

General Secretary Ms. Chirta Bhatia together with senior Committee members of the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) held a discussion with the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India HE Austin Fernando, on 26th November 2018 at the High Commission premises.

The discussions by OTOAI members were focused on the potential for enhancing outbound travel & tourism from India to Sri Lanka and proposals to promote Sri Lanka as a comprehensive destination amongst the OTOAI membership.

During the meeting on 26th November 2018, High Commissioner Austin Fernando highlighted the peaceful atmosphere that continues to prevail in Sri Lanka, with the current internal political status and encouraged the Indian Outbound Travel Industry for their active business engagement with Sri Lanka.

While making a note on the total number of Indian tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka which is around 18% per cent of the total traffic in 2017, High Commissioner emphasized the tremendous potential to increase the numbers, given the size of the Indian travel market and the interest of the Indian tourist to visit Sri Lanka.

Looking at the future, members of the OTOAI highlighted the emerging outbound travel trends in India, particularly the increasing number of millennial travelers from India. Secretary General of OTOAI added that diversified tour packages play a pivotal role in attracting youth travelers from India. Wedding, golf, snorkel and Ramayanaya Trail in Sri Lanka were among potential sectors identified by OTOAI members for promotion in India.

The OTOAI members also emphasized the importance of arranging familiarization programmes and workshops for the members of the OTOAI for effective “Sri Lanka” destination promotion among their customers in India.

In conclusion, High Commissioner welcomed proposals from the OTOAI members and proposed to hold an interactive meeting with the respective members of the Travel and Tourism industry in Sri Lanka to further pursue on the proposals. High Commissioner assured to

facilitate arranging meetings with the relevant travel industry associations and stakeholders in Sri Lanka for the members of the OTOAI, during their forthcoming visit to Sri Lanka in January 2019.

OTOAI is a national level, pan - India organization of outbound focused agents, destination management companies, national tourism organizations, Airlines, Cruise companies, hospitality chains and properties, working together to improve the quality of the outbound products and services in the Indian Travel and Hospitality sector, foster mutually beneficial partnerships, encourage best practices, promote integrity, encourage learning, training and development.

Moreover, OTOAI is the only outbound focused association that is eminently desirable to those agents whose primary and only focus in the outbound sphere, as well as to overseas government, tourism boards and DMC's interested in engaging with the India outbound travel tour market.

Sri Lanka High Commission

New Delhi

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