

Developing New Tourism

English translation:

After the present government came to power, it was not socialist but began to pursue a free economy. At this point, things began to improve, there was peace within the country; circumstances began to favor tourism. Because of those improvements, a lot of things enabled people to come here.

Occasionally, the peace is disturbed by some groups that agitate for whatever reason and they prevent people from coming, but still, they come; especially from Europe, which is where most of the tourists come from.

As things stand now, the main problem isn't the safety and security of tourists but the challenge is "What does Ethiopia have to offer to tourists?" What must be done to expand tourism, to attract tourists, and to ensure that they enjoy their stay? In examining the present situation, we find that most of the problem is on our side. What do I mean by this? Tourist sites haven't been well looked-after. Their cleanliness isn't properly maintained. They are not protected. For example, places at Lalibela, Axum, and Gonder are somewhat clean, and even though there are a lot of tourists that visit them, there is a lack of places that tourists can go for information and help.

In addition, infrastructure is not well-developed. Many of the roads to popular attractions aren't in good condition. The hotels are not up to the same standard as those that the tourists are used to in their own countries; their level is lower with regards to many aspects like food preparation, room quality. Tourists find these places to fall below their expectations. Let alone the hotels near tourist sites, even in Addis Ababa, besides very few known hotels, the hotels in general don't maintain their standards, so there's a problem in this respect as well.

The main way in which tourism grows is when the tourists that do come promote the country to the ones that have yet to come; word of mouth plays a big role. And if these people have good things to say about this country, if they're truly happy when they leave, then more people will come. If people enjoy themselves here, some believe that you need to repeat the experience of some, but I don't feel that there's much point in simply trying to repeat experiences. Or sometimes they say that if you treat the tourists well, if you take them out before they leave, they'll leave on a positive note but I don't think that this is enough to make people want to return or to recommend that other people come here.

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