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The Boeing Company today confirmed Ethiopian Airlines' order of new Boeing airplanes. The purchase agreement includes three Boeing 737-700s with blended winglets and three 767-300ER (extended-range) airplanes as part of the carrier's aggressive fleet renewal and expansion program.

Ethiopian Airlines also announced its intention to lease six additional airplanes, including Next-Generation 737s and 767s, to complement this acquisition. The flag carrier made the announcement today in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

"We selected the Boeing Next-Generation 737s and 767s following months of exhaustive analysis of the options available to help us execute our renewal and expansion plans to meet growing demand in our markets," said Bisrat Nigatu, chief executive officer for Ethiopian Airlines. "Our decision was based on the combination of operational, commercial and economic considerations."

Deliveries of the new airplanes will begin in the second half of 2003. The agreement also includes provisions for additional fleet expansion opportunities with Boeing 777 airplanes as a next step in the airline's fleet development program.

"Our longstanding partnership with Ethiopian Airlines has been built upon trust and performance," said Doug Groseclose, vice president International Sales -- Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "Ethiopian's leadership team is one of the finest as evidenced by their thorough and transparent analysis of the market options. The combination of strong leadership and the right airplanes will enable this remarkable carrier to set new standards of service in the medium- and long-haul markets throughout the region. We are excited at the prospect of working together well into the future."

The popular 767 offers the lowest operating cost per trip of any twin-aisle airplane. There are more than 880 767 airplanes in service with 80 operators around the world. The 767 has accumulated more than nine million flights and carried millions of passengers.

The latest models of the 737 family (737-600/-700/-800/-900) feature exceptional flexibility in size and mission, as well as superior reliability and maintainability. The Next-Generation 737 models provide passengers with all-new, spacious interiors and more accessible overhead luggage bins. These airplanes are the most technologically advanced in their class and have proved to fly higher, faster, farther, quieter and with greater fuel efficiency than the competition. Flight deck displays and spacious new interiors are patterned after the market-leading Boeing 777.

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