

15% tourist arrival growth expected 2010 - Philstar, March 2010



DOT expects 15% growth in tourist arrivals in 2010

CEBU, Philippines - The Department of Tourism (DOT) expects at least a 15 percent growth of tourist arrivals in the top destinations in the country in the year 2010, as domestic and travel movement continues to increase, boosted with the recovering interests of foreign travelers.

In an industry report released recently by DOT, it revealed that anchored on the smooth implementation of Tourism Act or RA 9593, the department foresees the coordinated and integrated efforts of the government and the private sector to expand current capacity, increase tourist demand, enhance tourism revenues, and create more employment opportunities in tourist destinations.

Because of the implementation of the RA 9593, DOT is confident to hit at least 15 percent growth of domestic and tourists' arrivals to the top destinations in the country.

Cebu has emerged as the number one tourism destination in the Philippines for 2009 with total tourist traffic arrival for the year hit 1.61 million, a 1.2 percent increase compared to figure recorded in the previous year.

The Tourism Act of 2009 seeks to regulate and uplift the standard of tourism services; to strengthen promotional capability of our tourism industry; to create infrastructure such as hotel development and beaches; to encourage private sector participation; to ensure and focus a cooperative approach among various agencies and institutions; and to ensure competitiveness and increase market share.

The new law "declares a national policy for tourism as an engine of investment, employment, growth and national development, and strengthens the DOT and its attached agencies to effectively and efficiently implement that policy."

The report also underscored that by year-end 2009, the DOT has endorsed 28 new tourism projects worth P 36.3 billion with estimated employment capacity of 15,567 once operational.

The bulk of new investments are in the Tourism Economic Zones amounting to P29 billion. These include the Eagle Entertainment City, Bagong Nayong Pilipino Entertainment City, Embarcadero de Legaspi, Akean Resorts and Ilawod Estate Tourism Economic Zone.

Additional investment in the accommodation sector with total cost of P5.4 billion is projected to employ 2,722 people. This include the Remington Hotel (1,000 rooms) and Microtel Inns and Suites (150 rooms) in Manila, Sheridan Beach Resort (96 rooms) in Puerto Princesa City, Highlander Hotel (76 rooms) in Nueva Vizcaya and Green Canyon EcoPark (75 rooms) in Tarlac

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In connection to this, the airline sector responded to the growth in the tourism sector as Cebu Pacific, Zest Airways and SeaAir have poured investments to acquire new aircrafts to cope with the demand for increased air travel. Total investments of these airlines were valued at P15.9 billion.

Total tourist traffic in the top fourteen (14) destinations in 2009 reached 8.9 million for 14 percent growth. This feat is attributed to the combined efforts of the Department of Tourism, the private sector, local government units and other stakeholders to continually diversify the tourism products, increase accommodation and transport capacities, and upgrade existing tourism services.

Top 10 destinations in the Philippines include; Cebu, Camarines Sur, Metro Manila, Baguio City, Davao City, Boracay Island, Cagayan de Oro City, Zambales, Bohol, Puerto Princesa City, Camiguin, Cagayan Valley, Negros Oriental and Ilocos Norte.