

ECDC NEWS

Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.
901 S. Highland Street, Arlington, Virginia 22204

Phone: (703) 685-0510 * Fax: (703) 685-0529 * E-mail: info@ecdcus.org * Web Site: www.ecdcus.org

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 11, 2014

CONTACT: Lindsay Stepp

ECDC announces its 20th National Conference to be held in Arlington, VA

The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. (ECDC) will host its 20th national conference on April 30 – May 3, 2014 at Holiday Inn Ballston, 4610 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA. This year's conference, *African Refugees and Immigrants: Pathways to Security, Integration and Empowerment*, will highlight the extraordinary experiences of African refugees and explore the current issues facing the African refugee and immigrant population in the U.S. and abroad.

This year's conference theme will consider the major issues facing African refugees and immigrants while placing particular emphasis on innovative approaches to increased security, integration and empowerment. These three areas encompass both the international and domestic arena of refugee protection and resettlement by addressing the causes of refugee migration, resettlement trends, and the meaning of true integration and assimilation of refugees in the U.S. Recent and ongoing unrest in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; situations of African refugees and asylum seekers in Israel; the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa, coupled with current funding challenges of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) are a few of the reasons for this comprehensive approach. Conference sessions will include updates on processing and admissions of African Refugees to the U.S., challenges to serving newcomers to the U.S. in the face of budgetary constraints, working toward common goals to better serve newcomers to the U.S., and U.S. policy and response to recent refugee crises in Africa.

The keynote speaker, who will be opening the conference, is Mr. Salih Booker who is a specialist on U.S.-Africa relations, African development, and international human rights. He served as Advisor to the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2013. During the previous decade, Mr. Booker directed two international human rights organizations. His career began in Washington in 1980 where he was a Legislative Assistant for Trans Africa.

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 in their new American communities.

For more information on conference registration fees, lodging arrangements, and other program details, please contact Lindsay Stepp at lstepp@ecdcus.org or 703-685-0510 ex.216.