



Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.

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Empowering refugees and immigrants since 1983

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ECDC Welcomes Ethiopia's New Refugee Law

Arlington, VA – On January 17, Ethiopia passed a law allowing refugees to move freely outside the refugee camps. This decision comes following the United Nations Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), which was adopted in December. As demonstrated by this new law, the GCR encourages nations to treat refugees humanely and to share the burden that comes with hosting large numbers of refugees.

Ethiopia's law gives nearly a million refugees the right to work, study, and live outside of refugee camps. For the first time, many refugees, who were born in Ethiopia, will have the opportunity to experience life outside of the camps. It is a significant step in sending a message of inclusion to refugee populations as well as the local communities hosting them.

Another impact of this law is the fact that it will finally provide a chance for refugees to live a dignified life. They will be able to formally register births, marriages, and deaths. They can participate in the economy by earning an income and using financial institutions. This means inclusion in everyday life benefits not only for refugees but also the country in which they are living.

This law comes at the right time as refugee camp confinement has not proven to work for many host countries. In most cases, refugees are restricted to certain areas completely dependent on international aid. Ethiopia has set an example for other host countries to follow, letting refugees become self-reliant and able to contribute to their local communities and economies.

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ECDC is one of nine resettlement agencies working in partnership with the Department of State and the Office of Refugee Resettlement to provide initial placement and support services to refugees being resettled in the United States. ECDC promotes cultural, educational and socio-economic development programs to assist refugees and immigrants in becoming productive members of their new homeland.