



HOW WE SHOWCASE AFRICA TRAVEL, TRADE AND TOURISM "TEXAS STYLE" AT HOUSTON'S 1-FEST

By Muguette Goufrani

We welcome every opportunity to circulate Africa Travel Magazine, having great success at ASTA's Las Vegas Show, Adventure Travel Summit, near Vancouver, ATA Congresses in Ethiopia and Tanzania, plus its Eco Cultural Tourism event in Djibouti. Our biggest audience ever was "Out of Africa" at Houston's International Festival, as massive outdoor extravaganza that covers 16 acres of parks near City Hall. High-ranking government dignitaries and corporate leaders were on hand, plus over 300,000 of the public from Texas and neighboring states.

Out of Africa Theme

Texans know how to host a giant event, and this was a marvellous, celebration of Africa and Africans from the Diaspora. as we savored the rich culture and heritage that has been such a huge contributor to the American mosaic. Most prominent among the African countries represented was Ethiopia, honor its Millennium. Mr. Bird and I flew from Seattle via Denver, arriving in Houston in time for the opening luncheon, where the keynote speaker was Ambassador Andrew Young. We met this popular humanitarian leader two months later at the Leon H. Sullivan Summit in Arusha, Tanzania.

Ethiopian Contingent

To launch this prestigious event, Ethiopia sent a large contingent led by H.E. Mrs. Tadelech Dalacho, Ethiopia's State Minister of Culture and Tourism (above right) plus our colleagues from Ethiopian Airlines, City of Addis Ababa and the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, led by its President Mrs. Kidan Ghiorgis.

Ethiopia On the Cultural Stage

Showcasing Ethiopia was a dazzling array featuring traditional arts and crafts, textiles, food, music and fashions. Ethiopia is recognized worldwide as the birthplace of coffee, which was available for visitors to sample and purchase. Ethiopia's National Theater Company thrilled the packed audiences at each performance. Likewise the impressive Ethiopian Designer Fashion Show. Houston's International Festival was designed to create an opportunity for Ethiopians to introduce their products to people at all levels and learn how to be competitive in the North American market.

America's 4th Largest City

In mid week, we joined the Ethiopian delegation for a visit to the Museum of Natural Science, where Ethiopia's Lucy has been the star attraction. Others from our party were guests at the National Air and Space Administration complex. The week's highlight, was the Mayor's Gala Dinner, a grand affair, where, among others, we were introduced to the President's brother, Neil Bush. Houston is America's fourth largest city and a hub of international commerce. For years its leaders have focused their attention on making their city not only a great place to live, but an outstanding place to visit. Houston is a vibrant international city that heartily enjoys its tradition of being a place of firsts. General Sam Houston, the city's heroic namesake, was the first president of the Republic of Texas.

Ethio- American Activities

For many years we have worked in close touch with Ethiopia's High Commissioner in the USA, Mr. Gezahgen Kebede, founder of the The Ethio-American Trade and Investment Council (EATIC). Based in Houston, it is a non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization dedicated to strengthening and facilitating trade and investment between Ethiopia and United States of America. For over 15 years EATIC has played an active role in getting many American business communities to view the Ethiopian investment and tourism opportunity first hand.

Mr. Kebede invited Ethiopian private and public business sectors to participate, and extended an invitation for Africa Travel Magazine's Publishers to cover the exciting activities on behalf of the travel and tourism industries. It was a sincere pleasure and a great honor. This event was timely, since Ethiopia is the first country to featured in our Best of Africa Library of books and magazines.

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