

JOINT PRESS RELEASE
A Chinese Tourism Media Expedition to Ethiopia Launched in Beijing

“Enter Ethiopia: The Land of Origins”



The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in Beijing, the Ethiopian Airlines and the DEEP MEDIA CHINA, a travel marketing and consultancy firm, have organized a joint press conference under the theme; **“Enter Ethiopia: The Land of Origins”** on 26 December 2016 at the premises of the Embassy to launch the DEEP MEDIA CHINA team expedition to Southern Ethiopia and the Lower Omo Valley from 29 December 2016 to 16 January 2017 to explore the tourist attractions of the region in its bid to write and publish a book entitled **“Enter the Omo River Valley”** and to produce a documentary film in Chinese language to be disseminated to the general tourism public in China. The event brought together representatives from the Embassy, Ethiopian Airlines, DEEP MEDIA (CHINA) and journalists from various Chinese media firms. The DEEP MEDIA CHINA team is comprised of travel writers, anthropologists, linguists, media personnel and other professionals of the tourism sector.



At the occasion, Negus Kebede, Minister Counselor and Head of Business Diplomacy Section of the Embassy, stated that Ethiopia is the Land of Origins and an ancient independent nation endowed with rich natural, historical, cultural and archaeological resources which, combined with the hospitality of the people, make it viable for tourism. He mentioned that the government considers the tourism sector as one of the engines of economic growth with the active participation of the private sector to securing the benefits of tourism to the local communities that are custodians of the country's diverse heritages.

He further expressed that the government of Ethiopia is implementing a number of strategic measures to further develop the country's tourism sector such as expanding the tourism infrastructure and facilities, establishing a tourism marketing organization and a national tourism council, increasing education and training institutions in the field of tourism as well as enhancing the protection and conservation of tourist attractions including efforts to secure world status for the heritages.

In this regard, he noted that the steps being taken by the government have been bearing fruits with the UN agency, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) bestowing recognition on the Axum Obelisks, Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibella, Fasil Castle, Walled-City of Harar Jugol, The Konso Cultural Landscape, Lower Awash Valley, Lower Omo Valley, Simien Mountains, Tiya Stela, Meskel Festival (Finding of the True Cross), Fiche Chamballala and most recently the Gadaa System (the indigenous democratic, socio-political system of the Oromo People of Ethiopia) as the tangible and intangible cultural heritages of humanity.

He pointed out the fact that given the immense tourism attractions of Ethiopia and the great potential of China in generating tourists in the global outbound tourism market, the flow of Chinese tourists to Ethiopia is yet very modest. He expressed that the occasion will create an opportunity to foster closer partnership and joint promotions between the Embassy, DEEP MEDIA CHINA, the Ethiopian Airlines

and the media at the event to expand and exploit tourism opportunities in Ethiopia and China. Moreover, he assured the participants of the commitment of the Embassy to encourage and facilitate such partnership and expressed his wish of success to the endeavors of the DEEP MEDIA CHINA to publish a book and produce a documentary film and micro-film which, he said, will contribute its parts in bolstering Ethiopian tourism market in China and the flow of Chinese tourists to Ethiopia.

He went on to add that the three parties (the Embassy, DEEP MEDIA CHINA and the Airlines) will host "The second" and the most important tourism event that will bring together tour operators, media, travel writers and other professionals of the tourism sector to inaugurate the publishing of the intended book and documentary film of the DEEP MEDIA CHINA.

As faithful traveler to Ethiopia, Mr. Zhang Bo, DEEP MEDIA CHINA team leader, Vice Chairman of China Alliance for Outdoor Industry and publisher and chief editor of many travel magazines such as Cosmopolitan China, Lady Magazine, DEEP Magazine and the "Enter the Rift Valley", the first famous magazine introducing Ethiopia to China published in November 2011, also gave his thoughts about tourism opportunities in Ethiopia. He witnessed that "Ethiopia has the most diverse and rich tourism potential in Africa. The tourism resources of the country are unabated by foreign intruders as the country has been the only independent nation in the continent. As a result, Ethiopia offers, on top of its diverse flora and fauna, a trove of historical, cultural, religious and archaeological attractions that most African countries cannot match. Most importantly, Ethiopians with their diverse cultures and exceptional hospitality, have their own unique language, calendar, alphabet, time, number, cuisine etc. A trip to Ethiopia, therefore, is less like a sojourn in Africa than a visit to some far-flung island, where everything is strange and compelling."

He noted that "China tourism industry has seen unprecedented development in recent years due to the sustainable economic growth and the substantial increase in people's personal income among others. As a result, the Chinese people are now eager to go outside to explore other parts of the world. China had 120 million outbound tourists in 2015 and they spent hundreds of billions of dollars which creates a tremendous market for destination countries". Mr. Zhang Bo concluded that "our effort of publishing a book and producing a documentary film and micro-films will contribute much in bringing more Chinese visitors to Ethiopia to learn about its incredibly rich culture and the history that stretches back to the beginnings of humankind".



Mr. Eddie Liu, representative of the Ethiopian Airlines, expressed that “the Ethiopian Airlines is Africa’s largest and one of the longest serving flag carriers that has been providing consistent and seamless services for the last 43 years for the movement of people, ideas, cultures and business between Ethiopia and China and China and Africa. Today, the Ethiopian Airlines, with the youngest and latest aircraft fleet of state of the art, is flying from its hub in Addis Ababa to 93 international cities in four continents”. He noted that “Loyal to its motto “THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA”, the Airlines offers best connectivity from 51 African cities to four gateways in China (Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai). The Ethiopian Airlines continues to play an indispensable role in promoting investment, trade, tourism and culture between Africa and China by operating 31 weekly flights. The Ethiopian Airlines is sponsoring the project.”

The event offered the Chinese media a chance to experience insights of the multifaceted tourism potential of Ethiopia. To highlight the event, an elaborate Ethiopian traditional coffee ceremony was held. As the origin of coffee, Ethiopia has a strong and pervasive culture centered around coffee.

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