



ANOG



Alliance of Nigerian Organizations in Georgia

For Immediate Release

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Alliance of Nigerian Organizations in Georgia (ANOG) Meeting with Delta Air Lines Officials

COMMUNIQUÉ

On Wednesday April 16, 2008, Executive members of ANOG met with Delta Air Lines officials to open a line of communication, thank Delta for its decision for its direct flight to Lagos, Nigeria and to address some concerns by the Nigerian communities and travelers flying the Atlanta route.

The meeting took place at Delta Air Lines Headquarter Admin Building in Hapeville, GA between 2:00 to 4:20 pm

ANOG Officials: Chairman, Dr. Ezekiel Macham; Vice Chairperson, Dr. Winifred Nweke; Secretary General, Lanre Oladega; Treasurer, Mrs. Ego Ndukwe; Publicity Secretary, Ndubueze Alaka & Community Affairs Committee Chairman, Louis Ebodaghe.

Delta Air Lines Officials: Mr. Bobby Spann (Director-International Development, Alliances & Asia – Pacific Sales), Mr. Lee Gossett (Director, Line Maintenance and MCC), Mr. Andy Renner (Director–International Network Planning), Mr. Anthonio Valadez (Account Executive, Commercial Development Asia, Caribbean & Latin America), Ms Alfreda Turner (Customer Service) and two other Executives in charge of Food and Aircraft.

ANOG OFFICIALS' REMARKS

Members of ANOG expressed their gratitude and concerns in the following manner:

- To establish a line of communication between Delta and ANOG so that issues of concerns with the Nigerian communities could be resolved amicably.

- Present some concerns and complaints Nigerian travelers had on this Atlanta – Lagos or Lagos – Atlanta route with a view to resolving some of the concerns/complaints in the areas listed below; concerns were presented, with some members presenting their life experiences in the following areas:
 - i. Customer service : Poor service and disrespect for passengers
 - ii. Safety: constant mechanical problems, size and age of plane
 - iii. Luggage: losses, delayed arrival, weight allowances and total abolition of excess luggage
 - iv. On time departure/arrival and missed connecting flights
 - v. In-flight entertainment

DELTA AIR LINES OFFICIALS' REMARKS

- Delta responded by apologizing for any inconveniences and shabby treatments that might have engendered the complaints brought by ANOG and the Nigerian community. It was stated that this should not have happened at all and were definitely, not intentional. Delta officials promised that Delta would continue to seek ways to bring about improvements on this route and other routes Delta flies.
 - a. **On customer Service:** All passengers (either Nigerians or NOT) must be treated well by their staff on the ground or by the flying crew.
- Delta also used the occasion to give some insights on issues of Safety, lost/delayed luggage, on-time departure/arrival and choice of food/movies as follows:
 - a. **On Safety,** Delta categorically stated that it takes any mechanical issue or problem seriously as they always want to maintain a higher standard and would not put an aircraft in the air even if it requires minor maintenance (e.g. lavatory). This sometimes may cause delay of departure or arrival of the aircraft. Once again, apology was tendered in this respect
 - b. **On age and type of Aircraft being used for the route or similar route (e.g. New York JFK–Tel Aviv),** Delta indicated that the average age of its 767-300 aircraft was 12 years. However on longer range markets like ATL-Lagos, the average age is only 7 years. The newer 767-300s have better performance characteristics which make them a more suitable aircraft for these longer range routes. Using a larger aircraft like a 777-200 is not ideal because Delta only has a limited number of them, and they are all flying ultra-long range routes like ATL-Tokyo, which cannot be substituted with another aircraft type. Additionally, although the marketplace has responded favorably to the new ATL-Lagos service, it has not

yet grown to the point where it could support the additional seats from an aircraft up gauge.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

- i. Delta agreed to give additional cultural sensitivity training to crews serving on that route. ANOG may be called to give some insights about the Nigerian culture at such training
- ii. If a particular passenger was not treated well, Delta needs detailed information on that particular flight (Date, Time, flight number, etc) so as to have adequate data or information to act upon or investigate for any disciplinary action
- iii. Given safety and viability reasons, Delta will continue to use Boeing 767-300 series on this route, for now. Delta appreciates the Nigerian peculiar culturally engendered need to carry excess luggage, especially during the holiday or high peak seasons, but is currently collecting data on this route to enable it to recalibrate the usual assumptions and averages that were used to set up guidelines. Delta promises to revisit these guidelines as data become available and thus, asks that the Nigerian community bears with them until they find a safe solution. In the meantime, the quickest and safest solution, though not convenient for the passenger, is not to allow any excess baggage till further notice.
- iv. Delta anticipates relaxing the total abolition of excess luggage in the future and promises to examine and make adequate plans towards seasonal demand fluctuations on that route
- v. **On the choice of food being offered**, Delta agreed to review it and possibly tailor it to serve meals, preferably hot meals, to which Nigerian communities are accustomed instead of the cold cuts served on American and European routes. However, this depends on the feasibility of carrying on board more than one hot meal each way. Delta is willing to have ANOG help it review menus and suggest entertainment offered on this route.
- vi. **On the in-flight entertainment**, Delta invited the Nigerian community, through ANOG, to suggest the movies to be offered in-flight. It, however, noted that it would take change of the equipment to provide individual

in-flight entertainment screens. Delta projects that this could take 3 to 4 years to accomplish, but intimated that it could happen earlier if the airplanes already equipped accordingly become available after it merger with Northwest airlines. Delta implores the community to bear with it as it seeks solutions to this concern too.

- vii. Delta is considering the New- York – Lagos route. In the meantime, Delta seeks support and understanding of the Nigerian community as it works to resolve issues that were brought to its attention.

Signed

**Ezekiel Macham PhD
Chairman**

**Lanre Oladega
Secretary General**

Member Organizations: Akwa-Ibom State Asso, Eko Club of Atlanta, Egbe Omo Yoruba Greater Atlanta, Esan Progressive Association of Georgia, Igbo Union, Igbodo Development Union, Ikeduru Association, Isiekenesi Improvement Union, Kwara State Asso GA, Ndokwa Assoc in America, NICORE, NIDO, Nigerian Ministers Foundation, Nigerian Women Asso of GA, Nigerian Youth Alliance, Nubians, Orlu Progressive Union, Otu Umunne, Owo United Asso., Yorubas of Atlanta, Zumunta Assoc Atlanta