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**UFTAA COMMUNICATION No. 43 – 2 September, 2020**

**SUBEJCT : SUCCESSFUL UFTAA MID YEAR FORUM 2020 (VIRTUAL) – Announcement of PART 2 of the FORUM – AN INTERACTIVE SESSION**

**To : All Members of UFTAA**

Greetings from UFTAA. We are delighted to share that the UFTAA MID YEAR FORUM 2020 (Virtual) held on 31st August, 2020 witnessed excellent participation. Featuring experiences shared from different leaders on the way forward, the theme for the Mid-year Forum was “Restructuring Business Approaches – Revival from COVID-19)

Over 180 delegates from many countries joined to witness the presentations delivered with well-prepared content made by 15 Global Leaders from Belgium; India; Turkey; China; Philippines; Israel; Mexico; Singapore; Kenya; Nigeria; Sri Lanka; Tanzania; Antigua; and Barbuda. These Association Leaders shared the debates they had in their respective countries with Airlines, IATA & Governments; Future Trends; and the Way-Forward plans. Apart from delegates from these countries, the FORUM witnessed large participation from many other countries, among them which include Canada; USA; Spain; Nepal; Saudi Arabia; Mauritius; Monaco; Malta; Qatar; Cuba; Pakistan; and more.

UFTAA expresses our sincere gratitude to all the presenters who have obliged us and created excellent presentations. During this week, the presentations will be uploaded on our website. UFTAA also thanks all those who joined the virtual FORUM.

A Broad-Spectrum of presentations on the evolving situation in the Travel & Tourism Industry and the way-forward to accomplish sustainability was organized by United Federation of Travel Agents Associations (UFTAA). It was an educative UFTAA FORUM.

These presentations offered outstanding learning content for the industry stake-holders to capture the various situations that exist in different parts of the world. There was a focus on the trends as well as plans initiated to overcome the most negative COVID-19 impact. It was projected by most speakers that it would take a couple of years for the travel & tourism business to bounce back to the pre COVID numbers. It was important that what is initiated during this transition period has to be well planned.

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Presenters also focused on the numerous challenges that agencies across the world faced due to the refund policies of the Airlines. While some Airlines started to make refunds; some offered “vouchers’ serving as Credit Notes which would take time to realize. It was shocking that some Airlines are yet to address the refund applications filed by Travel Agencies. Government had to get involved to enable refunds from Airlines was also commented. On a strong note, the most common aspect presented by the Associations was to persuade IATA to come up with a policy that safeguards monies of Travel Agents & the Passengers during such disasters or market situations.

Presenting the Curtain Raiser to commence presentations, UFTAA President Mr. Sunil Kumar R detailed the various initiatives UFTAA had taken up in their debates with IATA and Airlines to bridge the gap between the “crisis and relief”. For over 4 Months UFTAA actively represented the associations and their members to help address the challenges posed.

Vice President & Chairman of Air Matters, Mr. Yossi Fatael, presented a lucid picture of the evolving situation and the trends that one must keep an eye on.

**UFTAA FORUM PART 2 (INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS only):** The time that was available at UFTAA FORUM 2020 on the 31st August, 2020 was not sufficient to provoke greater interaction. Due to the most enthusiastic response from our associations, we did not want to curtail the well-prepared presentations.

To address the need for an extensive interaction and opportunity for attendees to seek more information, UFTAA Board decided in favour of an UFTAA MID YEAR FORUM 2020 (VIRTUAL: **Part 2 – Interactive**), which will be held virtually during September, 2020. We shall do our utmost to offer extensive interaction opportunity and learning from best practices that are prevalent, globally, for the benefit of its Associations and its members.

Thank you & Warm Regards

Sunil Kumar R

President, UFTAA

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