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SPECIAL REPORT:

JAPAN TRAVEL MART 2010



Travel Daily's Abigail King reports from last week's Japan Travel Mart in Tokyo

Japan has tripled its international tourism budget in the last year in a bid to beat France and become the world's most popular tourist destination.

At the 2010 Japan Travel Mart, Mr Hiroshi Mizohata, commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency, welcomed the 400 sellers and 300 buyers and outlined his country's plans.

"We have a new catchphrase called 'Endless Discovery,'" he said.

"We want to show that Japan is safe, clean and hospitable and we want to become top of the world."

Yasuto Kawarabayashi, the director of the Ministry's International Tourism Promotion Division, told *Travel Daily* that the tagline "Endless Discovery" aims to encourage repeat visits from UK travellers.

Japan plans to achieve this through promoting new

destinations and by making English more widespread. "The opening of Haneda International Airport in October 2010 also helps," said Kawarabayashi.

"More flights can reach Japan and it's only 12 minutes from Haneda to the centre of Tokyo," he added. The Ministry also proposes to restructure Japanese holidays in order to reduce congestion at peak travel times but, as Kawarabayashi admitted, those details are not yet finalised. Even Mina Hayashi, winner of the 2010 Miss Japan Grand Prix award, championed her country's cause.

"I believe Japan's hospitality has the power to warm the hearts of people who visit our country," she said.

Japan hopes to attract 25 million foreign visitors per year by 2020 as a starting point for further expansion.

