Ethiopian Airlines promotes regional integration, says Songwe

Addis Ababa, 11 April 2018 (ECA) - Executive Secretary, Vera Songwe, recently met with Ethiopian Airlines CEO, Tewolde GebreMariam, and praised the airline for championing regional integration through its flights to over 50 destinations on the continent.

“Ethiopian Airlines flies to over 58 destinations in Africa connecting the continent, moving people and goods, and thus making the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) possible,” said Ms. Songwe after a tour of the Ethiopian Aviation facilities in Addis Ababa on 29 March.

The meeting followed the historic signing in March of the AfCFTA by over 40 African leaders, and the launch - in January - of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), an African Union initiative to create a single unified air transport market in Africa.

The liberalisation of civil aviation in Africa is expected to steer economic integration on the continent.

Ms. Songwe described the Ethiopian Airlines Aviation facilities as “an outstanding center of excellence,” noting that sustainable improvements in the sector require complex changes in a range of policy dimensions in areas such as infrastructure, trade facilitation and services.

Against this backdrop, she underscored the importance of recognizing and showcasing the strides made by Ethiopian Airlines in air logistics, adding that African countries need to do more to improve the efficiency of trade logistics services.

“Understanding the logistics index is very important to better measure the capacity of African countries to efficiently move goods and connect manufacturers and consumers with regional and international markets,” said the Executive Secretary.

Mr. GebreMariam concurred with Ms. Songwe, stating that trade logistics required the focus and commitment of all African countries and that it is important to liberalize the market in Africa. Both parties agreed to collaborate in finalizing a study on this topic.

Other areas of partnership discussed during the visit include promoting Addis Ababa as a tourist destination; creating a “conference-friendly environment” in Addis Ababa, which will attract more international and regional conferences and events to Ethiopia, leading to increased use of the U.N. Conference Centre; and how best to work together in servicing the UN family in Addis Ababa better.

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