



EDF News

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ERITREAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

WINTER 2004

2004 YEAR END APPEAL

As 2004 comes to an end, we are sending out an appeal to all of Eritrean Development Foundation's supporters and friends for their help. As many of you know, the situation in parts of Eritrea is again dire because of drought conditions. In October, the World Food Programme sent 61,200 metric tons of US-donated wheat to help 600,000 people who are extremely affected by the drought. WFP officials said that, "Eritrea faces complete crop failure in some key food-producing regions." Successive droughts over the last four or five years have been devastating in the food producing regions of Gash Barka and Dehub. For 2005 the UN is asking for 505,000 tons of food aid for Eritrea, over half of which is for emergency needs. So far only about 12% of what is required has been received.

EDF will continue to mobilize support for immediate, urgent needs for the people of Eritrea. At the same time, EDF is committed to developing and supporting activities that focus on more long-term development issues. In 2005 EDF will continue to direct its efforts toward expanding its HIV/AIDS education project, promote the Youth Camp Program, (originally initiated by Board Member Solomon Teklu) explore other issues, such as education, and develop collaborations with local Eritrean NGOs. Working with local partners in Eritrea, EDF will continue to identify opportunities to help people in need and those who want to help themselves.

We have much to do in 2005!!! Please send a donation to EDF today. (For those who are already pledgers, many thanks!) Or better yet, sign up to become an EDF pledger by contributing monthly — \$25, \$50, or more. Donations to EDF are tax deductible. Thanks for your continued support.

PLEDGE INFORMATION

Please sign me up for EDF's Monthly Pledge.

Circle level of pledge:

\$25 \$50 \$75 other

Please find my one-time contribution of:

\$50 \$100 \$250 other

Please accept my contribution by Credit Card

Type _____ Number _____ Expiration Date __/__/__

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIPCODE

TELEPHONE FAX EMAIL



Please make your tax-deductible donation to:
Eritrean Development Foundation
1012 14th St., NW, Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20005
EDF is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization

tel: 202/783-3273 fax: 202/783-3274 e-mail: edf@edfonline.org website: www.edfonline.org

EDF Mission

WORKS in partnership with grassroots non-governmental organizations, community groups, and other local institutions engaged in education, health care, and agricultural development in Eritrea. **PROVIDES** financial support and material aid for emergency relief, community development, and capacity building in Eritrea.

HELPS Eritreans become self-reliant and productive members of their community, thereby enhancing their dignity and strengthening their cultural heritage.

DRAWS on its intimate knowledge of the people of Eritrea and the Horn of Africa to educate the US public, media, and policymakers on humanitarian and development issues in the region.

REACHES out to individuals and organizations interested in participating in resource development in support of Africa and Africans.

ERC and EDF: 30-Year Commemoration Planned

In 2006 the Eritrean Development Foundation is planning to commemorate the 30 years of work undertaken by EDF and its predecessor, the Eritrean Relief Committee. Planners of this event would like your input and help for this important occasion. If you are interested in getting involved, especially if you have participated in ERC or EDF in the past, please call Kip Mackey at 502 367-0993 or the EDF office at 202 783-3273 or by email edf@edfonline.org. Please look for further information about the 30-year commemoration in future newsletters and on the EDF website: www.edfonline.org.

Become Involved in an EDF Chapter

As EDF ushers in a new epoch, it needs individuals across the country who are able to mobilize and coordinate grassroots activities in support of humanitarian, reconstruction and development efforts for the people of Eritrea. There is an important role that EDF Chapters can play. If you want to start a new Chapter, please contact us for information and support. If your local Chapter is dormant, please restart it! There is a great need for Chapters to be formed in many localities, such as the following cities: Atlanta, Chicago, New York and Rochester. EDF may be able to send a representative to help.

Chapters will give a big breath of life to a revitalized EDF, while contributing to the progress and vision of prosperity for Eritrea. For more information, please call:

Kip Mackey, 502 367-0993 or Margo Kelly, 202 783-3273, at the EDF office.

EDF Collaborates with Vision Eritrea

At the Board meeting held on September 17, 2004, EDF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Vision Eritrea, the largest indigenous non-governmental organization in Eritrea. Founded in 1994, Vision Eritrea has been assisting vulnerable communities in Eritrea to become more self supporting through work in the areas of health, education, food security and social welfare. Dr. Tseggai Gherezghiher, Director of Vision Eritrea, signed the MOU for Vision Eritrea and pledged to support EDF in Eritrea. Chairman of the Board, Dr. Yacob Fisseha, signed the MOU for EDF. Both Dr. Tseggai and EDF Board members view this MOU as mutually beneficial and will allow EDF to have in-country support without having to maintain and staff an office in Asmara.

The MOU initially covers a two-year period, to be reviewed at the end of that timeframe. It covers five main areas of collaboration or agreement: 1) joint proposal writing; 2) Vision Eritrea to provide EDF with joint project reporting and financial and administrative support in Asmara; 3) mutual consultation on national policy regarding areas of priority and methods of intervention in Eritrea; 4) publicize joint activities or projects and mutual exchanges of information; and 5) organizational autonomy.

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A Message from Dr. Yacob Fisseha, EDF Chairman of the Board

Since taking over leadership of the Eritrean Development Foundation (EDF), the current Board of Directors has worked to make people aware of the organization and to extend support to it. Much effort will be needed to match its past achievements. The new team of directors (the Administration as well as the Board) is determined to raise the status of EDF to higher levels of accomplishments in partnership with the Chapters, other agencies and individual supporters.

The current team of administrators has no intention of keeping EDF in the role of a perpetual relief agency. As EDF's mission states, our goal is to be a forceful catalyst for development, both material and transformative. EDF can have a role, too, in the identification and cooption of timely and pertinent ideas and services for change—and be a facilitator of educational exchanges and information sharing between Eritreans and the outside world. Despite such worthy long-term goals, EDF cannot close its eyes when economic and social crises, such as drought and AIDS, threaten the fabric of the nation. Under such circumstances, EDF must strive, of necessity, to participate in immediate relief efforts for the people of Eritrea. For example, the drought news from Eritrea this year is worrisome. The total drought-induced food deficit of the country is estimated to be about 505,000 tons for the year. EDF, through its supporters and friends, has to contribute its share to help ameliorate this problem.

The EDF administrative team does not view the organization as only a provider of relief and development projects, they also see it as a facilitator, presenting the country and people of Eritrea to the outside world. For this reason, the annual spring dinner gathering is as much a fundraising event, as well as an opportunity to project Eritrea to non-Eritreans and, by bestowing the Fred Hallows Award, to recognize people who have contributed critically to this vital outreach effort.

What EDF aspires to accomplish in the long run may sound a bit lofty. Yet, if we put our minds and efforts together, there is no reason why such a goal cannot be realized. Before EDF can mature, though, it must outgrow its current stage of underdevelopment. That is where the donors and patrons of EDF, such as you, become our vital partners. If each of us contributes his or her part, the cumulative impact would put the organization on a solid foundation. The new EDF leadership is counting on you to join them in this noble undertaking. That is why, during this holiday season, we hope you will remember EDF's needs and potential and respond generously.



Youth Camp July 2004

EDF's 2004 Benefit Dinner Honors Dr. Haile Mezghebe

EDF held its sixth anniversary Benefit Dinner on September 16, 2004 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. Before a crowd of almost 200 people, Dr. Haile Mezghebe, co-founder of EDF and a physician and professor of surgery at Howard University, was honored for his dedication and years of selfless work in helping the people of Eritrea. Dr. Haile has served as Team Leader of Physicians for Peace medical missions to Eritrea in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. This medical care has helped save or dramatically improved many lives in Eritrea.

The evening included a warm welcome by EDF Chairman, Dr. Yacob Fisseha, and introduced Ms. Margo Kelly, who joined EDF as the new Executive Director in May 2004. Mr. Solomon Teklu, EDF Vice Chairman, was the master of ceremony during the evening. Most of the Board Members attended the evening, including those who traveled from California, Iowa, Kentucky and Michigan for the Dinner.

After a short video highlighting the life and work of Dr. Haile, Dr. Tseggai Gherezghiher, who has known Dr. Haile for over 25 years, gave the keynote address. Dr. Tseggai has worked as a scientist, professor and researcher in the fields of pharmacology and ophthalmology. In 1994 Dr. Tseggai founded Vision Eritrea, the largest indigenous nongovernmental organization in Eritrea, and currently serves as its Director. Vision Eritrea has been assisting vulnerable communities in Eritrea to become more self supporting through work in the areas of health, education, food security and social welfare.

Here are some words of praise from Dr. Tseggai's speech: "Dr. Haile is loaded with profound modesty, a man with endless passion and sympathy at any given time for any human being. Haile will always go the extra mileage, spend the extra penny to help others in need to improve their quality of life. His consistent commitment, loyalty and dedication to serve Eritrea and Eritreans back home and in the States have earned him to become a selfless and tireless hero among his fellow Eritreans."

Ambassador Girma Asmeron, from the Eritrea Embassy, presented the 2004 EDF award for "Excellence of Service" to Dr. Haile, which had the inscription, "In appreciation of your extraordinary commitment and dedication in providing critical medical care to the underprivileged in Eritrea."

Dr. Haile was very humble and gracious in accepting the award, acknowledging the many other family, friends and colleagues who have supported his work. The purpose of the night's function was really to highlight EDF, he said. In his remarks, Dr. Haile said he initially resisted this award because he felt like a small piece in a larger puzzle. "In the bigger picture, I'm insignificant." But from a larger vantage point, "on behalf of all those who have helped Eritrea, I can accept this award," he said.

The funds raised at the Benefit Dinner will help EDF continue to function and pursue its mission of supporting reconstruction and development efforts for the people of Eritrea.



Left: Dr. Haile Mezghebe, Solomon Teklu and Dr. Tseggai Gherezghiher. Center: Dr. Haile and Ambassador Girma Asmeron. Right: Dinner Attendees.

Message from Margo Kelly, Executive Director

Having lived in and worked on development issues in Africa for the last 12 years, I am very excited about the opportunities and potential of the Eritrean Development Foundation. I was brought on board as the Executive Director of EDF in May 2004. What I have been most impressed with so far is the strong commitment of the Board Members, and other supporters, to EDF and to help the people of Eritrea.

Over the last few months, we have been working hard. First, we consolidated various lists and created a current database of over 2200 EDF supporters. Board member Hellen Tesfamariam contributed much time to this effort. Second, we renewed communication by sending out our Summer 2004 Newsletter and updating our website. Third, in September, we held the EDF 2004 Benefit Dinner honoring Dr. Haile Mezghebe. Close to 200 people attended the event, which raised needed funds for EDF and its activities. Last, we have worked to resolve a number of outstanding administrative items.

We believe we are now poised to tackle a number of projects in 2005: 1) expanding our circle of contributors, supporters and partners here and in Eritrea; 2) reviving and expanding the EDF Chapter activities; 3) maintaining regular communication on our activities via the newsletter, website and special events; and 4) developing projects and programs, along with funding for them. My philosophy is to start small, create some successes and then build on them.

I realize EDF underwent a retrenchment and transitional period before I arrived. I believe we have to move forward from there and do our best to communicate and reconnect with our many supporters and expand our network. I welcome your input and ideas, and can be easily contacted via email or telephone. We can do much by working together.



Eritrean Development Foundation

1012 14th St., NW Suite 1030

Washington, DC 20005



Save the Date
May 19th, 2005
EDF Benefit Dinner
in Washington, DC
Honoring
Olympic Silver Medalist
Mebrahtu Keflezighi

Board of Directors

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Solomon Teklu, Vice Chairman
Mesfin Zaid, Treasurer
Hellen Tesfamariam, Secretary
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