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May 15, 2000

Ms. Sandra Thurman
White House Office of National AIDS Policy
736 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Thurman:

I am writing to extend a special invitation to you to serve as a panelist at ECDC's sixth national conference on African refugees scheduled for June 19-21 at the Quality Hotel & Suites in Arlington, Virginia.

The session for which we seek your participation is on *HIV/AIDS in Africa: An International Challenge* set for 2:15 p.m. on June 20, 2000. We envision you giving about a 15-20 minute presentation of your own perspective on the subject, then joining in an informal discussion, possibly including a Q & A with the general audience.

Overall theme for the conference will be "African Refugees and the U.S. Response: 20 Years of Resettlement," marking the 20th anniversary of the passage of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Act of 1980 and the initial acceptance of African refugees to America. Plenary sessions will assess how the program has fulfilled its mission over the past two decades and explore issues confronting policy developers and service providers in the new century. Concurrent workshops will provide practical assistance to service providers, examining some of the "best practices" developed in local communities during the program's history. We will also be addressing broader issues that lead to the creation of refugees.

Attending the conference will be representatives of state and local refugee service providers and voluntary agencies, officials from national and international refugee organizations, recent newcomers and others interested in humanitarian issues and international affairs.

Joining ECDC in sponsoring this conference are federal agencies involved in refugee affairs, most of the nation's non-governmental resettlement and other non-profit organizations.

Your participation will greatly enhance the effectiveness and appeal of the conference and we are most hopeful that your busy schedule will allow you to accept this invitation. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please contact Saba Berhane at (703) 685-0510, Ext. 232.

Sincerely,



Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.
Executive Director