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## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate World Refugee Day, which is being celebrated today in the United States and in almost 90 countries around the globe. The theme for this year's World Refugee Day is "Refugee Women," which is very appropriate since almost 80 percent of the refugees worldwide are women and children.

World Refugee Day gives us a chance to reflect upon the almost 50 million uprooted people in the world and to think about what the United States is doing to help alleviate their suffering. In fiscal year 2001, the U.S. welcomed 68,426 refugees to its shores and gave those disparate people the chance to seek a new life. While there are some encouraging aspects to our Nation's refugee policy, there is much more to be concerned about.

An extreme regional inequity exists in our Nation's refugee admissions process regarding African refugees. On November 21, 2001, President Bush authorized the admission of 70,000 refugees into the United States for fiscal year 2002. Yet, as of May 31, 2002, slightly more than 13,800 refugees have been admitted. Of these admitted by the end of May 8, 933 were from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, whereas only 891 refugees were from Africa.

When the Congressional Black Caucus asked the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department in March why so few refugees from Africa had been admitted this fiscal year, they replied that security concerns prevented them from admitting the refugees. Yet if security is a reason for the delay, why is it that almost 1,500 refugees from the Near East and South Asia have been admitted when the region is known to have much more serious security concerns than Africa?

Mr. Speaker, I am asking for an equitable refugee admission process. Worldwide, 28 percent of the refugees are from Africa, and I believe that 28 percent of refugees resettled in the U.S. should be African in origin. But to date, less than 7 percent of the refugees admitted this fiscal year to the United States are from Africa. This imbalance really cannot continue.

What can we do to correct these regional inequities? We can roll over fiscal year 2002 admission numbers into fiscal year 2003 numbers so that a precious chance to rebuild a life does not expire. We can institute direct flights from refugee camps to a facility in the United States so that the refugees can be processed within the U.S., as was done for Kosovo Albanians during the Balkan war at Fort Dix in New Jersey.

We could give preferential treatment to African refugees into very safe settings, as was done for the Montagnards from Vietnam, and we can increase circuit rides so that refugees can be interviewed where they actually live. Mr. Speaker, where there is a will, there is a way.

The statistics that I have cited are useful in understanding the severity of the refugee admissions crisis that is taking place, but they also obscure the fact that we are talking about desperate, suffering people. Each fraction of a percentage point represents a family that has been united and given a new lease on life; each number represents someone who has escaped a hopeless refugee camp or a violent urban detention center.

Each number represents someone like Rose, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who has resettled in Dallas, Texas, the district that I am proud to represent here in Congress. Rose's husband, an ethnic Tutsi, fled the violence and chaos under the former Zaire to Rwanda to escape persecution. At that time, Rose was expecting her second child. As the war and violence of the Great Lakes Region raged around them, Rose and her children were forced to leave. They found temporary refuge in Benin.

In February 2000, Rose and her two children arrived in Dallas. Rose quickly found a job at a photo processing lab that enabled her to support her two children. Although she was self-sufficient, her life was incomplete without her husband. But by working with resettlement agencies, Rose was able to unite her family in March of this year.

Mr. Speaker, the story of Rose from my district has a happy ending, and it demonstrates the hope and opportunity that we can offer if we will.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MEEKS of New York addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LANGEVIN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TOWNS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## CELEBRATING WORLD REFUGEE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, today is World Refugee Day. For many years, numerous countries all around the world have set aside a day for remembering the plight of refugees. One of the most widespread is African Refugee Day celebrated June 20 in several African countries.

In 2000, as an expression of solidarity with Africa, a special U.N. General Assembly resolution was passed naming June 20 of every year World Refugee Day.

Some of my colleagues may be thinking, why do we need a day to celebrate refugees? Why? Because today, right now, there are over 21 million refugees worldwide, people displaced by conflict, humanitarian disasters, and crises; men, women, and children whose lives are starkly different from those we lead because they find it very difficult