MEDIA RELEASE

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GTA drives tourism to Thailand with new campaign

- New campaign promotes Thailand to Asia’s fully independent travel (FIT) agents to help the destination recover more quickly from the political unrest
- Thailand Smiles Again is aimed at travellers from China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan
- GTA has called on its longstanding relationships with IHG and Starwood Hotels & Resorts for great deals that will attract travellers back to Thailand
- GTA is also working with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to bring travel agents to the destination so they can familiarise themselves with a true picture of all they can experience and enjoy
- And partnering with the Tourism Authority of Thailand’s Sabaai Sabaai promotion for Japanese travellers
- Initial forecasts suggested the number of foreign tourists visiting the country could drop by as much as 900,000 with many hotels reporting occupancy rates of just 30% in the first two months of 2014

International travel distributor, GTA, has launched a new campaign that promotes Thailand to Asia’s fully independent travel (FIT) agents. Given the millions of travel bookings GTA takes every year, the initiative could help the popular destination recover more quickly from the political unrest at the start of the year which resulted in travel alerts from around 45 countries.

Launched around the country’s New Year Songkran celebrations, Thailand Smiles Again is aimed at travellers from Asian countries – China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan – which are key source markets for Thailand. GTA has called on its longstanding relationship with IHG to offer a ‘Stay 3 Pay 1’ deal, saving 66% at five properties in Bangkok, one in Chiang Mai and one in Pattaya. A new G-Shop loyalty promotion will reward travel agents too: every booking made with GTA at Starwood Hotels & Resorts’ properties in Thailand earns points which can be redeemed for shopping vouchers.

GTA’s offices around Asia are also working with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to bring travel agents on familiarisation trips to the destination so they can see for themselves that the country has returned to normal and get a true picture of all they can experience and enjoy.

Says Daryl Lee, GTA’s Vice President of Sales for Asia: “GTA has been helping destinations and national tourism organisations like the Tourism Authority of Thailand welcome fully independent travellers from practically every part of the planet for almost four decades. Hoteliers and accommodation owners, as well as providers of tours, activities, attractions and experiences turn to us to help them affordably reach customers from around the world.

“This is the first time we have supported a recovery campaign on such a large scale. TAT has turned to us because of our longstanding relationships with brands like IHG and Starwood Hotels & Resort, which allow us to offer great deals that will attract travellers back to Thailand. Furthermore the extensive network we have established with travel agents means we can quickly call on them to participate in trips to get a true picture of how inviting the destination remains.”

Powering global travel, GTA’s network generates tens of thousands of bookings every day. Selling 12 million room nights every year, high street and online travel agents and tour operators rely on the company to source competitive rates for the accommodation, services, excursions and experiences that their customers – the travelling public – most want to enjoy. The sheer numbers of travel selling clients who work with GTA make the company a vital channel for trade relations and marketing campaigns.

According to media reports1, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) believes the financial damage from the political unrest could total $2.7 billion over the first two quarters of the year and forecast the number of foreign tourists visiting the country could drop by as much as 900,000. Many hotels in Bangkok, Pattaya and

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elsewhere reported occupancy rates of just 30% in the first two months of 2014 following travel alerts from at least 45 countries, including Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, the UK and the USA. Thai Airways, Singapore Airlines and other carriers axed flights into the Thai capital due to a sharp drop in demand.

GTA is also partnering with the Tourism Authority of Thailand’s Sabaai Sabaai promotion for Japanese travellers. The theme reflects the Thai way of life and the destination’s ‘easy going’ approach to welcoming visitors and to ensuring they enjoy their stay.

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Notes to Editors

- Powering global travel, GTA provides ground travel products and services for fully independent travel, supporting the biggest and best in travel. Part of Kuoni Global Travel Services, a division of Kuoni, GTA is trusted to deliver because of its wealth of experience, privileged relationships and on the ground expertise. Its technology solutions easily connect travel suppliers and sellers worldwide. Booking sites – GTA retail, TravelCube and Travel Bound, as well as GTA wholesale – process over 21,000 bookings daily, in more than 26 languages. Connect now with GTA at www.gta-travel.com