

ETHIOPIA

Business - Charter and Travel



By Martin Chemhere

A caravan of dromedaries
transporting salt guided
by an Afar man in the Danakil
Depression in Ethiopia

Pic: Maramade



Left: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Inside interior of a fabric weaving factory - Pic: Sunshine Seeds

Middel: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Raw coffee bean sorting and processing in a factory - Pic: Sunshine seeds

Top: The women workers in the textile factory in the capital city Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Pic: Pinar Aliver

Parallel to its great sporting successes that has helped spotlight the country internationally, is the 80s famine that killed millions and up until recently civil wars. Tourists from all over the world are visiting the country in large numbers, drawn by, among others,

incredible landscapes and fascinating cultures making the country arguably unparalleled in Africa. Though it's not a traditional "big five" top destination, as elsewhere on the continent; still most visitors have run out words to describe its diverse and awesome tourist attractions.

AIRLINES

Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) is the fastest growing Airline in Africa. In its seventy plus years of operation, Ethiopian has become one of the continent's leading carriers, unrivalled in efficiency and operational success.

Ethiopian commands the lion's share of the Pan-African passenger and cargo network operating the youngest and most modern fleet to more than 119 international passenger and cargo destinations across five continents.

Its fleet includes ultra-modern and environmentally friendly aircraft such as Airbus A350, Boeing 787-8, Boeing 787-9, Boeing 777-300ER, Boeing 777-



Erta Ale is the most active volcano of Ethiopia. This is one of the five famous volcanoes in the world that have a lava lake, as well as the only volcano in the world that has two lava lakes - Image By Mikhail Cheremkin

200LR, Boeing 777-200 Freighter, Bombardier Q-400 double cabin with an average fleet age of five years. In fact, Ethiopian is the first airline in Africa to own and operate these aircraft.

Currently its implementing a 15-year strategic plan called Vision 2025 that will see it become the leading aviation group in Africa with six business centres: Ethiopian International Services; Ethiopian Cargo & Logistics Services; Ethiopian MRO Services; Ethiopian Aviation Academy; Ethiopian ADD Hub Ground Services and Ethiopian Airports Services.

It has registered an average growth of 25% in the past seven years.

Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian), the Largest Aviation Group in Africa and SKYTRAX Certified Four Star Global Airline, launched a four weekly direct passenger flight to Bengaluru, India on 27 October 2019.

The capital of the Indian state of Karnataka, Bengaluru is dubbed 'Silicon Valley of India' and serves as the centre of technology and innovation.

Commenting on the launch of the service, Ethiopian Airlines' Southern African Regional Manager, Abel Alemu, remarked, "Ethiopian Airlines is a significant player in connecting India and Africa and beyond. The new four weekly flights will connect the important ICT hub city of Bengaluru to the ever-expanding Ethiopian network in addition to our twice daily flights each to the commercial city of Mumbai and the Capital New Delhi. The flights will also complement our existing dedicated freighter flights to/from Bengaluru.

The addition of Bengaluru to our Indian network will give wider menu of choices to the fast-growing air travellers between India and Africa and beyond. The increasing flight frequencies and number of gateways in India will facilitate trade, investment and tourism to/from the Indian sub-continent. The schedule is carefully designed to connect passengers efficiently through our global hub in Addis Ababa with short connections and will provide the fastest and the shortest connections between Bengaluru in southern India and more than 60 destinations in Africa and South America."

Currently, Ethiopian operates passenger flights to Mumbai and New Delhi as well as cargo service to Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Mumbai and New Delhi.

In August this year, Ethiopian received its 25th Dash 8-400 Aircraft, with

registration number ET-AXE, from De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Limited.

Senior executives of Ethiopian Airlines, De Havilland Canada and Longview Aviation Capital, the parent company of De Havilland Canada, joined Ethiopian's aircraft acceptance team and hundreds of De Havilland Canada employees for the celebration held at De Havilland Canada's facility in Toronto, Ontario, Canada where Dash 8-400 aircraft are manufactured.

"The Dash 8-400 aircraft gives us the performance attributes, capacity and passenger comfort that support our strategic partnerships with regional carriers in Africa and supports our continuing growth strategy in the market," said Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Tewolde GebreMariam. "We are honoured to be receiving the milestone aircraft bearing serial number 4600 and we are committed to supporting our fleet and others in our region through our Authorized Service Facility and our Dash 8-400 aircraft simulator."

"The delivery of the 600th Dash 8-400 aircraft produced at our Toronto facility is a significant moment for De Havilland Canada and we are delighted that Ethiopian Airlines, our largest customer in Africa, is the recipient airline. Since this aircraft will become the 25th

Dash 8-400 turboprop in Ethiopian's fleet, we are celebrating two important milestones," said Todd Young, Chief Operating Officer, De Havilland Canada. "Growing markets will continue to drive the evolution of our Dash 8-400 aircraft, as well as the suite of services we offer to support our customers. We are very proud that our teams in Toronto and at locations across the globe are well aligned in helping us meet the demand from airlines."

Early this year Ethiopian



Above: ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA: Coffee ceremony zone at Cloud Nine Business Class Lounge inside Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, Ethiopia - Pic: sasimoto



Above: Addis Ababa city, 14 July 2018, Ethiopia - Pic: Hailu Wudineh TSEGAYE



Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, formerly known as Haile Selassie International Airport, serves as the main hub for Ethiopian Airlines

Pic: ECA/Day



inaugurated state-of-the-art passenger terminal and its Skylight Hotel attended by among others, Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, African Union Chairperson H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki, Ministers and GebreMariam.

After presiding over the ribbon-cutting event at the new Skylight Hotel, the largest in Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, led the rest of the dignitaries on a tour of the hotel's facilities including the spacious executive suites. At the passenger terminal inaugural event that followed, the Prime Minister remarked, "Ethiopian Airlines is our national pride and a special icon among our companies as it carries our common name Ethiopia and our national flag. We would like all employees of the airline here and elsewhere to know that we speak of you with pride. The new hotel Ethiopian Airlines inaugurated today will enable us to attract tourists, and the airline's offer for employees to own shares of the hotel is important as it boosts sense of



Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Tewolde GebreMariam receiving the African Champion of the Year Award at the Africa CEO Forum.

ownership among staff, and will serve as a model for other companies to emulate.

What we learn from today's inauguration of the new passenger terminal is that we have a lot of work ahead of us. We expect the Board and the Management not to

be complacent with the new terminal, but rather to aim for a bigger facility with a capacity to accommodate at least 100 million passengers."

Addressing the gathering at the inauguration ceremony, GebreMariam said, "While Addis Ababa Airport took over Dubai as the largest air transport hub between Africa and the rest of the world, this grand terminal building is further evidence of the development of Bole Airport as one of the largest and most convenient global aviation hubs.

Ethiopian Skylight Hotel will enable the airline to offer packaged tour and travel programs. Moreover, the hotel will enable Ethiopian Airlines to attract around a third of tourists out of the 6 million passengers transiting through Bole Airport to visit Ethiopia."

The new passenger terminal features the latest technology security systems, self-check-in machines, self-boarding system, comfortable lounges, duty free shops and other amenities.

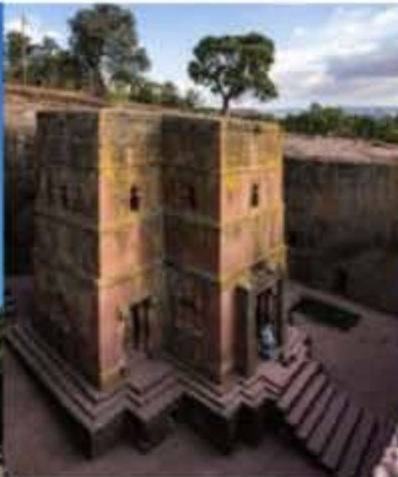
Ethiopian Skylight Hotel has 373 guest rooms and spacious executive suites, the largest Chinese restaurant in Africa and a conference hall that can accommodate 2500 people, among others.

Ethiopian Maintenance and Engineering Services, the largest and oldest aircraft maintenance centre in Africa, in the last year became the first in Africa with capability to repair the GENx Engine, which powers the Boeing 787 aircraft.

The first GENx engine repaired at the maintenance and engineering services facility makes the airline one of a few GENx Repair shops



Above: Holy Trinity Cathedral, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Pic: Kenneth Dedey



Above: Lalibela, Ethiopia. Famous Rock-Hewn Church of Saint George - Bete Giyorgis - By Rudi Ernst



Above: Medieval fortress in Gondar, Ethiopia. Gondar Castle is a UNESCO World Heritage site - Pic: Dmitry Chulov



Above: Danakil Depression. Tourists swim in the washouts in the salt lake. The high salinity of water does not allow one to drown, or even to plunge into the water - Pic: Manamana



Above: Asham Africa hotel, Bishoftu - Pic: Hailu Wudineh TSEGAYE



Above: Close up of a female Gelada monkey with babies sitting on a rock in the Simien mountains - Pic: Giedrius

in the GE MRO global network.

The centre performs airframe, engine, component and line maintenance under the approval of ECAA. Its base maintenance facilities have the FAA PART 145 Repair Station approval since 1968 and are currently approved for the maintenance of B737, B757, B767, B777, B787, Q400 and A350 aircraft models. Ethiopian MRO also holds EASA PART 145 approval for both base and line maintenance at Addis Ababa for B737NG, B757, B767 and B777. The base facility also has the accreditation of Boeing and Bombardier as approved service facility.

Recently Ethiopian Airlines Group and Lufthansa Systems announced the introduction of Lufthansa's Lido/Flight 4D solution in Ethiopian's flight planning system. This new generation of the proven flight planning solution from Lufthansa Systems offers extensive automation and optimization functions for flight planning and control processes.

Ethiopian will be using Lido Flight Planning Services (Lido/FPLS) for five years at a total contract value of EUR 3 380 000 (US\$3 825 845.66).

The core features of Lido/Flight 4D are its integrated and continually updated aeronautical database and the so-called optimizer. Lido/Flight 4D calculates the most suitable route for each flight based on all flight-related data, weather conditions

and the current airspace situation including any restrictions.

"The contract with Ethiopian Airlines is strategically important to us," said Marco Cesa, Senior Vice President Regional Management EMEA at Lufthansa Systems. "The deal will be noticed throughout Africa and strengthens our position in the local market. The reliability and flexibility of our product won over Ethiopian Airlines and will provide considerable support to the carrier going forward."

Ethiopian has also upgraded its flight watch system for its operation control function, enhancing its flight tracking capability. The new flight tracking system called Fusion enables the airline's operation control personnel to monitor the status of all aircraft in air live, complementing the navigation technologies fitted on its young fleet and facilitating interventions initiated by ground staffs in case of deviation from the planned routes.

A multi-award winning airline, Ethiopian has been certified as a Four Star Airline by SKYTRAX, the most prestigious international air transport standards and quality rating organization. The airline was also awarded with the SKYTRAX World Airline Award for Best

Airline Staff in Africa (twice), and earlier in 2017 Ethiopian received SKYTRAX World Airline Award for Best Airline in Africa.

In 2018 it won Best Airline in Africa Award for the 7th year in a row from African Airlines Association (AFRAA).

It also won Best Business Class in Africa Award 2018, Best Economy Class in Africa 2018 and topped among SKYTRAX's World's Top 100 Airlines 2018 list, moving up from number 48 last year to 40, as voted for by airline customers around the world.

Also the same year (2018) Ethiopia won Africa's Outstanding Food Services by a Carrier Award as voted by PAX International readers at a ceremony held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Hamburg, Germany. At the 2019 Africa CEO Forum held in Kigali (Rwanda) Ethiopian received the prestigious African Champion of the Year Award.

Africa CEO Forum is the leading international conference dedicated to the private sector in Africa and hosts the continent's top CEOs, international investors, experts and high-level policy makers every year.

While receiving the African Champion of the Year Award, Gebre Mariam said, "We are honoured to be awarded as African champion. Thank

you very much for the strong vote of confidence that Africa has given us even at the most challenging time in our history. We are still mourning for the loss of the lives of our esteemed passengers and colleagues at the tragic accident on ET 302 on 10 March 2019. My sincere sympathy and heartfelt condolences for the families of the victims, the country and the continent of Africa.

But we are very grateful to the traveling public which have stood with us in such difficult time. The vote of confidence is unbelievable. We have never seen such kind of large number of vote of confidence for one of the strongest brands in Africa. Thank you all for all the support you have given us and continue to give us. Together, we will make Africa great and we will put our continent in its right place in the global stage."

Ethiopian has been honoured as the 'Best Airline in Africa' for the third consecutive year at the Skytrax 2019 World Airlines Awards held in Paris on 18 June, 2019. Additionally, Ethiopian has won 'Best Business Class in Africa' and 'Best Economy Class in Africa' at the award ceremony.

Aquarius Aviation is an Ethiopian registered general aviation business,

operating from Bole International Airport. It provides air services for passengers and cargo using fixed-wing and rotor aircraft.

Services are accessible to a range of organizations including but not limited to companies working on the Oil and Gas production sector, embassies, various NGOs and tourists on a charter/contract basis. Aquarius also provides medical evacuation services to support these organizations programs and are approved and accredited to the highest international standards by independent auditors.

Aquarius fly to most of the paved airports and runways in Ethiopia as well as unpaved airstrips throughout the country. It also operates into neighbouring East African countries such as Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia.

The airline company is owned and managed by a woman, Frehiwot Tessema, who explained: "We specialize in charter flights, contract operations, aircraft management and medical evacuations. We support operations of aid agencies, embassies, NGOs, oil, gas and petroleum as well as mining, agricultural and development projects."

She said her company has been operating in Ethiopia since September 2009, which makes it 10 years old.

The type of aircraft and helicopters used by the company are light aircraft, such as Beechcraft 1900s, Cessna Grand Caravans and B350 helicopters, leased from several countries in the world.

Several challenges are experienced in this business and she explained: "Not owning aircraft due to not having access to finance - which is the foremost. Banks in Ethiopia won't lend us money using the aircraft as collateral. Not having a maintenance hangar for general aviation in Ethiopia, meaning we have to fly our aircraft to Kenya for maintenance. These challenges have led to our weak financial position and resulted in slow growth of our company and therefore we are not able to fully fill the gap of the sector in our country."

In spite of the above, Frehiwot foresees a bright future for her company, mentioning huge opportunities for the aviation sector in our Ethiopia such as government focus being tourism, mining, agriculture and manufacturing which are all needs to be supported by the light aircraft operations, mostly operated in a remote environment; encouraging and attractive investment policy laid down by the government, such as including the aviation association in the newly

ARBA MINCH, ETHIOPIA: The Haille Hotel sits at the edge of the rain forest and Nechisar National Park, Ethiopia in this 180 degree panorama. - Pic: John Wollwerth



Above: Cessna Grand Caravan Ex at Murulle airstrip at the Omo Valley where Aquarius Aviation partners @wildexpeditionafrica have a camp nearby.

established Tourism Transformation Council led by the Prime Minister which shows the government's commitment; the aviation sector being small – untapped sector – in a large country with fast growing economy and steady and continuous development of the economy of the country which is promising for the expansion and growth of our business

She also noted the establishment of industrial parks all over the country increasing the demand of air services by potential investors as time saving is the prime benefit of business aviation, and time itself is a high value and limited resource. Companies using business aviation overwhelmingly take top honours in revenue growth, innovation, employee satisfaction, and

market share and Ethiopia should avail this option to investors in order for them to achieve their goal.

As well as government plans to sell shares of the aviation sector which will give aviation businesses strength in finding technological support, and



economical strength; unavailability of roads that connects to most of the oil and gas industries, UN missions and diplomatic communities are travelling to; vital support from the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority, maintenance and training support from the Ethiopian Airlines; building of new airports and runways by the government that can help in expanding aviation businesses by owning/leasing more aircraft and availability of the historical and natural tourist attractions, recommendation of international media as is Ethiopia "the best destination year after year."

Frehiwot (in Ethiopia they don't have a family name, they never use their second name which is their father's name) has worked in various management positions both within government circles and private enterprises. With a strong business background, including holding a degree in Business Administration in Ethiopia and a diploma in Strategic Business Management, she brings a sense of understanding and commitment to the service industry that is matchless in Ethiopia.

Over the past ten years, in the time that she has owned Aquarius Aviation, Frehiwot has worked with over 140 client companies and businesses that include diplomatic missions, embassies, oil companies, NGO's, tour operators, security companies, mining and energy think tanks and the media. Most of these have recommend Aquarius Aviation as their preferred provider because of the level of service and attention to detail that she and her team provides. She manages and is ably supported by a strong ground team that includes local Ethiopians and ex-pats alike.

Frehiwot has made history as Ethiopia's first and only woman owner and manager of an aviation industry player, enjoying strong backing and support from the ECAA.

Other players in the Ethiopian airline industry include Zemen Flying Service, a fixed-wing and helicopter services operation whose hub is at Bole International Airport. Also, Wings Over Africa Aviation Limited, the Kenya based and rest of East Africa focused company, offer private helicopter and jet charter services.

AVIATION ACADEMY

Each year, Ethiopian Aviation Academy (EAA) trains more than 2 000 pilots, flight attendants, maintenance workers and other employees for Ethiopian Airlines and several other African airlines. This aspect partly points to why others turn to it for aviation expertise.

On 9 March 2019 EAA, ICAO TRAINAIR Plus member and IATA authorized global training center,

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graduated 559 aviation professionals. The graduates were drawn from the Aviation Maintenance, Commercial, Cabin Crew and Catering and Pilot Training Schools of the academy. At the ceremony, Ethiopian also recognized the 1000th pilot, First Officer Thomas Girma. Speaking at the graduation ceremony, GebreMariam congratulated the graduates and said aviation is a great profession for those who are up to the challenge and the stringent discipline requirement of the profession. He added that the profession demands focus and discipline of the highest order and unwavering commitment to safety and high performance standard. He called on the graduates to execute their job



Above: Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed (third from left) and Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Tewolde GebreMariam (third from right) inaugurates new passenger terminal expansion and new Skylight Hotel.

Top: Todd Young Chief Operating Officer, (seated Left) De Havilland Aircraft Canada and Tewolde GebreMariam (seated Right) Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO signing for the Q400.

Middle: Ambassador Johan Borgstam, (seated Left) Head of the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia and Mr Tewolde GebreMariam, (seated Right) Group CEO of Ethiopian Airlines sign the letter of intent to establish Ethio-European International Business School (EEIBS) at the Airline's headquarters.

professionally with attitude, behaviour and action that inspires trust and confidence in respective customers. EAA, the largest aviation academy in Africa, provides comprehensive trainings for pilots, aircraft maintenance technicians, cabin crew, marketing and leadership personnel from Africa and beyond. In May this year, the EAA graduated 22 travel and tourism professionals in IATA Foundation in Travel and Tourism Program. The training program, delivered by experienced instructors at the state-of-the-art aviation academy, aims at equipping travel agents with the best knowledge, skills and attitude required to succeed in the industry. In addition to personal development, the training also plays a significant role in producing skilled manpower to further develop Ethiopia's tourism sector. EAA has so far trained 13 batches in the same course. The academy is accredited and authorized by IATA and serves as Regional Training Partner (RTP) of the Association. The EAA is now fully equipped with state-of-the-art Siemens Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) Workshops/ Programming Labs and capable of providing training at different levels (Intro, Service 1 and Service 2). Training will first start with Ethiopian Airlines Group staff to be followed by third party customers within and outside Ethiopia (Africa). The project is launched in partnership with Siemens and it is to become a joint ET- Siemens Training Centre of Excellence. This new capability will address the training need related to PLC equipment maintenance and programming. EAA, the largest and the most modern aviation academy in Africa and a full ICAO TRAINAIR Plus Member was in 2018 ranked among the top World Aviation Training Centres by Aviation Voice, a global aviation news provider engaged in ranking of aviation training centres all over the world. The ranking was against 18 carefully calibrated performance indicators to provide the most comprehensive and balanced ranking covering the full range of a training centre's areas of activity. Also included was the number and types of programs, opportunity of cadetship and aviation training combined with higher education studies and data on the number of students, instructors. As well as information regarding the size of fleet and the network of flight training devices the training centre operates, among others. EAA is an ICAO designated Regional Training Centre of Excellence hosting ICAO courses; European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) approved

Maintenance Training Organization, International Air Transport Association (IATA) Authorized Training Center (ATC) and Accredited Training School (ATS) and Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority Approved Training Organization (ATO). The Academy is also working to become an IATA | Regional Training Partner (RTP). In March 2019 the EAA, ICAO TRAINAIR Plus member and IATA authorized global training centre, graduated 20 cabin crew trainees from Mozambique, in preparation to serve the newly established Ethiopian-Mozambique airline. The training is further testimony to the crucial role Ethiopian Airlines is playing in producing trained aviation professionals for indigenous African carriers and supporting the growth of the continent's aviation industry. In December 2018 Ethiopian Airlines and European Union Delegation to Ethiopia signed a letter of intent to establish Ethio-European International Business School (EEIBS). The letter was signed by Ambassador Johan Borgstam, Head of the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia and GebreMariam, at the Airline's Headquarters. The agreement will see Ethiopian hosting the delivery of an MBA program at Ethiopian Aviation Academy with the support of the EU Delegation under the EU's Transformation Triggering Facility (TTF) program. GebreMariam said, "We are very pleased to sign this letter of intent with the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia to establish an international business school under our Aviation Academy, which will be delivering a world-class MBA program. Once established, the school will be a significant addition to the leadership courses we are delivering at our Aviation Academy, an ICAO designated Regional Training Centre of Excellence. We look forward to launching the MBA courses and shape as many young African minds as possible, adding value to their academic and professional lives." Borgstam said: "The EU Delegation to Ethiopia is proud to partner with Ethiopian Airlines Aviation Academy on this important project that will provide quality education to young Ethiopians. Investing in training and education is critical for the realization of Ethiopia's development strategy. The European Union invests heavily in human capital development in Ethiopia and supports government efforts to improve the business environment and the implementation of the industrialization agenda. It is our firm conviction that this will help addressing the challenges of youth unemployment as well as ensuring the successful implementation of the second phase of the country's Growth and Transformation Plan."

Under its Aviation Academy, Ethiopian offer Pilot, Cabin Crew, Commercial and Aviation Maintenance courses in addition to the Leadership and Career Development Training. Ethiopian and The University of Mississippi, the largest public research university in Mississippi, recently signed a MOU to introduce different aviation related training programs into the existing courses of EAA. The training programs to be introduced include Integrated Marketing Communication, Aviation Executive EMBA and a four-year engineering degree program aimed at upgrading EAA's existing two-year aircraft maintenance training. The agreement was signed in April 2018 by GebreMariam and Professor Noel E. Wilkin, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor of The University of Mississippi, at the premises of the university. In 2018 Ethiopian Airlines achieved yet another milestone, becoming the first A350 XWB Simulator Operator in Africa and among the few in the world. This machine is fitted with a full electrical motion system which delivers improved performance while providing energy savings and environmental benefits.

GebreMariam said: "The introduction of the A350 XWB Full-Flight Simulator is a continuation of our pioneering role in African aviation Technology. It is part of our Vision 2025 strategic roadmap to be fully self-sufficient in the provision of pilot training in all the aircraft type we operate. It complements the other full-flight simulators we are already operating such as the B787, B-777, B737, B757, B767 and Q400. All in all, we have invested over \$125 million in the last 7 years to expand and upgrade all the facets of our training capabilities. These investments are meant to bridge the aviation skill gap in Africa and to avail well trained and qualified aviation professionals in the continent. Education is the biggest Equalizer of our time and our aim is to make Africa self-sufficient in aviation professionals." By last year, the Pilot Training School of the airline had trained personnel from over 52 countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

TOURS
Operating a wide range of safari tours is Zagwe Ethiopia Tours, a

company based in Addis Ababa and well known for delivering a quality service with a squad of experienced professionals, complemented by a fleet of new model comfortable vehicles and professional and disciplined drivers with long years of experience driving through Ethiopian roads. Mulu Mossie, Tour Operator, Zagwe Ethiopia Tours explained: "We arrange a range of packages and tailor made tours to different parts of the country that suits your budget, time and preferences with reasonable price. "Our tour packages and, among others, includes adventure, historic tours, nature tours, coffee tours, honey moon tours, bird watching tours, safari tours to the Danakil depression and wild life tours." The tour operator also arranges tours to the four corners of the country including the Omo valley, Harar, Western Ethiopia and Bale mountains. Zagwe Ethiopia Tour is accredited by Ministry of Tourism and Culture / Tourism and a member of Ethiopian Tour Operations Association. Mossie pointed out a number of factors that are likely to further spur his company. These were factors like

Close up of an adult Gelada monkey (*Theropithecus gelada*), Simien mountains, Ethiopia
By Giedrius

Experience Ethiopia

	Federal Airlines (Pty) Ltd O.R Tambo International Airport Hangar 14 Bonaero Drive, Bonaero Park +27 11 395 9000 (Jhb office) +27 13 750 3141 (Nelspruit Office) Shuttle@fedair.com Charters@fedair.com www.fedair.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <20 pax• >20 pax• Biz Jets• VIP• Special events• Safari shuttles• Safari charters• Contracts• Aircraft leasing• Lodge transfers• Hangarage• Aircraft management
	FLYJETSTREAM 24 Hr Charter number 083 279 7853 charter@fjsa.co.z	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• < 20 Pax• V.I.P.• Freight• Helicopter• Special Events• Safari Charters• Contracts• Aircraft Sales• Surveys• Aerial Photography• Aircraft Leasing• Lodge Transfers• Hangarage• Air Ambulance• Aircraft Management



Above: Helicopter in the Danakil Depression

Above: Helicopter over Gheralta Mountains, Tigray.

Above: Helicopter in Blue Nile Gorge.

Ethiopia's great potential to attract visitors and being a leader in owning a large number of world heritage sites in Africa. The country also is rich in natural attractions of amazing landscapes, chains of mountains, gorges, living lava lake, wild life with great number of these being endemic, different species of birds, flora and fauna.

He said the Ethiopian tourism industry has its own many challenges. Among them are those to do with bad international image, internal disturbances, poor infrastructure, poor service, lack of promotion, lack of trained manpower, lack of awareness among the host community and many more. To deal with these, he noted that they hold discussions with the Ethiopian government officials and they promised to work on them for a better tourism based industry and to be competitive in the Horn of Africa Region.

"If the government works hand in hand with the stakeholders Ethiopian tourism business will grow, and undoubtedly that gives us tour operators a better chance to provide a quality service through hiring professionals to change that bad global image of the country," Mossie said regarding the future.

Journeys by Design is a Brighton, UK, based luxury and frontier African safari specialist, offering the Ethiopia Helicopter Safari, a rare and exciting service.

"This is a tailor-made trip that is designed to cover some of Ethiopia's highlights, but also gain access to unique and unusual locations. The trip covers the north and south of the country and is customizable according to the clients' interests," explains Chris Tinkler, Senior Destination Specialist.

"Ethiopia is incredibly scenic, and this is best captured from the air as many

of the locations along the route are not accessible by road. We offer anything from a week to 18 days, depending on how much the client wants to see and do. As well as the knowledge and experience of the pilot-guide, we have expert guides on the ground at each location that facilitate the experience at each site or landing thus making this immersive from above and below."

Asked what's unique about this safari, he said: "The freedom that the helicopter offers is by far superior to using commercial flights where you don't have to go through the rigid and often lengthy conventional travel modes. At the same time, it allows the traveller to cover an enormous amount of ground – travelling to the southern, northern and eastern circuits - in a relatively short period of time.

"Crucially, it provides access to places that would otherwise be off the menu for most travellers. We fly into remote gorges on route to Gondar, over volcanic craters in the Danakil, through canyons near Lalibela, and alongside waterfalls in the Simien mountains. "We land on mountain tops for a coffee, absolutely nobody in sight. We utilize private mobile camps to explore places that few ever go.

Finally, it is the perfect vehicle for the low volume, high impact travel that we believe in, and that serves as catalyst and support for the wider sustainable development of the ecosystems we visit – the Omo Valley especially."

Journeys by Design have been offering this safari for roughly the last 6 or 7 years, using helicopters from their partners who make provision for five Airbus H125 helicopters and one Airbus H130.

These trips can be logistically challenging as the helicopter has to fly from its base in Kenya to Ethiopia. Refuelling is also a challenge and hence fuel needs to be delivered to remote locations by truck. Hence, forward-planning for trips such as this is key. Clients will often book this kind of trip more than a year in advance.

Destinations covered in this safari include Addis Ababa, Gondar, Simien Mountains, Lalibela, Gheralta, Danakil Depression, Bale Mountains and Omo Valley. These are more specific to helicopter itineraries. Flights can, however, go almost anywhere with enough prior planning - provided it's safe to do so and logistically feasible.

About how he sees the future of the helicopter safari business in Ethiopia, Tinkler explains: "Finding opportunities for unique travel in a world of mass tourism is difficult. The helicopter opens up access to some of the last frontiers of travel. At the same time, for as long as Ethiopia's internal travel infrastructure lags behind the likes of South Africa and Botswana, the helicopter will continue to remain an integral part of those safari itineraries designed to cover multiple parts of the country.

"Finally, for many travellers prepared to spend the capital to experience the unusual or largely unattainable, it qualifies as the way to travel. In short, it will continue to be an area of growth for our business."

The tour operation industry has other players including Timeless Ethiopia Touring, Abyssinia Ballooning and Overland Ethiopia Tours, among many.

ETHIOPIAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

The Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) has recently been commended

by Members of the Transport Affairs Standing Committee with the House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) who said that the authority has contributed a lot to the nation's air transport safety and development.

During their visit to the headquarters of the authority, members of the standing committee were briefed by Shemels Kibreab, ECAA Deputy Director, on the overall progress of the authority, including major achievements and challenges faced. They also paid visits to ECAA Training Centre and Air Traffic Control Tower at Bole International Airport, where they gained insight into the major tasks of the Authority.

While briefing the members, Kibreab indicated that the authority has undertaken significant activities to enhance the nation's air transport sector, ensuring safety and security. Nevertheless, he said, "financial constraints in implementing capacity building programs, lack of encouraging response for performance reports and incompatibility of organizational structure with duties and responsibilities are the main challenges."

Committee members on their part stated that the ECAA appears to be the backbone for the advancement of the national carrier - the Ethiopian Airlines as well as the development of private air operators. They asked what relationships the authority has with stakeholders and similar institutions in the neighbouring states; whether there existed sufficient number of skilled personnel that is competent and capable of unleashing modern communication, navigation and surveillance

devices and other questions.

The Deputy Director noted that the authority has established commendable relations with stakeholders such as Ethiopian Airlines and the Ethiopian Airports Enterprise, adding that modern navigation equipment have become operational, with sufficient number of skilled manpower. Standing Committee Chairperson, honourable Kalid Ahmed said, "I'm so proud of the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority that manages to control 97% of the country's air space and ensure reliable safety in the sector." He further stated that the encouraging activities being undertaken by the Authority need to be strengthened.

Ahmed reiterated the need to retain the authority's human resource, exert relentless effort for the implementation of air transport policy and to alleviate challenges faced with regards to organizational structure, directives, rules and regulations.

Another recent development is the ECAA's graduation of 24 Air Traffic Controllers in modern surveillance technology. This was conducted under a training project jointly organized by ECAA and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

On the training project completion event, Colonel Hunegnaw said the attempt of modernizing air traffic management through the acquisition of modern surveillance technology and continuous training reveals the commitments of the Ethiopian government to realize a safe and efficient civil aviation service.

Speaking on the event, Muhammad Khawaj, ICAO Project Coordinator, said ADS-B (Automatic Dependant

Surveillance – Broadcast) technology of which the trainees have acquired operational skills, has proven to be more accurate, advanced and cost effective than RADAR. He also said, adopting this technology in providing safety in the skies of Ethiopia is a sign of the strategic vision of the aviation management. He further emphasized the fact that Ethiopia was probably the first country to implement the technology across the continent. The graduates, according to the project coordinator, acquired the required knowledge and skill that made them capable of operating both RADAR as well as ADS-B systems.

As a result of the training project, the surveillance technology has become operational for 24 hours. Ethiopian instructors, who have taken Train-The-Trainer Course, went on to replace ICAO Technical Cooperation Bureau Instructors and are currently conducting surveillance training by themselves.

On 28 June 2019 the ECAA training centre graduated eight Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) from the Republic of Somalia out of which two are females.

State Minister of Transport, Hiwot Mossissa noted that it was a great honour to have Somalia ATC graduates in Ethiopia's Aviation Training Centre; adding that the training could enable the neighbouring country's government to gain control over its air space by its own citizen controllers.

Mohamed Abudulahi Salta, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation of the Republic of Somalia led the list of notable government officials at the graduation ceremony and invited guests, among others. •