

ECDC NEWS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECDC & Africa Action Call for Better Communication between African Immigrants and Black Americans.

Organization Leaders Announce ‘Initiative for Unity and Transformation’ on WUSA-TV Ch. 9News with Andrea Roane.

Washington, DC –

In a thought-provoking, live interview on WUSA-TV’s “Morning News” – Dr. Tsehaye Teferra, founder and President of the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), and Salih Booker, Executive Director of Africa Action, joined Ch. 9 News anchor Andrea Roane to discuss a new hot-button issue: African immigrant and Black American relations. According to a recent article in the *New York Times*, since 1990, more Africans have migrated to the U.S. (about 50,000 annually), than in the entire two preceding centuries. New York State draws the most newcomers from Africa, with the Washington, DC metropolitan area being the second most popular destination. About 1.7 million U. S. residents identify their ancestry as sub-Saharan African.

“With this increased influx of African newcomers to the U.S., Black Americans are expressing concerns about how their culture and issues they have struggled for, such as Affirmative Action, will be impacted,” said ECDC’s Dr. Teferra. “On the African side there is also the problem of media-based brainwashing that stereotypes Black Americans. This is something African newcomers have to overcome. What people in both groups must come to understand and appreciate is that we are the same people, and that we need each other.”

Africa Action’s Salih Booker chimed in making connections echoing back to the halcyon days of Africa’s anti-colonial struggle and the American Civil Rights Movement. “Unity is the key thing here. If you look at the African American experience, you’ll find that whenever we are unified, we have been strong and victorious. As a people, whether here in the Diaspora, or on the Continent, we are at our weakest when we’re divided and working on separate fronts.”

In June, 2005, at the Marriott Crystal City in Arlington, VA, ECDC will present a three-day conference: “*E Pluribus, Unum? (Out of Many, One): Africans in America*” with workshops, seminars and a town hall-style meeting open to the public, that will take a realistic look at African newcomer and Black American relations. “From a cultural, economic and political perspective, there is much these two communities have to offer one another,” said ECDC’s Dr. Teferra. “We simply must make the effort to communicate with one another...”

For more information about the Ethiopian Community Development Council’s upcoming national conference: “*E Pluribus Unum?: Africans in America*” contact ECDC Conference Coordinator Saba Berhane or Tony Regusters at (703) 685-0510. News media are also invited to visit ECDC’s website @ www.ecdcinternational.org.