

## Conference Greetings

To leaders of the nation's refugee resettlement program, local service providers, and others who are attending ECDC's 17th national conference in Arlington, Virginia, May 2-4, we extend special greetings. Full coverage will appear in the next online issue of *African Refugee Network*.

## ORR Director Eskinder Negash Will Keynote ECDC's Annual Conference

ORR Director Eskinder Negash, a former refugee, will deliver the keynote address at ECDC's 17th national conference on May 2. Mr. Negash brings 30 years of experience working on behalf of refugees and immigrants and managing non-profit social service agencies. Prior to his appointment, he served as the Vice

President and Chief Operating Officer of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants.

In his efforts to enhance ORR programs, Mr. Negash has strengthened communication



**Eskinder Negash**

channels with State Refugee Coordinators, State Refugee Health Coordinators, MAAs, and National Voluntary Agencies. Under his direction, ORR increased funding for the PY10 Matching Grant program from \$60 million to \$65.3 million, which will enable over 29,000 clients to be served. Also, for the first time in ORR's history, the HHS Secretary not only attended ORR's national consultation last year but also attended the 2011 Refugee Admissions Consultations with the House and Senate Judiciary Committee in late 2010.

Among many successes, two main highlights stand out so far for Director Negash: ACF Acting Assistant Secretary David Hansell's participation on the trip to Kenya and Jordan, and the ORR 2010 National Consultation that had some 800 attendees—the largest in ORR history, with more than 200 participants who were once refugees themselves.

## Visit to Capitol is Popular Feature of Conference

For many leaders who attend ECDC's annual conference, a highlight in recent years has been the Visit to Capitol Hill scheduled this year on Tuesday, May 3 from 2-5:30 p.m. Included as part of ECDC's ongoing advocacy efforts,



it enables participants to discuss refugee and immigrant issues with their congressional representatives. For those planning to participate this year, a briefing will be conducted from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. Monday to describe logistical arrangements and to review issues of concern to African refugees and key policy areas that will be discussed with staff members.

## PRM Event Observes Refugee Convention Milestone

In one of many commemorations being conducted this year on the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees, PRM hosted an event titled "Rescue and Refuge: Tribute to Persons of Courage" on April 6. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described the event as "a reaffirmation of America's commitment to the protection of refugees around the world."

Receiving tributes were: Mina Jahic, a Bosnian Muslim woman who provided extended shelter and medical care to a seriously wounded Muslim man after his escape from a Serbian militia execution squad during the Bosnian war; Larry Hollingworth, who headed UNHCR's operation in Sarajevo during that war; Mbaye Diagne, a Senegalese Army cap-

tain who was credited for rescuing 600 ethnic Tutsis during Rwanda's 1994 genocide; Josephine Dusabimana, an ethnic Hutu, who sheltered Tutsis during the genocide; Raoul Wallenberg, the legendary Swedish diplomat credited with rescuing tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust; Harriet Tubman, the celebrated U.S. figure of the Underground Railroad during the 1850s; and the S.S. *St. Louis*, the ship carrying Jewish refugees from Germany which was denied harbor in Cuba and the United States in 1939, cited here as an example of how failure to provide life-saving refuge to people in their hour of need can produce tragic consequences.

## *Like a Man on Earth*

**Monday, 6:15 p.m.**

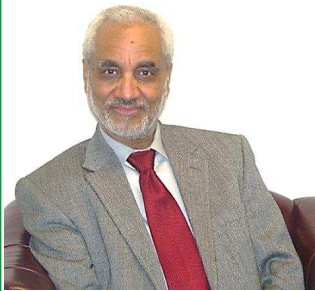
For many years, the nation of Libya has engaged with European financiers in a brutal conspiracy to control the immigration movements of other Africans, as documented in the film *Like a Man on Earth*, scheduled Monday at 6:15 p.m. filmed by an Ethiopian victim of the conspiracy, the work presents testimonies of refugees living in Italy conveying their journey of pain, endurance, and dignity.

*In My Opinion...*

**About Our Conference Theme**

**A**s our conference planning committee began exploring an appropriate theme for this year’s annual conference, we received a notice from UNHCR about a planned year-long observance of two historic developments in international responses to the needs of displaced populations. It encouraged partner organizations engaged in refugee and humanitarian missions to join in the observances, which will culminate with a Ministerial-level meeting in Geneva in December 2011. The events were the adoption of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951 and—just a decade later—the adoption of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Those actions established the legal foundation that has guided UNHCR’s work over the past 60 years and recognized that possession of nationality is essential for full participation in society and a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the full range of human rights. The observances are designed to increase public understanding and



**Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.**

sympathy for forcibly displaced and stateless people and to generate additional support for responding to their needs. The planning committee sanctioned those plans by its choice of our conference theme.

At its launch, UNHCR had a focused mission and a limited projected lifespan. It was charged with helping Europeans displaced by World War II. It was expected to complete its work in three years and then disband. Reality quickly trumped such optimism. That UNHCR’s mission would have to expand and its exist-

ence extend through succeeding years became dramatically evident in 1956 when it responded to the refugee flows created when the Soviet forces crushed the Hungarian Revolution, as noted in a historical summary on UNHCR’s website.

“Any indication that UNHCR would become unnecessary has never resurfaced,” the summary says. “In the 1960s, the decolonization of Africa produced the first of that continent’s numerous refugee crises needing UNHCR intervention. Over the following two decades, UNHCR had to help with displacement crises in Asia and Latin America. By the end of the century there were fresh refugee problems in Africa and, turning full circle, new waves of refugees in Europe from the series of wars in the Balkans.”

UNHCR’s experiences in dealing with the conflicts that accompanied the decolonization of Africa have helped to transform the organization, leading to an expansion of its mandate to include IDPs and requiring a vast expansion of its partnerships with supportive organizations. By 1969, some two-thirds of UNHCR’s global program funds were being spent in African countries, illustrating the enormous shift which had taken place in the organization’s focus in the space of a decade. The degree to which that shift continues is evident in the projected boost to 45 percent of UNHCR’s budget allocation in 2011.

A major emphasis during the UNHCR observances will be an expansion of the number of states ratifying the Stateless Conventions. While they are the key legal instruments in the protection of stateless persons around the world, they have attracted few accessions, prompting the General Assembly in 1995 to add that mission to UNHCR’s mandate. An estimated 12 million people worldwide remain stateless with only 37 states having ratified the Convention.

Anniversaries of significant events are generally “celebrated.” But that term is inappropriate for both the events and the organization being highlighted this year. What is appropriate is to note them with gratitude, admiration and a renewed commitment to the goals that prompted UNHCR’s creation and to the support that sustains its operations.

**Census Data Confirms Nation’s Diversity Pace**

America’s black or African-American population totaled 38.9 million and represented 13 percent of the total population at the time of the 2010 census, according to a recently-released analysis of racial data by the Census Bureau.

The overwhelming majority (97 percent) of the total U.S. population reported only one race in 2010. This group totaled 299.7 million. Of these, the largest group reported white alone (223.6 million), accounting for 72 percent of all people living in the United States.

About 24 percent of the total population reported their race as black, either alone or with at least one other race. Nine million people reported more than one race and made up about 3 percent of the total population. Ninety-two percent of people who reported multiple races provided exactly two races, with white and black being the largest multiple-race combination. An additional eight percent of the two or more races population reported three races and less than one percent reported four or more races.

Three quarters of multiple race combinations were comprised of four groups in 2010: white and black (1.8 million); white and “some other race” (1.7 million); white and Asian (1.6 million); and white and American Indian or Alaska Native (1.4 million).

A number of geographic areas had large proportions of minority populations. Between 2000 and 2010, Texas joined California, the District of Columbia, Hawaii and New Mexico in having a “majority-minority” population where more than 50 percent of the population was part of a minority group.

**2011 ORR National Consultation**

The 2011 ORR National Consultation is scheduled for August 1-2 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. In an invitation letter, ORR Director Eskinder Negash said the event “provides a unique opportunity for stakeholders throughout the network to share ideas, engage in discussions and expand the partnerships that form the backbone of the program.” For details, visit: [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr).

## Princeton Lyman Named Special Envoy to Sudan

Just three days after being appointed as the new U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan, Ambassador Princeton Lyman departed for Ethiopia and Sudan in early April to support ongoing negotiations between Sudan's North and South on issues pertaining to South Sudan's transition to



Princeton Lyman

independence in July. A former ambassador to Nigeria and South Africa and Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, Lyman participated in discussions in Ethiopia between the

parties to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and then traveled to Khartoum for meetings with senior Sudanese officials on both North-South issues and Darfur. Lyman replaces General Scott Gration in the envoy post. Gration has been appointed ambassador to Kenya.

Before his departure, Lyman met with President Obama to discuss challenges remaining in the area, including concerns about the continuing violence in Abyei. The president underscored his commitment to the establishment of two viable states in northern and South Sudan, according to a White House statement, and the need for all parties to join in the Doha Peace Process to elevate the level of international engagement on Darfur.

"The United States is committed to the peace, security, and prosperity of both the North and the South, which is why the President has chosen Ambassador Lyman for this important job," said Secretary Clinton. "His experience as U.S. Ambassador during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy will prove invaluable during the next few months. His diplomatic skills were on display during the mediation talks between the North and South, and he is well-positioned to advise the Sudanese people at this critical juncture."

Lyman is a member of the American Academy of Diplomacy and Adjunct Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies with the Council on Foreign Relations.

## State Department Ceremony Honors International Women of Courage

As part of worldwide observances of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8, First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton honored ten winners of the International Women of Courage Awards for their courage in advocating for women's rights and empowerment.

Among them was Henriette Ekwe Ebongo, 61, of Cameroon, a journalist and political activist who publishes *Be-bela*, a weekly independent newspaper and "has spent a lifetime advancing press freedom, freedom of expression, human rights, good governance and gender equality," according to a profile brief produced for the award ceremony.

"From the struggle against dictatorship in the 1980s, to the struggle against corruption and injustice in recent years, she has refused to be silenced for standing up for justice and the rule of law," the profile indicated. "She was instrumental in the founding of a freer and more independent media in Cameroon."

Praising the honorees for their achievements, the First Lady said they all had discovered a very simple truth: "that courage can actually be contagious."

"At some point, each of them decided that she simply could not carry on in the face of an injustice. She decided that she could no longer accept discrimination or corruption. She could no longer

stand silent in the face of violence or oppression, poverty or inequality. And so each, in her own way, decided to act. They decided to speak up, to publish an article, to file a lawsuit, to run for office, to open a school. And they have done these things at tremendous risk to themselves and to their families."

Other honorees were: Roza Otunbayeva, President of the Kyrgyz Republic; Maria Bashir, prosecutor general for Herat province in Afghanistan; Nasta Palazhanka, deputy chairwoman for Malady Front, a nongovernmental organization in Belarus; Guo Jianmei, lawyer and director of the Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Counseling and Service Center in China; Yoani Sanchez, innovator, writer and founder of the Generación Y blog in Cuba; Agnes Osztołykan, member of parliament and the Politics Can Be Different Party in Hungary; Eva Abu Hala-weh, executive director of Mizan Law Group for Human Rights in Jordan; Marisela Morales Ibañez, deputy attorney general for special investigations against organized crime in Mexico; and Ghulam Sughra, founder and chief executive officer of the Marvi Rural Development Organization in Pakistan.

Yoani Sanchez and Nasta Palazhanka, Clinton noted, were not present because they were prevented by their governments from attending the awards ceremony in the United States.



Michelle Obama and Hillary Clinton pose with Women of Courage honorees. Cameroonian journalist Henriette Ekwe Ebongo is at far left. (Department of State photo)

NEWS BRIEFS

**PRM Announces New U.S. Fund Support for UNHCR**

An additional contribution of \$126.8 million toward the 2011 worldwide operations of UNHCR announced by PRM on April 15 brings the total support provided by the United States this year to more than \$285 million.

Noting the historical milestones in refugee affairs being observed this year, the announcement saluted “the vital and courageous work of UNHCR, its many NGO partners and refugee hosting countries in providing protection to vulnerable people around the world.”

Here’s how the new funds are being allocated: Africa, \$39.9 million; Asia and Pacific, \$23.0 million; Europe, \$3.8 million; Global Operations, \$7.9 million; Middle East, \$49.4 million; and Western Hemisphere, \$2.8 million.

**African Emergencies Create High Stress, UNHCR Says**

With three major emergency operations across Africa, UNHCR António Guterres returned from a trip to Kenya in early April reporting that his agency had never been under such pressure since he took the helm in 2005. The trip included a stop at the sprawling Dadaab refugee complex in northeast Kenya and was the last in a series of missions aimed at evaluating the three most serious displacement

crises facing UNHCR: Ivory Coast, Libya and Somalia.

Despite the stressful situations, Guterres also said his missions had heartened him because “they show that in today’s world there are still a number of very generous countries who go on keeping their borders open for massive inflows of people in need of protection.” He singled out Egypt, Tunisia, and Liberia.

**Application Deadline Nears For ORR Supplemental**

May 20 is the deadline ORR has set for receipt of applications for grant funds designated for Supplemental Services for Recently Arrived Refugees. The program is designed to help local communities strengthen linguistic and culturally appropriate services for large and unexpected inflows of new refugees. Applications should propose 17-month projects that will serve a minimum of 100 refugees annually.

Full details are available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2011-ACF-ORR-RU-0149/html#c.d.section.I>

**New DHS Service Enables Self-Check of Work Status**

A new E-Verify Self-Check service that allows individuals to check their

own employment eligibility status before formally seeking employment was launched in late March by DHS and USCIS. The voluntary free and secure service will enable users to submit corrections of any inaccuracies in their personal records, helping protect themselves from potential workplace discrimination that could result from an employer’s abuse of the E-Verify system, according to a DHS press notice. Initially available to users in Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, Mississippi, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, the service will be rolled out to other states as quickly as possible. For more details, visit: [www.uscis.gov/everify](http://www.uscis.gov/everify).

**MPI Report Suggests Six Executive Branch ‘Fixes’**

While sweeping reform to fix a U.S. immigration system widely acknowledged as broken has taken a backseat politically, opportunities exist within the executive branch to improve the ways in which the nation’s existing immigration laws and policies are administered, according to a recent report by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI).

Titled *Executive Action on Immigration: Six Ways to Make the System Work Better*, the report offers proposals that the Obama administration could implement to improve the functioning and advance the core goals of the system.

None of the actions would require new legislation and all could be implemented by the DHS, DOJ and the White House, MPI says.

**FY 2011 African Refugee Admissions**

As of March 31, 2011 • Ceiling for FY 2011 is 15,000

Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Angola	1	Ivory Coast	1
Burundi	52	Liberia	43
Central African Republic	50	Nigeria	1
Chad	23	Rwanda	46
Congo	9	Sierra Leone	24
Dem. Rep. Congo	530	Somalia	1,075
Eritrea	922	Sudan	122
Ethiopia	184	Togo	4
Gambia	6	Uganda	3
Guinea	1	Zimbabwe	8
Guinea-Bissau	4		
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,109</b>

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

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