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AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION (ATA) PARTICIPATES IN MEETINGS OF 9th AFRICA UNION SUMMIT IN ACCRA, GHANA

ACCRA, GHANA, July 23, 2007 – ATA delegates participated in the Africa Union's 9th annual summit in Accra, Ghana from July 1-3, 2007. The overriding theme of the summit was "the Grand Debate," highlighting different options on integrating the continent.

South African President Thabo Mbeki advocates in favor of the "Union of African States;" former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo suggests an "African Union Government;" and Libyan President Colonel Muammar Gaddafi proposes the "United States of Africa."

This debate reflects ATA's recent commitment to launch "Destination Africa," a global campaign devoted to marketing Africa as one tourist destination in order to ensure that the continent as a whole and each individual country benefits from travel and tourism to Africa.

Alongside more than 40 heads of state, ATA delegates participated in the opening ceremony, which included an address by outgoing Commissioner of the AU Commission, Alpha Konare, and UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro. At the summit, ATA spoke to UN-DSG Migiro, World Bank Vice President for Africa, Obiageli Katryn Ezekwesili, Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, and US Ambassador to the AU Dr. Cindy Courville. ATA also spoke with Baptist minister and civil rights activist Jesse Jackson and multi-award winning jazz musician Herbie Hancock.

Prior to the AU summit in Ghana, AU delegates traveled to Djibouti, arriving on the 30th anniversary of the Red Sea country's independence from France. President Ismael Omar Guelleh marked the occasion with a special reception at the presidential palace and invited ATA delegates to attend the event.

While in Djibouti, ATA delegates met with Djibouti Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita and Youth, Arts, Leisure, and Tourism Minister Hassan Farah Miguil to discuss whether Djibouti will host ATA's upcoming annual eco-tourism symposium in December. Last year the event was held in the port-city of Calabar, Nigeria. The delegation also met with representatives from the US Embassy and the general manager of the 5-star Kempinski Palace Hotel, whose construction has raised the profile of Djibouti as a tourist destination.

Ethiopian Airlines, winner of Best Africa Airline of the Year in 2006 and ATA's 2007 official airline sponsored ATA's flights to Djibouti and Ghana.

About the Africa Travel Association (ATA)

ATA is the premier global travel association promoting tourism to Africa and intra-Africa travel and partnership since 1975. ATA members include ministries of tourism and culture, national tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public relations firms, students, NGOs, individuals, and small-and medium-sized businesses. Upcoming ATA events include: ATA's 2nd Annual Presidential Forum in September; ATA's 11th Annual Eco-Tourism Symposium in Djibouti in December; ATA's first Africa Marketing and Investment Forum in March 2008; and ATA's 33rd Annual Congress in Tanzania in May 2008. For more information, visit ATA online at www.africatravelassociation.org or call +1.212.447.1357.



Courtesy of Ogo Sow for ATA: Left to right: Djibouti Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita, ATA Executive Director Edward Bergman, and Kempinski Palace Hotel General Manager Burga Berberoglu.

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