



NEW AFRICAN AVIATION HUB ENVISAGED

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Ethiopia's Government is planning to give the country a massive new international airport.

To be located in or somewhere around Addis Ababa, the airport would have the capacity to handle 120 million passengers a year. In comparison, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport – currently the world's-busiest – handled just over 96 million passengers in 2014.

According to local media sources, the planned Ethiopian super-airport was introduced by Workneh Gebeyehu – Minister for Transport – at a conference held in late September. “The new mega-**hub** will move the aviation industry in Ethiopia to a higher level”, he was quoted as having said. “It will make Addis Ababa the aviation hub of Africa... [and] be the second mega project in the country [after the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam].”

New Addis Ababa Hub

The new Addis Ababa hub would be constructed in phases, these lasting up to a decade in total. Once finished, it would boast four runways plus several terminals and Ethiopian Airlines – Africa's most successful carrier right now – would base itself there.

Previously, EAE (the Ethiopian Airports Enterprise) worked with French consultancy group ADPI to single out the best sites to host the airport. Now, there are reportedly three sites under consideration, with the government set to consult local residents before making its ultimate choice.

Addis Ababa Bole International is Ethiopia's current main airport. Previously named Haile Selassie I International Airport, Bole was constructed during the 1960s. Much more recently, it's several-times been upgraded, giving it a new passenger terminal and cargo facility.

Ethiopian Mega-Airport

The new Ethiopian mega-airport's exact location should be known before the end of 2015. Thereafter: "the next step would be gathering inputs, searching for partners and undertaking other necessary pre-construction work", Tewodros Dawit – EAE's CEO – told The Reporter. "The plan is to start construction within two years...the whole project may take ten years."

Established in 1945, Ethiopian Airlines is now seventy years old. It has 76 aircraft and flies to 124 destinations. Twin-engined Boeing airliners – among them 13 very new 787-8 Dreamliners - make up the majority of its fleet.

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