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# ECDC NEWS

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

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## **ECDC's Holds 14th National African Refugee Conference and Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Ethiopian Community Council, Inc. (ECDC) held its 14th national conference African refugees and immigrants in Arlington, Virginia May 5-7, which attracted more than 200 leaders of community-based service providers and top leaders in refugee affairs. In conjunction with the conference, Governor of Virginia Tim Kaine declared May 5-9, 2008, African Refugee and Immigrant Awareness Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Under the theme African Refugees and Immigrants: The Optimism of Generations, the conference included plenary sessions on the current state of refugee protection and assistance efforts on the African continent; challenges facing newcomer refugees and the resettlement program in the United States; and strategies for improving program development and delivery.

Dr. Calvin O. Butts, pastor of New York's Abyssinian Baptist Church and president of the State University of New York College at Old Westbury, delivered the keynote address, commending ECDC's leadership role in African refugee affairs and urging greater U.S. involvement in efforts to end refugee-producing conflicts on the continent.

Maureen Bunyan, news anchor for WJLA-TV in the District of Columbia, described her personal and professional journey as a young immigrant from Aruba to the highest ranks of broadcast journalism as the luncheon speaker on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

This year's traditional banquet celebrated ECDC's 25 years of service to the newcomer community. James P. Moran (D-VA), stopped by to congratulate ECDC for its work and commitment to the immigrant community. Arlington County Board Chairman Walter Tejada commented on ECDC's work on behalf of African newcomers to the Arlington, Virginia, community and read a proclamation that designated the week of May 5-9 African refugee and immigrant awareness week in Arlington County.

Representative Mike Honda (D-CA), founder and chairman of the Congressional Ethiopian American Caucus also attended the banquet. He talked about refugee issues and commended ECDC's record of service.

ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra described highlights of the organization's growth and development and presented special awards to the following individuals and organizations: Linda Thomas-Greenfield, nominated as the next U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, a former official with PRM and currently Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs; Irene Lee, a senior program associate of the Annie E. Casey Foundation who provided ECDC its first foundation grant while serving with the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation; Henok Tesfaye, a native of Ethiopia who obtained a loan through ECDC's Enterprise Development Group subsidiary and now owns businesses in the District of Columbia; the International Rescue Committee; and to the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, a refugee resettlement affiliate of ECDC.

The Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) is a community-based, non-profit organization that is dedicated to resettling refugees, promoting cultural, educational, and socio-economic development in the refugee community in the United States, and conducting humanitarian and development programs in the Horn of Africa. Since 1983, ECDC has worked to help establish stronger and more culturally appropriate services for the United States refugee community and continues to pursue programs that will help newcomers become productive members of their new American communities.

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