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**SAVE THE DATES**  
**May 5-7, 2008**  
*African Refugees and Immigrants:  
 The Optimism of Generations*

**ECDC's 14th National  
 Conference on African  
 Refugees and Immigrants  
 Sheraton National Hotel  
 Arlington, Virginia**

## DHS Rule Sets Standards to Implement REAL ID Act Drivers' License Provisions

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced in mid-January a final rule establishing minimum security standards for state-issued drivers' licenses and identification cards.

The rule sets uniform standards intended to enhance the integrity and reliability of drivers' licenses and identification cards, strengthen issuance capabilities, and increase security at drivers' license and identification card production facilities, according to a DHS statement. The first deadline for compliance with REAL ID is Dec. 31, 2009. By then, states must upgrade the security of their license systems to include a check for lawful status of all applicants and to ensure that illegal aliens cannot obtain REAL ID licenses.

Some states are expected to be compliant well before that time, DHS said.

Compliance will be needed for access into a federal facility, boarding commercial aircraft, and entering nuclear power plants. Federal agencies will continue to accept licenses for official purposes

from residents of states that comply with the law.

While the DHS statement says that the final rule "dramatically reduces state implementation costs by roughly 73 percent" from early draft proposals, several states expressed continuing concerns about what they identify as an unfunded federal mandate. The American Civil Liberties Union and other organizations also expressed concerns about what they perceived to be threats to personal privacy.

In a joint statement, the National Governors Association (NGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), urged the Bush administration to seek additional Congressional funding to help states pay for implementation costs.

"Together, we initially estimated Real ID would cost states more than \$11 billion. These regulations offer states some flexibility that may tame those costs," said William T. Pound, NCSL executive

[Continued on page 2]

## At Geneva 'Dialogue,' Nations Renew Efforts to Preserve Asylum

Nearly 70 governments attending a two-day UNHCR-organized dialogue in Geneva in mid-December voiced support for a more coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to ensure the protection of refugees among the millions of migrants now on the move worldwide.

In a draft summary concluding the Dialogue on Protection Challenges at Geneva's Palais des Nations, High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres noted that participants urged the international community to maintain a distinction between refugees and migrants as a means to preserve the institution of asylum.

Much of the dialogue, the first in an annual series examining key refugee-related issues in a relatively informal set-

ting, focused on how to better ensure that refugees forced to flee violence and persecution are able to find the protection they deserve as governments try to grapple with growing migratory movements on their borders.

The world's 10 million refugees constitute only a small proportion of the 200 million people now living outside their own country. But increasingly, refugees are mixed in with migrants on the move—traveling in the same directions and using the same routes and means of transport. Distinguishing between those who are forced to flee and those who choose to move for economic or other reasons is a major challenge.

Guterres said there was broad agreement among participants for a compre-

hensive approach to fill the "protection gaps" and "grey areas" arising from these mixed flows of refugees and migrants. "The solution for addressing these gaps lies not in redefining mandates but in getting the international community to work together through new partnerships," he said.

Participants agreed to establish an informal working group that will include non-governmental organizations, governments and relevant agencies that will examine how to address these gaps in a more coordinated way.

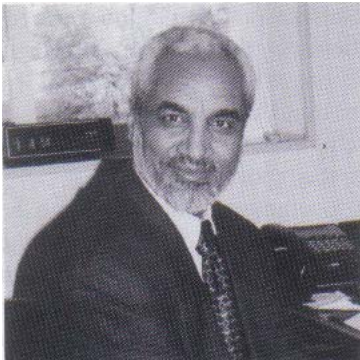
Participants also focused on human smuggling and trafficking, including irregular maritime migration. Tens of thousands of boat people risk their lives each year in the Mediterranean, the Gulf

[Continued on page 2]

*In My Opinion...***About the Politics of 'Change'**

A year ago, I commented about the potential significance of having for the first time in the nation's history a woman and a black man considered viable contenders for their party's Democratic presidential nomination, suggesting that the campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama could help illumine how wide is the remaining gap between the nation's professed commitments to equality, diversity and opportunity for all and their achievement. While the commentary was keyed to the annual observances of Black History Month and Women's History Month, the ensuing political contests have—at least for the moment—confirmed that the nation—at least the Democratic Party—is willing to give serious consideration to both. Ultimate success by either candidate will surely fulfill—at least in part—the “change” pledge being made by all candidates.

As the national campaigns continue over the coming months, it appears certain



**Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.**

that the intensifying debate about needed changes in immigration laws and procedures will further test the viability of the traditions that have made the nation such a beacon of hope for previous generations. With all candidates from both parties quite properly expressing dismay and concern about the flow of illegal immigrants entering the country, there is already some evidence that the issue is fueling a xenophobic resurgence, impacting attitudes and conduct toward all newcomers, whatever their legal status. For those of us engaged in welcoming and assisting refugees entering the country legally

and with profound gratitude for the opportunities and assistance they are receiving, there is also occasional and welcomed evidence that the traditions continue, the dream endures. One such evidence appeared in The Washington Post article mentioned in the “African Refugees in the News” feature on page 5, describing how Arlington County, Virginia, is fulfilling its commitment to treat everyone with “dignity and respect, regardless of immigration status.” While nearby counties were beset by protests and demonstrations breeding fear and intimidation among ethnic communities, Arlington County maintained a positive and accommodating posture.

Another occurred in the county elections in November when J. Walter Tejada, a U.S. citizen originally from El Salvador was reelected to the Arlington County Board of Supervisors and subsequently was chosen by the board to be its chairman. With our national headquarters located in the county and having been engaged in serving refugees and immigrants in the area for a quarter century, it has been my privilege to know and work with Walter for many years. He came to the United States when he was only 13 years of age, studied at George Mason University and has lived a busy and productive life, deeply committed to serving the county's diverse population and promoting civic participation and representation.

One of his first acts as board chairman was to introduce an ambitious “Agenda for Progress,” with a pledge to continue the County's policies. “While others were making scapegoats of immigrants and promoting divisive policies of exclusion, Arlington took a stand for justice and inclusion,” his agenda says. “This will not change in 2008. People come for a chance to live the American Dream. We support this dream by promoting the full inclusion of newcomers.”

Walter is both a beneficiary of that tradition and a symbol of its success.

Changes in personnel and policies will surely accompany the outcome of this year's elections, but let us hope that the traditions of welcome, compassion, hospitality and opportunity will be preserved. Let us hope, too, that the unique needs and status of refugees will not be lost amid the migratory flows sweeping the world.

**DHS Rule Clarifies REAL ID Act Issues On Drivers' Licenses**

[Continued from page 1]

director. “Still, the fact remains that the Administration has not asked Congress to fund state costs, and Congress has only provided states \$90 million. State legislators have to balance budgets and make difficult choices among many competing priorities. These regulations are federal standards and deserve federal funds.”

The DHS statement says \$360 million is being provided to assist states in implementing the Act, with \$80 million in REAL ID grants and \$280 million as part of the Homeland Security Grant Program.

Barry Steinhardt and Tim Sarapani of ACLU's Washington legislative office decried the rules as “utterly unworkable,” urging that the entire act needs be repealed.

“Rather than saddling the states and the American people with this misfortune of a law until 2018 and beyond,” they said, “it should be repealed and replaced with a clean, simple, and vigorous new driver's license security law that does not create a national ID.”

The final rule is available at [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

**Preserving Asylum...**

[Continued from page 1]

of Aden, the Caribbean and off the coast of West Africa.

At a side event devoted to rescue at sea, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Erika Feller reminded the participants of recent tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. In the last week alone, some 200 people drowned or went missing in separate incidents off Turkey, the Spanish Canary Islands and Yemen.

UNHCR and its partners, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO), are promoting measures that will save those who are in distress on the high seas and ensure their safe and timely disembarkation. Guterres said the heads of relevant agencies involved in maritime migration issues will meet early next year.

## Black History Month Honors Historian Carter G. Woodson

*Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism* is the theme for the 2008 observance of Black History Month, chosen by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) to honor a man described on their website as someone “who did most to forge an intellectual movement to educate Americans about cultural diversity and democracy.”

He was a leader among a small group of black scholars during the early years of the 20th century who believed that democracy required tolerance and could

sustain those differences in harmony, according to a statement by the ASLAH.

“In 1915, he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,” the statement notes, “and by the time of his death in 1950, he had laid the foundation for a rethinking of American identity. The multiculturalism of our times is built on the intellectual and institutional labors of Woodson and the association he established. He should be known not simply as the Father of Black History, but as pioneer of multiculturalism well.”



Previewing the 2008 Black History Month postage stamp are, from left, ASALH National President Dr. John Fleming, UNC Charlotte Professor Sandra Govan, USPS Community Relations Manager Roy Betts and UNC Charlotte Chancellor Dr. Philip Dubois.

### New Book Shipment Aids Ethiopian Institutions

Continuing its support of higher education in Ethiopia, ECDC recently shipped 49,552 new college level textbooks donated by the McGraw-Hill Companies for distribution among colleges, universities and technical institutes. With a wholesale value of more than \$3.5 million, the books address such topics as math, science, business, technology and economics.

“The latest 3-container shipment brings the total number of such donated books to 764,000—valued at nearly \$40 million—since the Educational Development Program was launched in 1992”, said ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra.

In what has become an annual highlight of the observance, the U.S. Postal Service’ issued its first Black Heritage stamp featuring Woodson on February 1, 1984. This year’s stamp, previewed during the 92nd ASALH convention at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte in October, honors Charles W. Chestnutt, the first African-American fiction writer to win national acclaim. He is best known for his depic-

tions of the African American experience before and after the Civil War. Chestnut is the 31st honoree in the popular commemorative stamp series.

The son of former slaves who instilled in him at an early age the importance of gaining a proper education,

Woodson initiated the celebration of Negro History Week in 1926, which was expanded in 1976 to embrace the entire month and renamed Black History Month.

“Although he did not begin his formal education until he



was 20 years old, according to an article by Korey Bowers Brown on the ASLAH website, “his dedication to study enabled him to earn a high school diploma in West Virginia and bachelor and master’s degrees from the University of Chicago in just a few years. He became the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University (the first was W.E.B. Dubois).”

“In an extraordinary career spanning three crucial decades, the man and the history became one—so much so that it is impossible to deal with the history of black people without touching, at some point, the personal history of Carter Woodson,” writes Lerone Bennett, Jr., of USINFO.

Describing Woodson as defiantly independent, Bennett says, he devoted his every waking hour to the task of ensuring that blacks would escape “the awful fate of becoming a negligible factor in world thought.” About his role in establishing the annual observance, Bennett says Woodson considered it as one of his proudest accomplishments, quoting the founder: “No other single thing has done so much to dramatize the achievement of persons of African blood.”

### Presidential Proclamation Honors King on Birthday

Through his leadership, service and clarity of vision, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., changed America forever, said President Bush in the annual proclamation designating January 21 as a Federal holiday. “We honor the lasting legacy of this great American, remember the ideals for which he fought, and recommit ourselves to ensuring that our country’s promise extends to all Americans across this great land,” the proclamation said. “In the brief time Dr. King walked upon this earth, he devoted his life to strengthening the content of he American character and called on our Nation to live up to is founding principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all its citizens. The president urged all Americans to celebrate King’s memory by performing acts of kindness through service to others and through community programs in honor of his life and legacy.

## UNHCR Urges Women Leaders to Empower Female Refugees

A Norwegian polar explorer joined more than 50 senior businesswomen and aid workers in Geneva in mid-December to look at ways in which women leaders could help female refugees empower themselves through livelihood projects.

"I really believe in empowering displaced women and girls," Norwegian Refugee Council Goodwill Ambassador Liv Arnesen told participants in her keynote address at the Women Leading for Livelihoods (WLL) meeting in UNHCR headquarters.

"Women and girls have survived the worst, they want to move on with their lives and education and creating businesses are ways to do that," added Arnesen, who in 1994 became the first woman to ski solo and unsupported to the South Pole. She recently met refugee women in Kenya and Burundi.

The refugee agency's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Erika

Feller, kicking off the day-long meeting, told participants that a lack of livelihood opportunities could lead to protection risks, especially for women. She added that many women had to resort to survival sex to earn enough money and food to provide for themselves or their children.

"Refugee women often have skills and resources but need additional support to become self-reliant and avoid protection risks, such as survival sex," echoed Marjon Kamara, head of UNHCR's Africa bureau. "An initiative like WLL aims at doing just that."

Mireille Mugisha, a 26-year-old economics student from Burundi, urged the business executives and philanthropists to support livelihood projects for refugee women. "When you empower a woman, you support the entire household . . . you help eliminate child labor, you ensure girls' access to education," she said. "You also reduce infant mor-

tality rates, improve nutrition and diminish poverty, exploitation and dependence on food aid."

All participants stressed that it was essential for refugees—especially female refugees—to develop skills in order to earn an income and support their families. Refugees must be given the opportunity to build up a lasting future whether they repatriate, integrate locally or resettle in a third country.

Women Leading for Livelihoods was set up by UNHCR to recruit the help of women leaders in promoting economic self-reliance and empowerment of refugee women and girls around the world.

"The goal is to improve refugee women's lives by recognizing their right to work, their potential in creating micro-businesses and to help them to become self sufficient," said Tina Tinde, who is the special adviser on gender issues to High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.

"We want women leaders to contribute with their expertise in creating a business, we want them to contribute with their ideas, we invite them to finance refugee women's projects" said Tinde.

Participants agreed to support projects ranging from language and literacy training to vocational and skills training as well as micro-credit and small business development. They will seek outside support to help refugee women create small- and medium-sized enterprises such as chicken farms, mushroom production, carpet weaving, furniture-making and clothes shops.

Meanwhile, a group of WLL members are expected next year to visit refugee camps at Dadaab in Kenya, which hosts some 172,000 predominantly Somali refugees—half of them women and girls.

"Access to livelihoods empowers women and allows them to have a stronger voice in their communities, including in peace-building activities," said Line Pedersen, who works in UNHCR's peace-building, livelihoods and partnership section. "This is especially crucial in a country like Somalia or in a protracted displacement situation like Dadaab."

### JRS' Katrine Camilleri Wins '07 Nansen Award

The 2007 Nansen Refugee Award was presented to lawyer Katrine Camilleri in Geneva in October for her work in helping refugees arriving in the Mediterranean island of Malta and her refusal to be cowed by threats from those opposed to her work.

"We are all privileged to be able to give the Nansen Refugee Award to an angel," High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres said before handing

over the award in front of scores of guests.

In accepting the award, Camilleri, aged 37, paid tribute to the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Malta, whose legal department she heads in representing the interests of asylum seekers who face detention after arriving in Malta.

"It is an honor that I share with every member of Jesuit Refugee Service throughout the world; when one of us is

honored all of us are honored because we share the same mission: to accompany, serve and defend the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people."

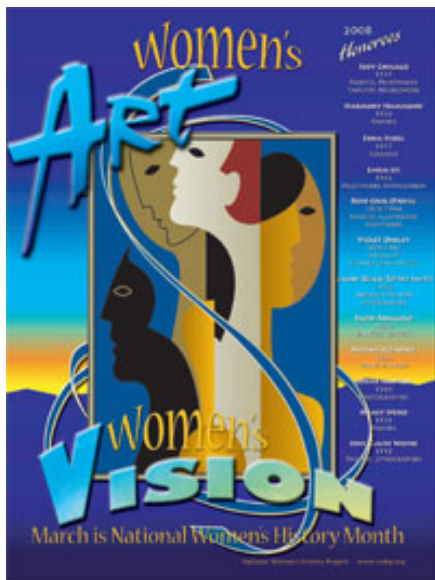
The annual award, which comes with a medal and a cash prize of \$100,000 funded by Norway and Switzerland, is given out yearly to a person or group for outstanding services in supporting refugee causes.

Camilleri said she planned to use the money to consolidate JRS projects and develop new services



Lawyer Katrine Camilleri updates a Congolese refugee client on her case. UNHCR photo by A. Pace

## Women's History Month to Honor Imagination, Diversity, Creativity



As the observance of March as National Women's History Month approached this year amid a political campaign featuring a woman as a leading candidate, with the wife of a viable black candidate assuming a major supporting role, the annual focus took on added significance in pursuit of its mandate "to ensure that the history of American women will be recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country." "As their Web site explains, the theme of the event for 2008 is *Women's Art: Women's Vision*, selected by the sponsoring National Women's History Project "to honor the originality, beauty, imagination and multiple dimensions of women's lives."

The observance will honor the following women, based on their art, vision, form and cultural backgrounds: **Judy Chicago** (b.1939), Painter/Printmaker/Tapestry/Needlework; **Harmony Hammond** (b.1954), Painter; **Edna Hibel** (b.1917), Colorist; **Lihua Lei** (b. 1966), Multimedia Installation; **Rose Cecil O'Neill** (1874-1944), Painter, Illustrator, Sculpturer; **Violet Oakley** (1874-1961), Muralist, Stained Glass Artist; **Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith** (b.1940), Abstract Painter/ Lithographer; **Faith Ringgold** (b.1934), Painter/Quilter; **Miriam Schapiro** (b.1923), Print/ Painter; **Lorna Simpson** (b.1960), Photographer; **Nancy Spero** (b.1926), Painter; **June Claire Wayne** (b.1918), Painter/Lithographer.

For more information, including suggestions for ways local community groups can observe the month, visit: <http://www.nwhp.org/whm/index.php>.

### African Refugees, Immigrants In the News...

## Articles, Editorials Address Social, Economic, Humanitarian Issues

As the debate about needed changes in the nation's immigration policies and procedures continued in recent months, an article in the November 15 edition of The Washington Post by Pamela Constable described how Arlington County, Virginia is dealing with the issue in a much more positive manner than nearby jurisdictions.

Under a headline reading, *Immigrants Haven't Worn Out The Welcome Mat in Arlington*, the article contrasted Arlington's commitment to "treat everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of immigration status" with the far less accommodating attitude in neighboring Prince William and Loudoun counties.

"After three decades of working to make foreigners feel welcome," Constable wrote, "Arlington has good reason to pointedly reaffirm this philosophical embrace. More than one in four residents is a first- or second-generation immigrant, yet the county boasts low crime and unemployment rates. School test scores are high, and newcomers interact peaceably with fifth-generation residents."

Arlington County's Board is now headed by J. Walter Tejada, a native of El Salvador who received an Award of Appreciation for his leadership on behalf of

refugees and immigrants at ECDC's annual conference last May. The article is available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/14/AR2007111402322.html>.

*Avon's calling immigrants: Company teams up with aid agency to help refugees, expand sales* is the headline on a recent article by Robert Preer in the Boston Globe describing how an industrious refugee from Sierra Leone is supplementing her income as an "Avon lady," continuing a tradition popularized a half-century ago by the company's "catchy 'ding-dong, Avon calling commercials'"

Already employed as a housekeeper at a Marriott hotel in Cambridge and as a hair stylist at a salon in Lynn, Isatu Peters was resettled about four years ago with assistance from the International Institute of Boston, which also helped her establish the Avon business, Preer writes.

About 15 of the Institute's clients—from Afghanistan, the Congo, Haiti, Uganda, and other trouble spots around the world—have their own Avon businesses, the article notes. It is available at: [http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2007/11/23/avons\\_calling\\_immigrants/](http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2007/11/23/avons_calling_immigrants/).

*Refugees in the Cold* is the title of an editorial that appeared in the January 12 issue of The New York Times, expressing dismay that as many as 35,000 refugees may soon lose "essential Supplemental Security Income" as a result of missing a deadline to become U.S. citizens.

Attributing the failure to meet a federal law-imposed 7-year deadline after entry into the country to bureaucratic failures in processing paper work and infirmities among some beneficiaries, the editorial identified Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) as the member of Congress who has placed a "hold" on a House-passed bill that would extend the deadline to nine years.

"Congress and the White House must insist on an explanation and press Mr. DeMint to lift his hold," the editorial says. "Vulnerable people who have found refuge here must not be forced further into poverty because of a palsied bureaucracy's inflexible deadlines—or one senator's obstructionism."

It is available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/12/opinion/12sat3.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=Refugees+in+the+Cold&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/12/opinion/12sat3.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Refugees+in+the+Cold&oref=slogin).

NEWS BRIEFS

**Post-Election Strife Uproots Thousands of Kenyans**

Deadly violence continued across parts of Kenya in January and the police presence remained heavy as the country reeled from the crisis sparked by last month's disputed election, according to a United Nations report.

Violence first erupted in the East African nation a few weeks ago, after Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner over opposition leader Raila Odinga in the December polls. Nearly 900 people have been killed and some 255,000 displaced in the ensuing crisis.

Kenyan authorities now estimate that 116,000 people are displaced in the Northern Rift Valley region. John Holmes, United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, appealed to international donors for nearly \$42 million to provide humanitarian and early-recovery assistance to some 500,000 Kenyans affected by post-election violence.

**U.N. Launches Year-Long Human Rights Initiative**

During observances of Human Rights Day on December 10, UNHCR announced plans for a year-long public information and advocacy campaign in 2008 marking the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human Rights Day was established in 1950 to commemorate the adoption and proclamation of the declaration by a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris on December 10, 1948.

"Too often, governments lack the political will to implement international norms they have willingly accepted," said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a message launching the special campaign.

**Refugee Admissions for '08 Again Targeted at 70,000**

While maintaining the overall regional refugee admissions allocations for Fiscal Year 2008 at the 70,000 level targeted in recent years, the annual Presidential Determination released in October reduces the allocation for the African region from

22,000 last year to 16,000.

Actual admissions from Africa last year were 17,482. Of the total 70,000 approved last year, only 48,281 were actually admitted, according to reports from the Department of State's Refugee Processing Center.

Here are the regional totals proposed for FY 2008, with the revised FY 2007 ceilings in parentheses: Africa, 16,000 (22,000); East Asia, 20,000 (16,000); Europe and Central Asia, 3,000 (6,500); Latin America/Caribbean, 3,000 (5,000); Near East/South Asia, 28,000 (9,000).

The proposed ceilings for FY 2008 include an additional unallocated reserve of 10,000, with authorization to allocate those slots to the regions on an "as needed" basis. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is also authorized to transfer unused regional slots "where the need for additional admissions arises."

**Rice Urges African Leaders To Redouble Peace Efforts**

Meeting with African and international leaders in Addis Ababa in early December, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said a comprehensive ceasefire agreement between Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and non-extremist political groups will help facilitate the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid in the country and urged the TFG to "renew and revitalize efforts towards a lasting political solution."

She outlined the U.S. commitment to

seeking peace, building democracy and fostering prosperity in conflict regions including the Great Lakes, Sudan and the Horn of Africa, according to a report from *USINFO*.

She called on all entities in Sudan to end the violence in Darfur, urging Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to send Ethiopian troops pledged to the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) as soon as possible.

**President Bush Announces Plan to Visit Africa in 2008**

In late January, President Bush announced plans to travel to sub-Saharan Africa February 15-21, 2008. He will visit the countries of Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, and Liberia for the first time since his previous visit to Africa in 2003.

Accompanied by his wife, Laura, the White House commented that the president is visiting "to discuss how the United States can continue to partner with African countries to support continued democratic reform, respect for human rights, free trade, open investment regimes, and economic opportunity across the continent."

**Fresh Violence in Darfur Restricts Humanitarian Aid**

Fresh violence in the Sudanese state of West Darfur has restricted humanitarian work around El Geneina, with aid workers describing the region as "a no-go area. Two villages in Geneina were bombed on January 12 and 13 by Sudanese planes, aid workers said.

<b>FY 2008 African Refugee Admissions</b>			
As of January 31, 2007 • Ceiling for FY 2008 is 16,000			
Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Burundi	1,213	Mauritania	1
Cameroon	2	Nigeria	5
Congo	23	Rwanda	9
Dem. Rep. Congo	67	Sierra Leone	26
Eritrea	37	Somalia	629
Ethiopia	115	Sudan	174
Gambia	1	Togo	19
Liberia	573	Uganda	15
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,909</b>

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

## White House Ceremony Honors 25 Naturalized Citizens

A special White House naturalization ceremony at the Eisenhower Executive

Office Building in mid-January welcomed 25 of the nation's newest citi-

**DHS Acting Deputy Secretary Paul Schneider, left, and USCIS Director Emillio Gonzalez pose with Anh Duong, one of four newcomers honored at ceremony.**



zens, with four other prominent newcomers receiving the "American by Choice" certificate of recognition for their "outstanding contributions in civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship."

Those honored with the recognition were: U.S. Congressman, Albio Sires; U.S. Army Major General (retired), John L. Fugh; Science Advisor to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Anh Duong; and Vice President of Walt Disney World Parks and Resorts, Duncan Wardle. The recipients are originally from Cuba, China, Vietnam, and the United Kingdom, respectively.

The 25 Americans naturalized today are originally from: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, China, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Iraq, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Republic, United Kingdom, and Venezuela.

During Fiscal Year 2007, USCIS welcomed more than 650,000 new citizens during naturalization ceremonies conducted throughout the United States and around the world for U.S. military personnel.

Confronted with a huge increase in applications for various USCIS forms and services in advance of a recent fee increase, the agency says it is becoming current in processing most requests, except Form I-130 Petitions for Alien Relatives. It expects to be current on that form by mid-February

## Enterprise Development Group Expands Services

Through an expanding array of programs and services, the ECDC Enterprise Development Group, Inc. (EDG) is helping refugee, immigrant and low-income clients in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area save money to acquire assets, obtain small business loans, improve financial literacy and achieve entrepreneurial goals.

Through its microfinance loan program over the past two years, EDG has provided \$1.8 million in loans to help clients start 70 new business and 25 existing businesses expand operations.

With grants from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VIDA), EDG is providing Individual Development Account (IDA) programs, offering matched savings to help qualifying clients acquire assets. The savings can be used to help purchase a home or car, start or expand a business, or acquire advanced training.

EDG's Enterprise Computer Learning Center, established in 2005 through a grant from Hewlett Packard's Global Micro Enterprise Acceleration program, has become a comprehensive service offering clients assistance in developing business plans, enhancing computer skills.

Of 85 students who recently completed basic and advanced computer classes, 35 gained employment for the first time; 24 were promoted to better jobs; and 26 acquired initial skills.

The program was recently strengthened by a donation of 50 computers by the Arlington County Department of Technology Services.

The Enterprise Business Incubator program provides 8 businesses affordable professional office space; access to free Internet service, and free use of conference room and training facilities for eight hours each month.

For information, visit:  
[www.entdevgroup.org](http://www.entdevgroup.org).

### African Refugee NETWORK

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December 2007-January 2008

*The African Refugee NETWORK* is a bimonthly publication of the ECDC Center for African Refugees and Immigrants (CARI). ECDC is a community-based organization established in 1983 to promote cultural, educational and socio-economic development programs to assist refugees and immigrants in becoming productive members of their new homeland. The Center includes three program areas: refugee resettlement, public education, and community development initiatives. Funding for the newsletter is provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, DHHS. Opinions presented in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official viewpoints of the funder or ECDC, and you should not assume endorsement by them. Material appearing in the newsletter may be reproduced with credit. For additional information, contact:

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## CALENDAR

**February 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, 22, at noon** — The Charles Guggenheim Center for the Documentary Film at the National Archives and the National Archives Afro-American History Society will show a landmark 14-part PBS series, which tells the definitive story of the civil rights movement. Each showing is 60 minutes.

**April 15-16** — Refugee Works will conduct one of its employment training institutes at Catholic Charities of Fort Worth, Texas. Others are scheduled June 17-18 in Indianapolis, and for August 19-20 in Manchester, New Hampshire. For information, visit: [www.refugeeworks.org/about/calendar.html](http://www.refugeeworks.org/about/calendar.html).

**May 5-7, 2008** — ECDC's 14th National Conference on African Refugees and Immigrants will be held at the

Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Each year the conference includes sessions contributed by experts in various aspects of refugee and immigration affairs. Watch for program and enrollment information in future newsletters and at: [www.ecdcinternational.org](http://www.ecdcinternational.org).

**May 6** — *Voices of Courage* is the theme of the 2008 awards luncheon to benefit the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children at noon at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York City. CBS Newswoman Lesley Stahl will host the event, honoring Kula Borbor, Liberia, Gistam Sakaeva, Chechnya, and Shreen Abdul Saroor, Sri Lanka, for their achievements in protecting refugee women, youth and children from rape and sexual exploitation. For information, visit: [www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org).

## RESOURCES

*The Resource Guide for Serving Refugees with Disabilities* is a downloadable "how-to" manual for caseworkers and advocates, developed by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants with support from ORR. Designed to help improve access to services for newly-arriving refugees with disabilities, it is available at: <http://www.refugees.org/article.aspx?id=1965>.

*Immigration and Refugee Links* is a comprehensive listing of resources available to organizations and individuals engaged in serving newcomers. Prepared by Church World Service, it includes sections on general information and advocacy, faith resources, policy issues and programs dealing with torture survivors, unaccompanied refugee children and coping with stress. It is available at: [www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/links.html#region](http://www.churchworldservice.org/Immigration/links.html#region).