

Friday, 7th November 2014 - LONDON

Ethiopia celebrated in World Travel Market week



Ethiopia participated in the World Travel Market (WTM) exhibition in London from 3rd – 6th November, 2014. A brief ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the Ethiopian stand and was jointly officiated by H.E Mr. Berhanu Kebede, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the UK, Mr. Solomon Tadesse, Director General of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization and Mr. Michael Yared, UK Area Manager of Ethiopian Airlines.

WTM is a leading global event that brings together professionals and decision makers representing the global travel and tourism industry. This year, Ethiopia was represented by Ethiopian Airlines, Kuriftu Resort and 12 of the country's best known

tour operators. The Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO), the tourism promotion arm of the government, coordinated the participation.

A cultural event composed of a public lecture, cultural music show and photo exhibition took place at the Royal Geographic Society (with IBG) on 5th November. A press conference held under the theme, **'Discover the new Ethiopia and its infinite possibilities'**, was also held at WTM, outlining how the Ethiopian Government, in partnership with Ethiopian Airlines, is successfully embracing new sectors of tourism.

During the cultural event at the Royal Geographic Society, a public lecture on the ***Rise and Fall of the Axumite Kingdom*** was given by Professor David Philipson LittD, FBA, FSA, who spoke extensively about the findings of his research on the subject. He also alluded to Ethiopia's ancient civilization and its positive impact on tourism.

Ethiopia's tourism potential and the ongoing effort to turn it into economic benefit was highlighted at the press conference held at WTM. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Talib Rifai, Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) gave testimony of his recent visit to Ethiopia, which exceeded his expectations. "Ethiopia is a tourism star in the making", he said. He also mentioned the political will of the government, the country's world class airline and the ethnic and religious harmony in the country as the main factors that will ensure the success of tourism in Ethiopia. Mr. Rifai then went on and described Ethiopia as a modern, fresh, democratic and forward looking country whose time to rise, has come.

Speaking at the press conference, H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede said the Government of Ethiopia attaches great importance to the tourism sector and had embarked upon the implementation of policies and strategies in order to exploit the country's tourism potentials and maximize the benefits that accrue from the sector. The construction of roads and airports leading to tourism sites as well as duty free privileges and other types of incentives given to the private sector to construct and operate hotels, resorts and recreation facilities, the Ambassador said. Ambassador Berhanu underlined the importance of the tourism sector pointing to the crucial role it plays in the economy by stimulating the travel and hospitality industry thus enabling it to generate foreign exchange and create jobs. Similarly, Ato Solomon Tadesse, Director General of Ethiopian Tourism Organization underscored the country's tourism potential and said that his organization will do its level best to take advantage of that potential in order increase the number of tourist arrivals in Ethiopia.

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