

Ethiopia's Treasure Revealed at Natural History Museum

London, 5th November 2012

Invited guests and scholars were thrilled to learn more about the unique record of human evolution in Ethiopia at a presentation on Monday 5th November at the Natural History Museum in London.

Visiting Palaeontologist Dr Berhane Asfaw gave a lecture on a record of human ancestry spanning the last six million years.



Ethiopia is the birthplace of Lucy, a hominid specimen discovered in 1974 at Hadar in the Awash Valley of the Afar Depression, estimated to have lived 3.2 million years ago.

Ardi, older than Lucy, is the most complete skeleton of an early hominid 4.4 million years old, uncovered in 1992.

Dr Berhane brought to the attention of the audience 6 million years of Ethiopian history, walking them through the evolutionary records of a vast area of research including places like Dikika, Warenso Milla, Middle Awash, Konso, Chorora and Omo.

During the presentation, he discussed the beautiful landscape of Ethiopia, volcanic lakes, the Simien Mountains, rare species and fossils which he said made Ethiopia, a Palaeo zoo.

According to Dr Berhane, what is unique about Ethiopia is, out of a total of 14 Hominid species widely recognized, 11 are found in Ethiopia. For instance, hominid remains are found in the Omo Shringura at all levels, from about 4 million to 200,000 years.

Some sites have a continuous succession of hominids, from 6 million to 60,000 years.

Dr Berhane told the audience at the London Natural History Museum that the oldest stone tools, stone choppers or Oldowan tools, 2.6 million years old, were discovered at the site of Gona.

Present on the occasion were Ambassador to the UK and the Scandinavian countries, H.E. Berhanu Kebede, and diplomats from the London Embassy. His Excellency expressed gratitude to the management of the National History Museum for hosting the presentation. He also appreciated Dr Berhane's detailed and lucid explanation and his responses to questions from the audience.

Dr Berhane is a member of the Ethiopian delegation taking part in the World Travel Market which officially opened today in the presence of dignitaries, members of the diplomatic corps and business people from across the globe.



Visitors are flocking to the Ethiopian stand at the WTM, beautifully designed to reflect its ancient civilization, where local tour operators will be on hand to display a wide range of tours and Ethiopian hospitality, reminding them of Ethiopia's unique stature as the cradle of humankind.

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For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7838 3880/3; 07717 603163; 0788 637 1094 or send an email to info@ethioembassy.org.uk.