

CCC/PS/3/2/2019

25th March, 2019

Press Release

For immediate publication in all COMESA Member States' Public Media

COMESA Competition Commission warns Ethiopian Airlines against violation of passenger rights through misleading statements of its Customer Services Policies.

The COMESA Competition Commission (the "Commission:") wishes to inform the general public that it resolved passenger complaints against Ethiopian Airlines on 21st February, 2019.

On 30th November, 2018, the Commission received a complaint from passengers traveling on Ethiopian Airlines from Cairo Egypt to Nairobi, Kenya via Addis Ababa. The passengers contended that on 11th November, 2018, they were denied boarding their connecting flight due to over booking by the airline. The affected passengers informed the Commission that the airline offered to compensate them with a voucher equivalent to US\$200, redeemable at the destination. However, the affected passengers informed the Commission that the airline did not fulfil its commitment as they were compensated 50% of the voucher amount.

The Commission considered the incident as a violation of consumer rights. This was an instance of false representation pursuant to Article 27 (1)(k) of the COMESA Competition Regulations which provides that:

"A person shall not, in trade or commerce, in connection with the supply or possible supply of goods or services or in connection with the promotion by any means of the supply or use of goods or services;

k) make false or misleading representation concerning the existence, exclusion or effect of any condition, warranty, guarantee, right or remedy."

The Commission engaged Ethiopian Airlines and upon its admission, the consumers were fully compensated and the airline undertook measures to minimise the risk of similar occurrence in the future.

However, the Commission is concerned that there is a high prevalence of misleading representation and unsatisfactory customer services in the air transport sector. In this regard, the Commission warned Ethiopian Airlines against such conduct and that in future the Commission may invoke relevant provisions of the Regulations to fine offenders.

George Lipimile
Director & Chief Executive Officer