

Ethiopian Airlines Creates Marketing Edge With Delivery of Dreamliner



As the second airline after Japan Airlines to receive world latest aircraft, Boeing B787, known as the Dreamliner, Africa's most successful carrier, Ethiopia Airlines made history a fortnight ago as the aircraft built with composite material and 20 per cent fuel reduction landed at the runway of Bole Airport, Addis Ababa.

Few days later the airline brought the aircraft to Lagos, its most lucrative route and then to Abuja, Nigeria's capital city.

Government officials in Ethiopia said the arrival of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner dubbed the game changer, to the nation's international airport gave a boost to their national carrier's vision of becoming the most competitive and leading aviation group in Africa.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, described the arrival of the aircraft as a major milestone not only for the national carrier, but for African aviation as a whole.

The long-awaited aircraft, which was sent from the Washington DC to Addis Ababa was received amid celebrations and cultural display by the officials and invited dignitaries from all over the world at the nation's airport.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner, according to Desalegn was an affirmation of the Ethiopian Airlines' commitment to play a leading role in development of "our country and the integration of the continent through the co-bringing of best possible, and reliable expanding services."

The deputy prime minister, who said Ethiopia was the second in the world apart of Japan and first in Africa to take delivery of the aircraft, said with the new aircraft, the national carrier was

contributing to the implementation of the nation's five-year national development and expansion plan by bringing in new aircraft such as the Dreamliner and expanding the economic development of the country.

In this regard, he added, the Ethiopian Airlines "has been a great factor in the success of opening floors for tourism, trade and investment," while also welcoming tourists from Africa and beyond to explore the new aircraft and the nation.

It was similar jubilation that welcomed the aircraft to Lagos last Sunday and in Abuja on Monday where excited passenger who flew the world's latest jetliner for the first time could not hold back the fact that they were history makers.

In Lagos as the aircraft taxied to the apron from the runway, curious passengers who were to board the flight rushed to the windows to have the glimpse of the aircraft.

The pilot of the aircraft with registration number ET- AOQ, Mr. Zelalem Hailu, explained that it was a good experience flying into Nigeria, disclosing that he has been flying for over 25 years and was trained to fly the Dreamliner at Gatwick Airport in the United Kingdom.

Officials of aviation agencies including the managing director of the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), Mr. Nnamdi Udoh, was on hand to inspect the aircraft, describing its arrival to Nigeria as a good development for the aviation industry.

Some officials of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) were also on hand to inspect the aircraft.

Speaking at the pre - arrival ceremony acting general manager of Ethiopian Airlines in Nigeria, Mr Solomon Begashaw, described the acquisition of the aircraft as a landmark for the African carrier, which he said was the first airline to make order for the aircraft, even as it is the second airline in the world to operate the aircraft.

He explained that being the first airline to introduce the Boeing 787 -800 Dreamliner, passengers would enjoy limitless features including more space for cargo, which the airline has been grappling with for a long time.

He explained that the aircraft was designed with the passenger in mind, as it had many facilities that enrich their travel experience.

The Ethiopian Airlines general manager also explained that with Africa as the core of its business strategy, Nigerian passengers would have a better experience with the aircraft, which he said would be deployed on the route and others.

"As a continent this shows how much we are making progress as Africans... competing on the global stage and changing our image," Ethiopian Airline CEO Tewolde Gebremariam, told reporters at Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport.

The plane arrived from Dulles airport in Washington, DC, home to the largest Ethiopian diaspora population globally.

State-owned Ethiopian Airlines -- Africa's fastest growing carrier -- has purchased 10 B787 Dreamliners from Boeing. Each has an official list price of some \$US207 million.

Ethiopian Airlines is expected to operate the aircraft on routes throughout Africa and Europe, including Accra, Lagos, Rome and London.

Tewolde said the delivery of the Dreamliner, dubbed "Africa First," was an achievement for the entire continent.

The aircraft was constructed with lightweight carbon, as opposed to heavy aluminium found on other planes, consuming 20 per cent less fuel.

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