about the future of tourism. In addition, in terms of tourism receipts and arrivals, he analyzed the growth in leading countries and how it will improve during the next 10 years.

Mr. Lokuhetty also emphasized the important role played by tourism in many economies and its multiplier effect. Oil prices coming down and how it would help to increase disposable income of people resulting in more travel. He indicated in his presentation that after fighting terrorism for 30 years, Sri Lanka has enjoyed the growth of tourism in since eradication of terrorism in 2009. Sri Lanka's uniqueness in terms of its compactness, authenticity and diversity is "A Land Like No Other."

This breakout session also invited Mr. Joseph Yung, Vice President-China, Group Project & Development, Regal Hotels International as a panelist. Mr. Yung shared with the audience the vision and investments for future of their Group, as well as a descriptive information of Chinese traveller and their expectations from host countries. The participants of the session all found this topic quite timely as many countries in the world



Mr. Anura Lokuhetty, Chairman of Asian Council on Tourism, chairs the Breakout Session on Tourism and reports on the latest trends in tourism in Asia.



Mr. Joseph Yung from Hong Kong analyzes the characteristics of Chinese tourists.



Mr. Lokuhetty and Mr. Yung exchange views with the participants on how to promote regional cooperation in the tourism sector.



Mr. Lokuhetty and Mr. Yung pose for a group photo with CACCI Director-General Amb. Victor Tseng and Deputy Director-General Mr. Amador Honrado.

are extremely interested in attracting Chinese travelers as China being the largest out bound market and largest population in the world.

The following Q & A Session was successful proving the interest in tourism of participants.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Lokuhetty made the following comments and suggestions:

1. The CACCI Newsletter on Tourism serves a good platform of information exchange, and therefore Mr. Lokuhetty encouraged more CACCI member countries to make contributions to the publication to share their expertise;

2. As the Chairman of Asian

Council on Tourism, Mr. Lokuhetty called on the host organization of each year's CACCI Conference to invite more local hotel training institutions and other tourism stake holders, such as airline operators, travel agents, transport providers, etc., to attend the breakout session on tourism. This will help not only attract more young people to join the industry, but also expand the labour force in tourism to meet up with the future demand.

3. Mr. Lokuhetty suggested in future CACCI Conferences, tourism could be included as one of the topics for plenary sessions, as tourism has been the fastest growing industry in the world.

Mr. Devindre Senaratne elected as the President of the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO)

Mr. Devindre Senaratne, the Managing Director of JourneyScapes Private Limited as elected as the President of the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) at the 35th Annual General Meeting of the Association, which was held recently at the Coco Royal Beach Resort, Waskaduwa.

In the meantime, Mr. Harith Perera, Managing Director of Diethelm Travel Sri Lanka was elected as the Vice President, Mr. Nalin Jayasundera, Managing Director of Aitken Spence Travels Ltd was elected as the Hony. Secretary and Ms. Gayangi Wirasinha, Managing Director of Abercrombie & Kent (Pvt) Ltd was elected as the Hony. Treasurer.

In the meantime, the following persons were elected to the Executive Committee of SLAITO for the period of 2015 / 2016 and they are Mr. T. M. F. Packeer, Managing Director of Asian Exotica (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Bilal Mohamed, Chairman of Asian Adventures Travel Management Co. (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Shanitha Fernando, President of Authenticities (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Chandra Wickremasinghe, Chairman of Connaissance de Ceylan, Ms. Bobby Jordan Hansen, Managing Director of Columbus Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Ms. Nushani Ediriweera, Director Sales & Marketing of Ceylon Tours Ltd, Ms. Shiromal Cooray, Managing Director of Jetwing Travels Ltd, Mr. Aasim Mukthar, Chief Executive Officer of Lanka Exhibition



& Conference Services (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Dirk Grigson, Managing Director of Lanka Sports Reizen, Mr. Nilmin Nanayakkara, Managing Director of Nkar Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Vasantha Leelananda, Executive Vice President - JKH & Head of Leisure Inbound Sector of Walkers Tours Ltd, Mr. Nishad Wijetunga, Director/CEO of Wayfarers Ltd and Mr. Mahen Kariyawasan, Managing Director of Andrew the Travel Company (Pvt) Ltd as the Immediate Past President.

The Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) was formally known as Association of Group Tour Agents (AGTA) and was established in 1975. In 2002 AGTA was reconstituted as SLAITO.

SLAITO is recognized as the APEX body for inbound tourism and the membership handles 90 percent of all inbound tourists in the organized tourism sector in the country.

SLAITO plays an integral role in all important private sector decision-making forums and is affiliated to the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

At present the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators have a membership of 200.

Source: Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), September 21, 2015



From Left to Right: Ms. Ushendrini Amerasinghe, Asst. Secretary General – Associations of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mahen Kariyawasan, Immediate Past President of SLAITO, Mr. Harith Perera, Vice President of SLAITO, Mr. Devindre Senaratne, President of SLAITO, Mr. Nalin Jayasundara, Hony. Secretary of SLAITO, Ms. Gayangi Wirasinha, Hony. Treasurer of SLAITO and Wing Commander Kumuda Eramudugolla, Chief Operating Officer of SLAITO.



Moss-viewing trips catching on among women

By Satoe Matsumoto

One day in June, a group of 17 people, mostly women wearing colorful outfits, got together at a scenic lakeside area at the foot of Mount Kita-Yatsugatake in Nagano Prefecture.

Instead of using binoculars to look at the panorama around them, these people were gazing downward with the aid of a loupe, sometimes crawling around on their hands and knees. They were captivated by the colonies of moss growing in the area, known as a “green carpet.”

The key to moss viewing is lowering the body to the same level as the mosses, said Takeshi Ueno, a 44-year-old plant ecology expert at Tsuru University who was leading this moss observation expedition near Lake Shirakoma.

Moss-viewing excursions like this are becoming an increasingly popular activity in various parts of Japan.

For example, in 2013, Hoshino Resorts Oirase Keiryu Hotel in Aomori Prefecture launched a one-night stay program including a tour to observe moss colonies in a riverside forest region.

The area around Lake Shirakoma has been designated by the Bryological Society of Japan as a “precious moss-covered forest.” The moss-viewing excursion there, organized by the operators of mountain huts near the area, started in 2011. Because of its growing popularity, the excursion’s frequency was increased to eight times

per year in 2014 from its initial five times. Most participants are women.

As he guided the two-day excursion, Ueno showed the wonders of the world of mosses.

When clusters of a variety of sunagoke moss were sprayed with mist, the leaves opened out and their



During an observation workshop held in June, participants observe moss growing beside a trail in the Kita-Yatsugatake mountain range in Nagano Prefecture. | KYODO

color changed from brown to green, prompting a marveling group member to cry, “This is like magic.”

“Women are rich in emotions,” Ueno said later during relaxation time after a seminar session at a mountain hut. “They can innocently enjoy changes in the shapes and colors of

leaves, for example, so they are well-suited to moss viewing.”

The moss-viewing boom coincides with the vogue of mountain hiking among young women. “Many women admire plants and flowers as they hike, and that may have piqued interest (in moss),” said Hisako Fujii, 37, the author of a book entitled “Mosses, My Dear Friends.”

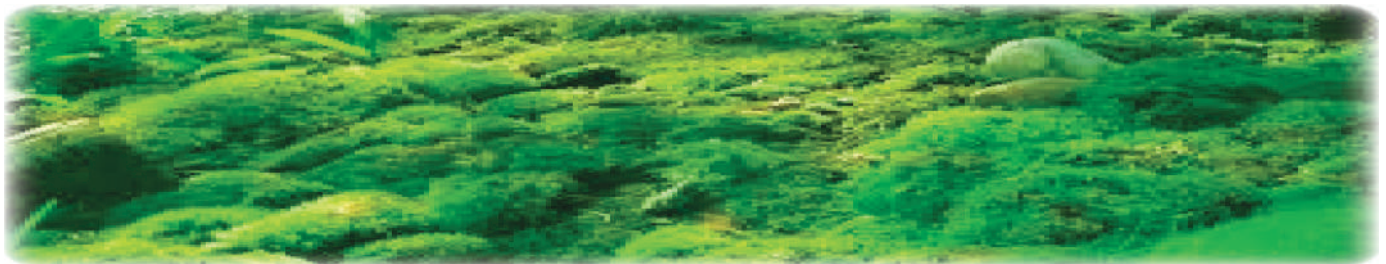
Mosses, which are rootless, do not necessarily need soil to live on, so they can prosper in a great variety of locations. Around the world, there are about 20,000 varieties of moss, of which some 1,600 have been confirmed

to be present in Japan, according to Ueno.

“What I like (about mosses) is that they are surviving with toughness as they reach out for water and light,” said Mari Sugiyama, a 27-year-old office worker from Goka, Ibaraki Prefecture, who was participating in the expedition in the Lake Shirakoma area.

For Sugiyama, moss viewing apparently offers a respite from the stress of everyday life. “Seeing clusters of mosses living together, I can forget about our competitive society,” she said.

Source: Japan Times, July 27, 2015 ❀



Tourism boom spurs Japan to convert offices into hotels



People stand at the front desk near a bar at First Cabin hotel, which was converted from an old office building, in Tokyo, as tourism booms in the country. Photo: Reuters

Record tourists to Japan are stretching the ability of hotels to accommodate them in a sector constrained by high costs, forcing developers to think out of the box for means to quickly increase lodging options without breaking the bank.

Japan is on target this year to beat the record 13.4 million visitors in 2014, helped by a weak yen and easier visa requirements for some Asian countries. The government is aiming to attract 20 million visitors by 2020, when Tokyo hosts the Olympics, to revitalise the world's third-biggest economy.

The rising influx of tourists is already squeezing existing accommodation supply in Tokyo, which has about 100,000 hotel rooms. Just 7,600 rooms are scheduled to be added in the next three years, according to STR Global, a research firm for the hotel industry.

The slow pace of growth is due to rising land prices and construction costs. One quick solution: convert old office buildings into hotels with tiny but stylish rooms that can rent for under US\$30 a night, less than half the rate for a cheap business hotel.

"Converting an office building into a hotel is an ideal way to respond to the immediate need for hotel rooms,"

said Yukari Sasaki, senior managing officer at property developer Sankei Building Co. "Building a hotel from scratch costs too much money now because of high construction costs."

Sankei, a unit of Fuji Media Holdings Inc, which owns the conservative Sankei newspaper,

converted a 35-year-old office building in Tokyo's electronics-geek district of Akihabara into a hotel in under a year and for less than \$8 million.

The hotel, called Grids, charges 3,300 yen (\$27) a night per person for a bunk bed and up to 5,000 yen (\$40) for premium rooms with tatami mats.

By comparison, the average room rate at Tokyo's lowest-ranked business hotels has risen 11.7 per cent from a year earlier to 9,500 yen, according to STR Global.

"The market for this type of hotel is still tiny, but it has potential to grow bigger in major cities where hotel demand is strong," said Tomohiko Sawayanagi, managing director for Jones Lang LaSalle in Tokyo.

Also, as more office towers are being built, older and smaller office buildings become less attractive. Such properties could be better used as hotels, industry people say.

"Some office buildings can generate higher returns when converted into hotels because we can expect further increases in foreign visitors to Japan," said Yuji Sakawa, deputy general manager at B-lot Co, a Tokyo-based real estate investor.

Last year, B-lot converted a 28-year-old office building near

Tokyo's popular Tsukiji fish market into a hotel called First Cabin, where 5,500 yen will get you a "business-class cabin" with a single bed.

Another 1,000 yen buys you space to open a suitcase.

In March, B-lot sold First Cabin to Hong Kong-based property investor SIS International Holdings Ltd, and is now converting a 30-year-old office building in Shinjuku, a popular destination for Asian tourists, into a bunk bed hotel.

Competition will come from the likes of home rental website Airbnb, which has listed thousands of properties, even at the risk of running afoul of the law.

Current regulations on short-term rentals are strict: owners are not allowed to legally let their homes without a licence, hotel-style reception desks and minimum room sizes.

But there is hope. As part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic growth strategy, his government has designated special zones across the country where a range of regulations will be eased, including laws related to short-term lodging.

In the meantime, property developer Sankei plans to convert more office buildings into low-end hotels. Its Grids property in Tokyo is slated to be torn down eventually to make way for an apartment building.

"But if tourism is still booming, we may rebuild it as a new hotel," Sankei's Sasaki said.

Source: Reuters, July 30, 2015



The backpacker's guide to Taipei: the city's 3 best hostels to stay at

By *Veronika Tomanova*

Taipei is backpacker-friendly city: it offers some great sights, stress-free public transportation and some of the most delicious food. A bit more challenging can be the search for budget accommodation. It's rather hard to find a hostel that is both inexpensive and convenient.

Some of the newly opened hostels have gone a long way to achieve a high level of both privacy and security. Electric sensor lockers, privacy curtains as well as individual socket and reading lights for each bed are nowadays a must.

We invite you to visit these three best newly opened hostels.

Star Hostel

Star Hostel, which has incorporated several green solutions in order to fulfill the goal of eco-friendliness, is behind Taipei Main Station, on MRT Lines 2 and 5 and with access to the Taiwan High-speed Rail and national rail. Its inviting lounge with plenty of pillows is a backpacker's dream: a place to both relax and gather with fellow travelers. High ceilings add more open space.



Veronika Tomanova lounges on a beanbag located in Taipei's Star Hostel. Star Hostel is located near the rear of Taipei Main Station, and incorporates eco-friendliness into its overall interior design. (Courtesy of Veronika Tomanova)

Star Hostel presents a unique combination of budget accommodation with an eco-friendly aspect. The characteristic massive constructions decorating the hostel interior are made from the wood of Taiwan forests. There are also many plants all around.

The complimentary breakfast is served in the hostel's dining room. Each day of the week, the dish is different, so that the guests don't get bored even after a couple of days. Star Hostel also offers a spacious and well-equipped kitchen including a coffee machine.

Star Hostel has been in operation since May earlier this year and offers eight dorms as well as private rooms (from one to four people). Prices start from NT\$580 for the dorms and NT\$3,000 for the private rooms.

You can find Star Taipei on Huayin St. Thanks to its central location, Star Hostel is a strategic place for visiting Taipei's sights. The proximity of both bus and train stations makes it easy to take off and explore the rest of the island.

Website: <http://www.starhostel.com.tw/>

Space Inn

Space Inn is located on Hengyang Road and stands out from the crowd with its modern design. The interior is stylized with a spaceship theme and the staff are attired in spacesuits, making guests feel like they have just taken off from Earth. The lounge is decorated in cold metal colors, with light effects simulating the Milky Way.

Space Inn has a total of 44 rooms and 298 beds. Rooms contain from four to 12 beds. The hostel is divided into female, male and mixed sections. Backpackers can sleep in the hostel for NT\$1,200 per night.

Space Inn guests can spend their

time in the lounge reading Mandarin and English magazines, watching TV, playing foosball and table hockey. There are also two desktop computers available. Free coffee is served in the guest kitchen.



Space Inn's space ship-themed interior design creates an outer-space atmosphere for guests to enjoy. Space Inn is located on Hengyang Road, and is widely popular among tourists from South Korea and the Greater China area. (Courtesy of Veronika Tomanova)

The hostel has been in operation since August last year. As the messages pasted on the hostel guest board suggest, the No. 1 country represented among the guests in South Korea. Furthermore, many visitors come from China, including Hong Kong and Macao.

Space Inn is situated a 5-minute walk from MRT --imen Station on MRT Lines 3 and 5. The location makes it perfect for exploring --imending, one of the most vibrant districts of Taipei, with its pedestrian zone and abundance of shops. In addition, 228 Peace Memorial Park is just a stone's throw away.

Website: <http://www.spaceinn.com.tw/>

NK Hostel

Unlike most hostels, the foyer of NK Hostel looks like a coffee shop. Once you step in, you can relax in its homely atmosphere. Little tables, soft sofas with colorful pillows make guests feel comfortable and welcome. This is one of the most relaxing places in town!

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The backpacker's

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NK Hostel is located on Nanjing East Road and has some great urban views. One can observe the planes taking off from Songshan Airport as well as enjoy panoramic views including Taipei 101.

Breakfast is included in the room rate and it's a good way to start the day before exploring the city. The hostel offers a comprehensively equipped guest kitchen where guests can prepare their own meals. There is also free tea available during the day.

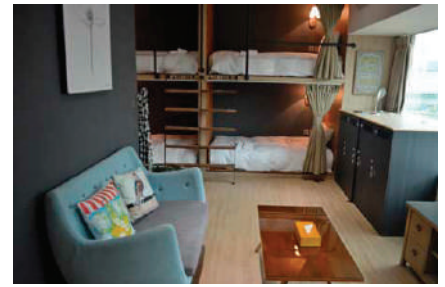
NK Hostel opened its doors in April earlier this year. Most of the

guests come from Greater China. There are eight to 15 beds in each dorm, with prices starting from NT\$680. The private room prices start from NT\$2,180. The doubles on the 14th floor feature a small balcony with a great view of Taipei 101.

NK Hostel is located near MRT Nanjing Sanmin Station on MRT Line 3 and is a great base for a culinary trip. There is a daily fruit and vegetable market as well as the famous Raohe St. Night Market within walking distance.

Website: <http://www.nkhostel.com/>

Source: China Post, July 7, 2015 ❀



NK Hostel features a room with classy bunk beds and a roomy atmospheric living room in this photo provided by the NK Hostel. The hostel is situated near MRT Nanjing Sanmin Station, on Nanjin East Road, with great urban views such as of Taipei 101. (Courtesy of Veronika Tomanova)

Lady Senator Is Batting for Agritourism

By Zac Sarian

A bill that will help develop agritourism in the Philippines has been filed in the Senate spearheaded by Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food.

This is Senate bill 2766 also

known as the Farm Tourism Act of 2015. The pending bill seeks to specify the programs that must be done to promote and support farm tourism as well as create the Philippine Farm Tourism Industry Development Coordinating Council.

The bill also seeks to ensure that policies and programs of government, including local government units, state universities and colleges and schools, and the activities of the private sector, are harmonized towards the development and promotion of farm tourism, according to Sen. Villar.

Sen Villar said agritourism can be considered as the sunshine industry in the agriculture

sector. She believes in its potential to augment the income of our people in agriculture that's why she and her colleagues are working on this bill that will allow farmers and fisher folks to seize this opportunity.

The lady senator stressed that farm tourism can also help solve the problem of urban migration which is placing stress on public services in urban areas. With economic development in the rural areas, urban migration will be curtailed. Farm tourism would contribute to rural development. Those in the provinces will not have to go to the congested cities to look for employment.

Sen. Villar revealed that at present, the Philippines has a total of 32 agritourism sites, including 27 protected areas consisting of strawberry and organic vegetable farms in Benguet as well as pineapple and coffee plantations in Bukidnon.

Recently Villar was in Negros Occidental together inputs on the attractions and management of farm tourism sites there. Among the farms she visited were the Fresh Start Organics of Chin Chin Uy, May's Organic Garden and Restaurant of Mrs. May Uy in Bacolod City, and the Rapha Valley farm in Don Salvador Benedicto town.

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SEN. VILLAR AT THE TAIPEI AGRI PRODUCE MARKET – Aside from leisure farms, the group of Sen. Cynthia Villar also visited the Taipei Agricultural Products Market where she is shown here posing with gorgeous phalaenopsis orchids. Ornamental horticulture also plays an important role in agritourist destinations. Some leisure farms specialize in edible flowers which they serve in their restaurants. That's something that also attracts visitors.

Lady senator

...Continued from page 7

Last June 22-25, Sen. Villar also led a mission to Taiwan to observe the best practices in Taiwan in promoting and developing agritourism as well as share the Philippines' experience in the area. The group included a congressman, four governors, government officials and a number of entrepreneurs and farmers.

Taiwan is way ahead in developing its leisure farms as agritourist destinations not only for local visitors but also for foreign groups. Instrumental in developing agritourism in Taiwan is the Taiwan Leisure Farms Development Association which currently counts about 300 members from all over the country.

Leisure farm development in Taiwan was adopted by the



JAPANESE SALUYOT IN AQUAPONICS – These are very healthy plants of the Japanese Saluyot selection growing in aquaponics by Dr. Eduardo Paningbatan, a retired professor from UP Los Baños. This is a special Saluyot selection that grows big whether grown in aquaponics or in the ground. Seeds of this variety will be available at Sarian Farm stall at the AANI Agri-Bazaar cum Agri-Kapihan which will be held at the Quezon Memorial Circle on July 17-19, 2015.

government as a way of enhancing profitability of the farmers who usually operate limited farm areas.

Developing leisure farms in Taiwan has been a strategy to attract the young entrepreneurs to put up their businesses in the rural areas. And these could be resorts offering a wide variety of attractions that include good food, do-it-yourself recreational activities and many more.

Many of the leisure farms in Taiwan are strong advocates of organic farming and environmental protection. One well known farm that has been practicing organic farming in the last 30 years is the Fairy Lake Leisure Farm in Tainan. It produces organic longan on 30 hectares and other crops like lychee, oranges and special coffee on the rest of the 52-hectare farm.

Another leisure farm that has strategically placed itself beside a national park is the Long Yun Leisure Farm in the Alishan mountain. The owner of the farm has rented the 400 hectare forest park so that its visitors can enjoy hiking through forest trails and imbibe the fresh mountain air.

The Taiwan Leisure Farms Development Association has been active in the past several years in attracting foreign tourists to visit Taiwan leisure farms, particularly in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia and lately in the Philippines.

Source: Manila Bulletin, July 8, 2015



IN PURSUIT OF GOOD AGRITOURISM PRACTICES – Sen. Cynthia Villar recently headed a mission to Taiwan to observe what make Taiwan Leisure Farms click. She was in the company of Rep. Carlos Padilla Jr. of Nueva Vizcaya, Gov. Eustaquio Bersamin of Abra, Gov. Nestor Fongwan of Benguet, Gov. Denis Habawel of Ifugao, Gov. Yevgeny Vicente B. Emano of Misamis Oriental, a number of other government officials and farmers. They visited several institutions, including the Golden Town Leisure Farm Zone, Young Lake Resort, Mile High Cafe and Leisure Farm, Taomi Eco-Village, Da-hu Strawberry Winery, Flying Cow Ranch and the Taipei Agricultural Products Marketing Corporation.



EXCITED ABOUT DURIAN – Apple Wang, marketing manager of the Flying Cow Ranch in Taiwan, was excited to see a fruiting durian tree for the first time. This is at the Sarian Farm in Teresa, Rizal which she visited recently. She loves to eat durian but had not seen the tree before. She was in the Philippines for a month to sharpen her English.

Tourism industry riding high on 'Dragon' sightseeing trail

By Jumpei Sugiyama



The scenic old town of Takayama in Gifu Prefecture forms part of the Shoryudo tourist route covering nine prefectures in central Japan.

A travel route covering historic, cultural and scenic spots in central Japan is proving a popular destination for foreign tourists.

But Toshio Mita, chairman of the Chubu Economic Federation, hopes that after Japan hosts the Group of Seven summit in May in the Ise-Shima area of Mie Prefecture, the number of travelers embarking on the Shoryudo tour route might really boom.

Shoryudo, which means “rising dragon route,” runs south to north through central Honshu and includes well-known spots often missed by foreign travelers making quick visits to Japan, such as the Ise Grand Shrine and the historic villages of Shirakawa-go in Gifu Prefecture, whose gassho-style houses are designated UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The name Shoryudo comes from the shape of the route that “resembles a rising dragon, with the Noto Peninsula forming its head and Mie Prefecture its tail,” according to the tourism association formed to promote the route.

Local governments, economic groups and private businesses in the region’s nine prefectures — Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Aichi, Mie and Shiga —

launched the project in 2012 as part of a central government drive to boost tourism.

The number of foreign tourists who stayed at inns and hotels along the “dragon” route more than doubled from 1.78 million in 2011 to 4.47 million in 2014, topping the association’s target of 4 million within the first three years of the project.

But some say the reason behind such a large jump in tourist numbers is unclear. The depreciation of the yen and easing of visa requirements by the government certainly also played a role, they say.

Masanori Murakami, a local tourism bureau official, admitted the effects of the project are “uncertain.” But the association is nevertheless working to increase the number of foreign tourists visiting sites along the route to 6 million by 2017.

To do so, it invited more than 550 officials from tourism and media organizations in 15 cities — including in China, Taiwan, Thailand and Russia — to tours through the route over the past three years.

But there is a lot more to do, apparently.



Members of the Taiwanese media take photos at the Gokayama World Heritage site, which features gassho-style houses, in Toyama Prefecture in July 2015.

Yumiko Noda, an experienced tour coordinator particularly for travelers from Taiwan, said, “lots of Taiwanese still don’t know Shoryudo.”

Yet Taiwanese visit well-known tourist spots in central Japan, such as Kanazawa and its renowned garden and Shirakawa-go, she said, suggesting tourism spots along the route may be competing with each other rather than attracting tourists through joint marketing.

According to the Japan Tourism Agency, 66 percent of foreign visitors to the country in 2014 traveled on their own. And while group tours use buses to travel around, Yasuyuki Kato, a marketing manager at travel agency JTB Promotion Inc. in Nagoya, said, “Shoryudo has yet to develop transport infrastructure to lead tourists to (out-of-the-way) sightseeing spots.”

But that is beginning to change.

For example, foreign tourists can buy Nagoya Railroad Co. expressway bus tickets for a fixed number of days of travel along the Shoryudo. Three- to five-day tickets for tours from Nagoya to the destinations of Takayama and Shirakawa-go, both in Gifu, and Kanazawa in Ishikawa, are available for ¥6,000 to ¥8,000. Nagoya Railroad currently sells about 1,000 tickets per month, up from around 100 tickets when it began selling them in January 2014.

In addition to Shoryudo, six other areas are designated by the central government as “extensive sightseeing routes,” where tourism promoters are trying to attract foreign tourists.

Among them, Hokkaido targets affluent Asian, European and U.S. visitors. The Kansai region offers tours to help foreign tourists understand Japan’s spirituality and aesthetics by visiting Kyoto and Nara. And the seven prefectures of Kyushu are promoting tours to spa resorts such as Beppu, in Oita Prefecture, and Ibusuki in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Source: *The Japan Times*, September 8, 2015



Japan to push bridges, dams as sightseeing spots

By JIJI

The land ministry will help promote sightseeing tours of public facilities with striking features, including large bridges and dams from which magnificent views can be had, officials said.

The ministry will study successful cases and compile a book offering know-how for central and local government entities to turn their public facilities into sightseeing attractions, the officials said. Such development is possible in cooperation with tourist associations and nongovernmental organizations.

Many public facilities have a solid “no entry” policy to individuals not on business.

However, the operators of some facilities open them occasionally to tours in recognition of their sightseeing value. If visitors shop and stay locally, the economies benefit.

One success has been the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge, which connects the city of Kobe and Awaji Island, both in Hyogo Prefecture.

Visitors climb to the top of the main tower of the suspension bridge about 300 meters above the sea, from where they get magnificent views from a usually inaccessible place. About 10,000 people take the tour annually.

Another popular facility is the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel in Kasukabe, Saitama Prefecture. The facility has



Visitors examine the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel, in Kasukabe, Saitama Prefecture.

earned the nickname “Underground Cathedral.”

The facility, a huge underground tunnel, handles large amounts of water from small rivers during heavy rain and releases it into a larger river. Some 350,000 people have visited the facility since guided tours began in fiscal 2003.

For many managers of public facilities, however, it is difficult to plan and organize attractive tours with guides and introduce other local sightseeing spots to tourists.

Tours require cooperation with groups that have expertise in the field

such as local tourist associations.

Other problems include what access to give tour participants, how to handle visitors on holidays when staff are away, and whether entry fees are appropriate.

In fiscal 2016, the ministry will analyze successful cases with tourism experts and compile a book of advice and tips for managers of public facilities to help them embrace the challenge.

Source: *The Japan Times*, September 24, 2015



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Akashi_Kaikyo_Bridge_Panorama.jpg



Global tourism rose 4% in first half of year, UNWTO says

The number of international tourists rose by 4 percent worldwide during the first half of the year, although security and health concerns hit hard some African destinations, the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said on September 10, 2015.

About 538 million tourists made trips to international destinations in the first six months of the year — 21 million more compared with the same period last year, the Madrid-based body said in a statement.

“These results show that, despite increased volatility, tourism continues to consolidate the positive performance it has had over the last five years and to provide development and economic opportunities worldwide,” UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai said.

Global tourism figures were hard hit by the global financial crisis, declining 4 percent in 2009 as an

outbreak of swine flu also contributed to cash-strapped people staying at home, but have since risen each year.

Asia, the Middle East and Europe, the world’s most-visited region, all saw a 5 percent increase in arrivals, with the Americas posting growth of 4 percent. Africa, however, saw a drop of 6 percent.

North Africa, which was shaken by terrorist attacks in Tunisia, a popular lower-cost beach holiday spot for Europeans, saw arrivals fall by 10 percent, while sub-Saharan Africa had a decline of 4 percent.

“Alongside the impacts of the terrorist attacks, African destinations have been impacted by the aftermath of the Ebola outbreak in a few west



African countries and the slower growth of regional economies depending on the export of oil and other commodities,” the tourism body said.

Tunisia’s tourism industry, which had been recovering after the Arab Spring unrest, was badly shaken in March by an attack on the Bardo museum in Tunis, followed by one in June in the resort of Sousse, which killed a total of 59 tourists.

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP), September 12, 2015



Cyclists to experience Taiwan through round-island challenge

By Lee Hsin-Yin



More than 500 cyclists in 20 teams on November 14, 2015 launched their round-island trip in Taiwan with an aim of experiencing the country on

two wheels.

Starting their adventure in eight different spots across Taiwan to symbolize the spirit of jointly moving the country forward, the bikers said they are looking forward to the nine-day journey, which will cover a distance of about 900 km.

Among the hundred-odd foreign cyclist-participants of the event dubbed “Formosa 900” is Chris Steinmetz, who said he learned about the campaign back at home in Germany and applied to Taiwan’s Tourism Bureau for a spot.

Together with his teammates, the 38-year-old departed from the Taipei City Hall Saturday and will make stops in municipalities including Hsinchu, Chiayi, Pingtung and Hualien.

Steinmetz said he is excited to learn about Taiwan on his first visit here through biking because it provides the most leisurely pace and best opportunity to interact with local people.

“You smell things, you can see the wrinkles of people and their happy faces,” he said. “It’s about getting in touch with people.”

Wayne Liu, deputy director-general of the Tourism Bureau, which organizes the biking festival to raise Taiwan’s profile within the global tourism industry, said he hopes to build

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Philippines Focuses Tourism Ambitions on Europe

By Josh Lew

2016 will be a big year for the tourism industry in the Philippines. Arrival numbers have been disappointing for the past few years. In 2014, the number of arrivals fell well short of the government's goal, which was already rather modest compared to other destinations in the Asia Pacific.

Never able to reach its potential

2014's arrival numbers topped out at 4.8 million. That is significantly less than the 6.8 million that the government wanted to get. Overall, the island nation had 1.8 percent of the international tourists in the Asia Pacific region. The next closest rival, Vietnam, had 3 percent of the tourist traffic, while Indonesia came in at 3.6.

This is nothing new. The government has missed its international arrival goals since 2012. Issues this year — with security, travel warnings

(from South Korea) and bad press for its main airports — will most likely mean that the trend will continue.

Hope for 2016 and beyond

2016 could bring a very different story, however. The Philippines is trying to take advantage of the fact that its airlines are now cleared to fly to Europe. Carriers based on the islands had been blacklisted because they didn't meet European safety standards. Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific

the third of those issues. President Aquino is planning to ink an airline deal with another European country, Italy, in the near future. The islands are also aiming to draw more tourists from the Middle East, namely Israel and Saudi Arabia.

China: the elephant in the room

Then, of course, there is China. Manila is not on good terms with Beijing because of disputes over territory in the South China Seas.

China has issued strong travel warnings for the islands. So while other countries are trying to capitalize on the massive Chinese outbound market, the Philippines has to look elsewhere.

India is an obvious option, and it is another source of hope for the tourism industry. More than

50,000 Indian citizens came to the islands in September. Even more than Europe, the Indian market could turn into a potential game-changer for the Philippines.

With growing markets and a newly found freedom for its airlines, the Philippines is in a good position to reach the goals that it has been failing to achieve for the past few years. Philippine Airlines also realizes that quality is an issue for itself and for the country as a whole.

The airline's CEO recently said that he has a five-year plan to make PAL a five-star airline. This kind of ambitious improvement-oriented mindset (even if five-star status seems like a pipe dream) coupled with an entry into new markets could help the Philippines get closer to its tourism potential.

Source: *Travel Pulse*, December 7, 2015

Cyclists

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the round-island event into one that could be participated by people from all walks of life.

"Taiwan has enjoyed a good reputation in its bike (manufacturing) industry, and we should integrate that strength into tourism to make the country a top travel market in the world," he said.

Source: *Focus Taiwan*, November 14, 2015



were able to get off the blacklist two years ago, but other airlines' European ambitions remained grounded until only recently.

The government is trying to capitalize on these newly reopened routes. They are seeking a deal with France that could see direct flights between Paris and Manila. This is important because France is a quickly growing market for the Philippines. This September, this islands saw more than 34,000 French arrivals. That is almost double the number of tourists who came from Spain, which already has strong relations with Manila.

Strong competition

The Philippines has been trying to highlight its eco-tourism, beaches and diving. The problem is that other regional destinations have similar attractions, a higher profile among international tourists and more direct flights. The hope is to quickly remedy

Mongolia's tourism industry poised for growth

An improving investment climate, supported by a raft of transport infrastructure upgrades, should help to boost Mongolia's tourism sector this year, with the upper end of the market set to enjoy above-average growth.

Business sentiment is expected to improve in Mongolia, following the news that the government and Rio Tinto have reached an agreement on the expansion of the Oyu Tolgoi mine. Delays to the project had previously dented investor confidence in the country, and the deal should produce knock-on effects across the economy, once momentum builds.

Promising outlook

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) said in its 2015 report that Mongolia's tourism industry was on course for a period of sustained growth.

Last year, tourism's total contribution to the economy reached MNT695bn (\$364m), representing 3.2% of GDP, according to the industry organisation. Revenue is forecast to rise by 7.8% this year, before increasing by an average of 5.7% annually through to 2025, producing earnings of MNT1.29trn (\$674m), the WTTC reported. While tourism is expected to account for a modest 2.6% of GDP at the end of the 10-year period, its contribution in absolute terms will rise significantly on the back of anticipated

economic expansion, driven by growth in the mining industry.

The WTTC added that the industry would benefit from a steady expansion in capital inflows in the coming years. While investment this year is expected to rise by just 2.2% from last year's total of MNT1.2trn (\$630m), the council anticipates inflows to grow by an average of 7.4% through to 2025.

Visitor numbers are also on course to top last year's figures, the WTTC said, with the estimated total of 408,000 up 3.5% on arrivals in 2014. The report pointed to business tourism as a segment showing considerable promise, saying it expected spending in this category to rise by an annual average of 8% over the next decade, well above the overall average of 5.4%.

Mine deal provides a boost

The Oyu Tolgoi copper mine expansion project may well prove to be a catalyst for a surge in business tourism growth. In mid-May the government and mining giant Rio Tinto struck an agreement that will clear the way for progress to be made on the MNT11.5trn (\$6bn) underground phase of what is by far Mongolia's largest single resource project.

The commitment to resolving a number of disputes, including differences over tax payments and investment contributions that had delayed work on the project, is

expected to help restore confidence in Mongolia as an investment destination.

Speaking after the deal was finalised, Prime Minister Ch. Saikhanbileg said he expected the development of the mine to encourage investment in other areas of the economy. "Unlocking Oyu Tolgoi's underground mine will have a significant impact on the Mongolian economy, which will benefit Mongolian citizens for generations to come," he said in May. "Our joint agreement clearly positions Mongolia as an attractive country for investment and underscores the fact that Mongolia is open for business."

Tourism is already showing signs of growing activity, with several high-end projects either completed or in the pipeline. The Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts chain opened a new 290-room luxury hotel in Ulaanbaatar at the beginning of June, while three overseas firms of architects have been shortlisted by the Mongol Corporation, a local developer, to design a mixed-use complex in the centre of the capital worth MNT590bn (\$309m), which includes a hotel, residential units and commercial space.

The two initiatives are set to incorporate conference facilities, in line with a current drive to target the business segment of the tourism industry.

Improving connectivity a priority

Plans to strengthen Mongolia's transport networks will provide an

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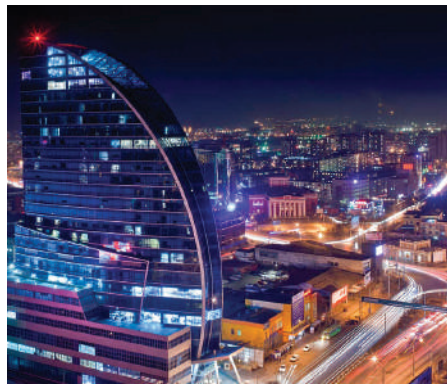


Mongolia's tourism

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additional boost for tourism. Work is set to begin later this year on a 1000-km-long highway linking Russia and China that will run through six provinces via Ulaanbaatar.

A new MNT962.5bn (\$504m) international airport, currently under construction outside the capital, will play a pivotal role in taking Mongolia's tourism industry to the next level. Ground was broken on the project in mid-2013, with the airport scheduled to welcome its first aircraft in 2016. Initially, the facility will have the capacity to handle 3m passengers annually, although there will be potential for increasing the number to



12m.

Several of the country's 22 regional airports and its internal road network are also earmarked for upgrades, which will improve access to Mongolia's more remote regions.

In a separate development, the government has indicated plans to

make a MNT481.25bn (\$252m) investment in its iconic Trans-Siberian Railway, suggesting that Mongolia is keen to use tourism interest as an opportunity to broaden its offering.

Source: Oxford Business Group, June 15, 2015

United Nations Declares 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has approved the adoption of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The resolution, adopted on 4 December, 2015, recognizes “the importance of international tourism, and particularly of the designation of an international year of sustainable tourism for development, in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, in leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and in bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of peace in the world”.

“The declaration by the UN of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development



is a unique opportunity to advance the contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental, while raising awareness of the true dimensions of a sector which is often undervalued” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “As the lead UN agency for this initiative, UNWTO is very much looking forward to proceeding with the organization and implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the UN system, other international and regional organizations and all other relevant stakeholders”, he added.

This decision follows the recognition by global leaders at the UN Conference on Sustainable



Development (Rio+20) that “well-designed and well-managed tourism” can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development, to job creation and to trade.

The decision to adopt 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development comes at a particularly important moment as the international community embraces the new Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved by the UN General Assembly last September. Tourism is included as targets under three of the SDGs - SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production and SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Source: The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), December 7, 2015

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Enhancing the Recreational and Biodiversity Value of Ceylon Tea Trails



The Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform (SLBBP) of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce signed an agreement with Dilmah Conservation for enhancing the scenic and biodiversity value of Ceylon Tea Trails – a chain of luxury bungalow resorts; Castlereigh, Summerville and Norwood - developed under the leisure arm of Dilmah.

The Castlereigh reservoir is considered a high-value resource by Ceylon Tea Trails, promoting responsible nature-based and adventure tourism in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. The reservoir was created in 1965 as Sri Lanka's first mini-hydro power generation project, by damming the Kehelgamu Oya – a major tributary of the Kelani River. Located in the Central Province, the reservoir also gets

fed by the Dik Oya, a minor tributary.

The current programme will attempt to increase the scenic, recreational and biodiversity value and in general, uplift the environment surrounding the Ceylon Tea Trails bungalows located overlooking the Castlereigh reservoir, together with Dilmah Conservation, the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) and the local authority of the area.

The owning company of Ceylon Tea Trails, Resplendent Ceylon - the leisure arm of Dilmah Tea, is a Patron Member of the Platform.

Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform: The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with IUCN and Dilmah Conservation established the Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform in 2012, to encourage and provide services to Sri Lankan businesses to engage more vigorously in the conservation and sustainable use of Sri Lanka's unique biodiversity. The Platform is committed to creating a network linking Sri Lanka's businesses, government agencies and biodiversity conservation organizations. To date, the Platform has garnered the commitment of fifty

Patron and General Members towards the achievement of its key objective of involving the Sri Lankan private sector in concerted efforts in the conservation of biodiversity. <http://business-biodiversity.lk/>.

Dilmah Conservation: Dilmah Conservation was initiated to incorporate environmental conservation efforts into the MJF Charitable Foundation, which focuses on social justice. Dilmah is governed by a set of core values which govern the principles of business today, as it did at the inception of the company, making it a truly ethical brand. <http://www.dilmahconservation.org/>.

For further information, please contact: R. M. Harshini de Silva, Coordinator – Sri Lanka B&B Platform, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce; Email: businessandbiodiversity@chamber.lk; Tel.: +94.11.5588833 or +94.76.7623991

Issued by: Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, July 13, 2015



ABOUT CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific.

It is a non-governmental organization serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since its establishment in 1966, CACCI has grown into a network of national chambers of commerce with a total now of 29 Primary Members from 27 Asian countries and independent

economies. It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region. CACCI is a non-governmental organization (NGO) granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations. It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.

Among the benefits of membership in CACCI are the following:

1. Policy Advocacy - CACCI aims to play a strong policy advocacy role in order to establish a business environment conducive to creating

better opportunities for CACCI members.

2. Wide scope for networking - Participation in the various projects of CACCI will provide members the opportunity to expand their reach in Asia-Pacific by establishing contacts with the business communities of the region.

3. Participation in CACCI Annual Conferences and Training Programs - Members are invited to participate in the annual Conferences and various training programs which CACCI regularly conducts either on its own or in cooperation with other international organizations and member chambers.

4. Interaction in Product and Service Councils - Membership in CACCI allows participation in the activities of the various Product and Service Councils (PSCs) of the organization. PSCs are business groupings organized along product or service lines with a primary objective of promoting business cooperation, personal contacts, and technology transfer.

5. Access to CACCI publications - CACCI publishes the CACCI Profile, its monthly newsletter, and the CACCI Journal of Commerce and Industry, a bi-annual publication which features papers, speeches, and other articles pertaining to issues affecting the regional economy.

For more information, please visit www.cacci.biz

About CACCI Asian Council on Tourism

Asian Council of Tourism is one of the Product Service Councils under the CACCI umbrella. The PSCs have been formed with the primary aim of promoting greater business interaction among CACCI members who are in the same product or service line. There are currently twelve PSCs that are operating within the CACCI umbrella.

The PSCs meet at least once a year, usually in conjunction with the Annual CACCI Conference held in various member countries. Occasionally, officers and key members of the PSCs conduct teleconferences to discuss their activities for the year.

CACCI held its first breakout

session on Tourism during the 60th CACCI Council Meeting held on 18-19 May 2004 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and formally organized a CACCI Asian Council on Tourism (ACT).

The current Chairman of ACT is Mr. Anura Samarawickrema Lokuhetty from Sri Lanka. He is concurrently Chairman of Red Apple Travel & Holidays Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., and Immediate Past President of The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, the apex body representing all hotels in Sri Lanka.

For more information on the PSCs, please visit the CACCI website at www.cacci.org.tw and go to the "Product and Service Councils" page.

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