

Ethiopian Airlines partners with tourism organization to market Ethiopia



- Makes 40 percent discount on domestic fares

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – Ethiopian Airlines has forged a new partnership with the newly-established Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO) in marketing Ethiopia as a global tourist destination.

At a press conference held on Thursday at the **Addis Ababa Hilton Hotel**, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines and board chairman of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, **Tewolde Gebremariam**, announced that Ethiopian partnered with ETO in order to promote Ethiopia as a major tourist destination. Tewolde said that Ethiopian Airlines has been promoting Ethiopia as a tourist destination.

The company annually spends more than 10 million dollars to promote **Ethiopian tourist attractions**.

With a view to encouraging tourist influx into the country, Ethiopian has a 40 percent discount on domestic fares as of this week. “Ethiopian does not make profit from domestic operations, but as a national carrier we have an obligation to promote the tourism sector as well as offer affordable prices for Ethiopian nationals on domestic routes,” Tewolde told reporters.

Ethiopian has 17 domestic destinations and operates the Bombardier Q400 aircraft on domestic routes.



Solomon Tadesse, CEO of ETO, welcomed Ethiopian Airlines’ decision to collaborate with his organization. Solomon said Ethiopia had a tremendous potential in the tourism sector not limited to wildlife but to a rich culture, history, and archeology. Solomon said that in line with boosting the tourism sector, the government had established the Ethiopian Tourism Council and the ETO. “A public private partnership has been established and we will be working closely with all stakeholders including the **Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, the Ethiopian Hotels Association**, Ethiopian Airlines and all relevant government bodies in tourism development and marketing,” Solomon said.

Following the announcement made by Ethiopian Airlines to reduce domestic fares, the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association disclosed that tour operation prices would go down by 20 percent. The president of the association, **Fitsum Gezahegn**, said that if domestic fares decreased by forty percent there would be a significant discount on tour operation costs. They would then reduce their fare by 20 percent. “We have to be globally competitive. Airlines, tour operators and hotels should offer competitive prices,” Fitsum said. “We do not want Ethiopia to be a cheap destination but we have to offer a competitive price and attract more tourists.”

According to Fitsum, product, service and price are the most important factors in tourism development. “We need to work more to change our country’s image. We need to improve services and offer competitive prices,” Fitsum said.

According to Fitsum, a tarnished image of the country, dearth of trained manpower, poor infrastructure (absence of convenient roads, communication and good standard hotels), an absence of coordination and poorly kept national parks are some of the problems the tourism sector was facing. “Encouraging steps have been taken by the government to address these issues; but we need to work more on these things.”

Tewolde focused more on the opportunities the country had than on the challenges. “We have a leading airline in Africa. Ethiopian has four destinations in Tanzania. We fly daily to Dar Es Salam, Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and

Arusha. Tanzania does not have a national carrier but they have a huge number of tourists. We take more tourists to Tanzania than we bring to Ethiopia,” Tewolde said.

He said that the Ethiopian government was making huge investments on infrastructure development. “Today we have 17 airports and 15 of them are asphalted. But the airports are idle because we do not have enough tourists. The number of tourists coming to Ethiopia so far is insignificant. We need to change this. Roads are being built in every part of the country. New roads have to be built in south-west Ethiopia and in the Afar region, with access to the volcanic site (Ertale)”.



According to him, major infrastructure projects have been accomplished. “We have achieved a lot, the remaining issues are minor,” he said. He hinted that the long-serving tourism logo, “Thirteen months of sunshine”, could be replaced with a new one.

Ethiopian Airports Enterprise, Ethiopian Roads Authority, National Bank of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Immigration, Ethiopian Investment Authority, Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Tour Operators Association and Addis Ababa

Hotels Association are board members of ETO. Solomon said his organization would closely work with all pertinent government bodies on policy and other relevant issues.

Half a million tourists visit Ethiopia every year and the country’s earnings from the sector had reached one billion dollars. The Ethiopian government’s five-year Growth and Transformation Plan was aimed at boosting the number of tourists to one million and the revenue to three billion dollars by 2015.

Source: The ethiosports