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## Ethiopian to Enhance Passenger Experience Equipped with Airbus' Airspace Link HBCplus and Inmarsat's GX Aviation High-Speed Inflight Broadband Service

*The pan-African carrier has selected award-winning GX Aviation connectivity and Airbus' integrated satellite connectivity solution HBCplus for its upcoming new A350-1000 aircraft*

**Addis Ababa, 08 June 2023**

Revealed at Aircraft Interiors Expo (AIX) in Hamburg, Ethiopian Airlines, the fastest-growing airline brand globally and the continent's largest airline brand, will offer advanced, high-speed inflight broadband to passengers onboard its upcoming Airbus A350-1000 aircraft, with GX Aviation provided by Inmarsat, recently acquired by Viasat, and selected through the Airbus Airspace Link HBCplus programme.

As one of the launching airlines for inflight connectivity (IFC) through Airbus' HBCplus programme, Ethiopian Airlines will benefit from a more streamlined, efficient order process that will ensure its latest aircraft meet the rapidly growing passenger demand to stay connected while flying.

Inmarsat's latest Passenger Experience Survey found out that 97% of respondents use their personal devices on flights for entertainment, such as streaming movies and TV shows, keeping up with work, and to stay in touch with family and friends. In addition, 82% of passengers are more likely to rebook with an airline that offers quality inflight Wi-Fi.

The first of Ethiopian Airlines' Airbus A350-1000 aircraft is set to be delivered in the Third Quarter (Q3) of 2024, with passengers able to benefit from GX Aviation's world-class connectivity technology. This supports the airline's Vision 2035 Strategy which focuses on expanding its fleets, enhancing its passenger experience and maintaining its leading position in the airline industry.



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Regarding the new service, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said, “As we endeavour to maintain our position as Africa’s number one and among the leading airlines globally, we know one of the key success factors is giving our passengers the best possible onboard experience. Connectivity is a crucial part of our services and products; and bringing Inmarsat’s best-in-class GX Aviation service to our passengers, as part of Airbus’ HBCplus programme, is a major step forward. We want to give our passengers the possibility to stream, surf, and chat from thousands of feet in the air, no matter where their route or destination is. Inmarsat’s seamless, truly global inflight connectivity will be vital to deliver this. We look forward to a very successful partnership with Inmarsat and Airbus, now and in the years to come.”

Niels Steenstrup, President, Inmarsat Aviation, said: “We were selected as the first managed services provider (MSP) for the Airbus HBCplus programme last year, with a scope that includes connectivity, digital portal services and ISP capability. The fact that we have already been selected by two leading airlines is a great achievement and we are excited about delivering our award-winning GX Aviation inflight broadband to Ethiopian Airlines’ passengers starting from next year. This will enable them to stream videos, browse the internet, shop online, enjoy social media and more, all from the comfort of their seats and using their personal devices.”

Andre Schneider, Airbus VP Cabin and Cargo Programme said: “We are delighted that Ethiopian Airlines has selected our agnostic and flexible high-bandwidth connectivity solution – HBCplus. This is further endorsement from our valued airline customers of the confidence they place in Airbus to devise and integrate enhanced inflight capabilities for their passengers to experience. Airspace Link HBCplus provides satcom based off-board connectivity for the Airspace Link open ecosystem, available both in linefit and retrofit. Initially encompassing Ka-band services, it will enable the airline to connect to a choice of Managed Service Providers (MSPs), in this case with Inmarsat – via a new certified terminal and antenna built as part of the aircraft.”

Powered by Inmarsat’s Global Xpress satellite network, GX Aviation delivers world-class connectivity on every aircraft, on any route, and for every passenger. Airline customers will also benefit from seven more Inmarsat satellite payloads entering service by 2025, increasing its Ka-band network fleet to 12.

This includes two Inmarsat-6s, both of which have already launched, followed by two payloads in highly elliptical orbit, enabling the world’s only commercial mobile broadband service for flights in higher latitudes and across the Arctic. This delivers



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uninterrupted connectivity on high-elevation routes. Three additional satellites will then launch in geostationary orbit, adding further speed, capacity, and resilience.

## About Ethiopian

Ethiopian Airlines Group (Ethiopian) is the fastest-growing airlines brand globally and the continent's largest airline brand. In its seventy-seven years of successful operations, Ethiopian, the fastest growing airline, has become one of the continent's leading carriers, unrivalled in efficiency and operational success. Ethiopian commands the lion's share of the African passenger and cargo network operating the youngest and most modern fleet to more than 150 domestic and international passenger and cargo destinations across five continents. Ethiopian's fleet category consists of ultra-modern and environmentally friendly aircraft such as Boeing 737s, 777s, 787s, Airbus A350-900 and Bombardier Dash 8-400 double cabin with an average fleet age of seven years. In fact, Ethiopian is the first airline in Africa to own and operate most of these aircraft. Having achieved its strategic plan (Vision 2025) ahead of time, Ethiopian is currently implementing a 15-year strategic plan called Vision 2035 that will see it become one of the top 20 most competitive and leading aviation groups in the world by providing safe, secured, market driven and customer focused Passenger and Cargo Transport and Logistics, Aviation Training, Airport Management and Ground Services, MRO and Aerospace Manufacturing and Travel and Tourism Services. As a multi-award-winning airline, Ethiopian has been the champion in various coveted awards including Skytrax's 'Best Airline in Africa Award' for five consecutive years among others. The airline has been a Star Alliance member since 2011 and has been registering more than threefold growth in the past 10 years.

For additional information, please visit [www.ethiopianairlines.com](http://www.ethiopianairlines.com)

Email: [CorporateCommunication@ethiopianairlines.com](mailto:CorporateCommunication@ethiopianairlines.com)

Contact: (251-11)517-8913/8165/8907

## About Viasat

On May 30, 2023, Viasat completed its acquisition of Inmarsat, combining the teams, technologies and resources of the two companies to create a new global communications partner.

Viasat is a global communications company that believes everyone and everything in the world can be connected. With offices in 24 countries around the world, our mission shapes how consumers, businesses, governments and militaries around the world



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communicate and connect. Viasat is developing the ultimate global communications network to power high-quality, reliable, secure, affordable, fast connections to positively impact people's lives anywhere they are—on the ground, in the air or at sea, while building a sustainable future in space. Learn more at [www.viasat.com](http://www.viasat.com), the [Viasat News Room](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or [YouTube](#).

Contact for media: [press@inmarsat.com](mailto:press@inmarsat.com)

## About Airbus

Airbus pioneers sustainable aerospace for a safe and united world. The Company constantly innovates to provide the most efficient and technologically-advanced solutions in aerospace, defence, and connected services. In commercial aircraft, Airbus offers the most modern and fuel-efficient airliners. Airbus is also a European leader in defence and security and one of the world's leading space businesses. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide.