



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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NMI January 2013 Visitor Arrivals Up 3%

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – January 2013 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) were up 3 percent compared to January 2012. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 39,391 visitors in January compared to 38,263 in January 2012.

“It’s a positive sign that visitors arrivals were up three percent in January and hotel occupancy reported by the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands rose six percent,” said MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio. “However, there is still growth potential in the number of unsold room nights. We need to target that potential revenue through increased promotions and strategic partnerships with airlines, especially in the coming shoulder months when traditionally fewer people travel.”

Arrivals from Japan in January were essentially flat at 15,217 visitors, three percent below January 2012 levels. In January, the value of the yen tumbled to its lowest level since June 2010 versus the dollar, falling from 86.72 yen at the beginning of January, to 90.92 yen by the end of the month, making U.S. dollar-denominated destinations more expensive for Japanese, and slightly impacting travel to the NMI.

Arrivals from Korea rose slightly by four percent to 13,241 visitors. On Jan. 10, Asiana Airlines began operating charter flights from Korea twice weekly using an Airbus 330 with 290

seats for the winter season until Mar. 28, 2013, which will bring an additional 6,670 air seats out of the Korea market to the Northern Marianas.

Arrivals from China were also essentially flat in January, rising two percent to 7,791 visitors. In addition to six weekly flights from Shanghai and Guangzhou, two weekly direct non-stop flights operate from Beijing to Saipan. In conjunction with Century Tours, DFS Saipan, and other key China travel agents, the MVA China office has launched a large-scale billboard, subway advertising, PR and travel trade campaign which runs through March, in support of the Beijing flights and targeting post-Chinese New Year low season. In a positive sign of the NMI's rapidly growing stature as a world-class destination in the China market, China's leading online travel agency Ctrip recently published its Island Popularity rankings and for the first time, Saipan entered the Top 10 most popular island destinations for Chinese travelers, ranked as follows: Hainan (China), Phuket (Thailand), Bali (Indonesia), Maldives, Jeju (Korea), Hawai'i, Sabah (Malaysia), Saipan, Okinawa (Japan) and Koh Samui (Thailand).

In comparison to flat arrivals from Japan, Korea and China in January, with the launch of bi-weekly direct charter flights from Vladivostok to Saipan in late October, arrivals from Russia leaped 52 percent in January to 1,043 and are expected to see continued rapid growth throughout 2013.

Japan, Korea and China Economic Highlights

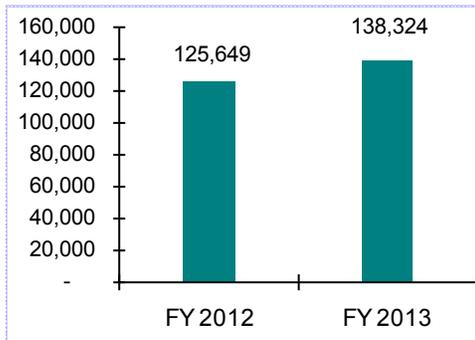
For the first time since June 2012, the Japanese Cabinet Office upgraded its monthly economic assessment. Private consumption is holding firm, and business sentiment is improving thanks to higher stock prices and weaker yen exchange rates.

Korea's export growth is gradually slowing down and domestic demand has weakened slightly. SERI (Samsung Economic Research Institute) announced some major trends in 2012: distress in the Korean economy and sluggish domestic demand, instability in North Korea, changes in the political landscape due to elections, and heated competition for differentiated service and content to viewers following the entry of general cable TV broadcasters in 2011 that ended a decades-old monopoly by three terrestrial broadcasters. The won/dollar exchange rate declined 21.8 from previous month to close at 1,124.7.

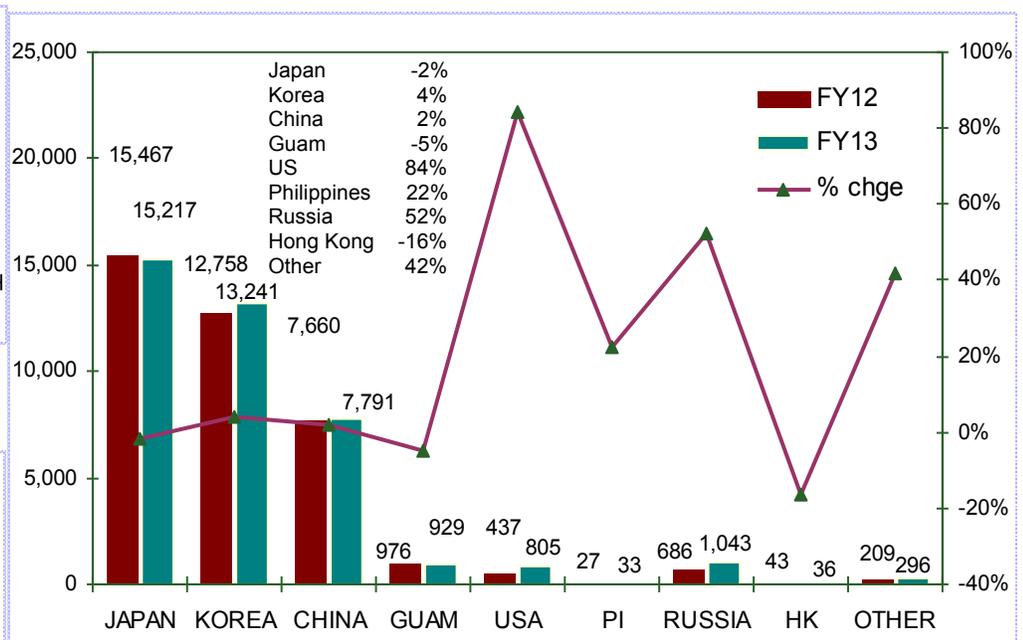
China's National Bureau of Statistics reported the nation's economic expansion slowed to

7.8 percent for 2012 amid external jitters and domestic woes. China's Foreign Exchange Trading System reported the Chinese currency Renminbi, or yuan, weakened 22 basis points to 6.2767 against the U.S. dollar on January 16. Research conducted by China Tourism Academy estimates that outbound visitor numbers will reach 94.3 million in 2013, up 15 percent, and expenditure will rise 20% to \$117.6 billion.

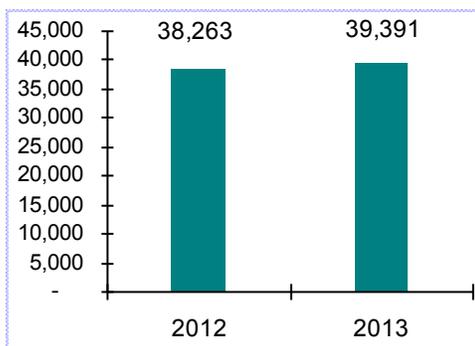
**Visitor Arrivals Year to Date
FY 2012 vs. FY 2013**



**CNMI Source Market Arrivals
January 2012 vs. January 2013**



**Visitor Arrivals
Jan. 2012 vs. Jan. 2013**



The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta Air Lines and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. China is served regularly from Shanghai, Guangzhou and seasonally from Beijing. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.