



Tebabu Assefa
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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR | MENTOR | MOTIVATOR | SPEAKER

- Author, Virtuous Exchange
- Co-founder & Chief Storyteller, Blessed Coffee
- Co-founder, US-Africa Diaspora Business Council
- Chief Organizer, Benefit Corporation for Africa Initiative

Speaking Topics:

- Benefit Corporation Legislation
- Global Coffee Crisis
- Virtuous Exchange vs. Fair Trade
- The Blessed Coffee model
- US-Africa Diaspora Business Council
- Benefit Corporation for Africa Initiative

Award and Citation:

- Champion of Change award by the White House
- Congressional Citation form US Senator Ben Cardin
- Congressional Citation for Congressman Chris Van Hollen
- Citation form Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley
- Social Entrepreneur of the Year award from Start Up Africa

Some Past Audiences:

- White House Champion Award Ceremony
- Congressional Ethiopian-American Caucus briefing, US Congress
- African Braintrust, Congresswoman Karen Bass's Annual Conference
- Six Annual Anniversary of Benefit Corporation, Silver Spring Maryland
- Annual African Forum at Colombia University, New York, NY
- University of District of Colombia, Washington DC
- Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland
- Montgomery College, Takoma Park Maryland
- Start Up Africa Annual Conference, New Castle, Delaware



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Champions of Change

WINNING the FUTURE ACROSS AMERICA

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Tebabu Assefa

Tebabu's longtime passion in cultural promotion, work in media to promote African culture, and his use of stories to excite markets for African products has resulted in a new model, which creates international market linkages for higher-value and profit-sharing with farmers and producers to foster and advance economic and social development. To showcase the model, Tebabu founded Blessed Coffee (BC), a social business that imports, roasts, brands and distributes premium Ethiopian coffee to the wholesale and cottage-café retail market. BC is the second company to register as a Benefit Corporation (a public corporation chartered and produce public benefit as well as profit) in the State of Maryland. BC connects 200,000 small coffee farmers, organized under the Oromia Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union (OCFCU) in Ethiopia, with the specialty coffee consumer in the US market. BC shares profits with the OCFCU to support the Union's social program, opening schools, health clinics, safe water wells and other social programs in the coffee-growing region. Tebabu aspires to present the Blessed Coffee as an alternative business model to the African community in the US, to encourage them to follow suit and establish businesses that advance US-Africa cultural and economic ties for development in Africa, and here in our American communities.

The Global Coffee Crisis:

Prior to 1989, coffee supply, demand and prices were controlled by the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) imposed quotas and controlled prices between major coffee producing and consuming countries. This resulted in fairly stable prices for coffee. In 1989, the ICA collapsed in part due to a lack of support by the U.S., which had a great deal of power as the largest importing member nation. The Reagan administration was strongly free market and opposed the ICA on those grounds. These factors played a key role in the demise of the ICA. As result coffee prices on the global market hit a 30-year low, and a humanitarian crisis ensued and the fall in revenue has affected the income small farmers earned for the 'fruit of their labour". They were unable to afford their basic necessities and send their children to school.



The Benefit Corporation for Africa Initiative (B-Corps for Africa)

B Corps for Africa Initiative aims to establish an infrastructure to support the growth of the Benefit Corporation movement in the United States linked to the business in Africa who aspire and work to reach the American market. It will facilitate trade opportunities between and amongst African and American B Corporations for the purposes of leveraging the power of business to achieve economic success and solve social and environmental problems in the two countries and beyond.



US-Africa Diaspora Business Council (USADBC):

USADBC is conceived and developed to provide information, build capacity and developmental infrastructure of the growing US-African diaspora business community, whose purchasing and investment power can directly contribute to the economic development of small enterprises in Africa, with impact to the US - Africa trade relations. And, USADBC aspires to open opportunity for US businesses that have potential and interest to enter the emerging African market. The US-African diaspora is well positioned and highly motivated to provide leadership and grow the US-Africa investment and transfer of knowledge and appropriate US technology to Africa.



Virtuous Exchange (VE)

VE is a business model that facilitates businesses by directly connecting producers and consumers. It provides access to active investment and significant benefit sharing to the producers, consumers, and other stakeholders involved in every transaction. It develops and promotes engagement, production, transaction, and marketing processes that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.



Blessed Coffee: (BC)

Blessed Coffee is based on the philosophy, "from the farmer to your cup" and is established as a socially responsible business and trade geared towards development in coffee growing regions as well as in communities in the US where coffee is sold. BC is the Second Company to be incorporated as "Benefit Corporation" a new legislation signed into law in April 2010 in the state of Maryland. The first of its kind in the nation it is a hybrid of for-profit and non-profit models that aims for community benefits as well as profits.





THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 30, 2012

Mr. Tebabu Assefa
Takoma Park, Maryland

Dear Tebabu:

Congratulations on being selected as a White House Champion of Change. Thank you for the work you do every day.

From the earliest days of our founding, our Nation has been ordinary people who have dared to dream and used their unique and extraordinary things. Americans like you help carry this tradition reaching for new ideas that will help our country win the future. Fellow Champions embody the change you want to see in the world. We will out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world to keep our country strong.

Congratulations, again, and I wish you all the best in your endeavors.

Sincerely,



The Maryland General Assembly



Official Citation

He it hereby known to all that sincerest congratulations are offered to

Blessed Coffee

in recognition of

a celebration of its Third Anniversary, a milestone which applauds the massive accomplishments of the since its grand opening, with hopes of many more

Presented on this 15th

by Delegate State House
of Montgomery County - Legislator District 20

Blessed Coffee brand growth & News coverage
2011 to 2013

- September 2011: MD Governor Martin O'Malley at the Blessed Coffee's inauguration address, stated Blessed Coffee, "stands at the intersection of profits & social responsibility."
- January 2012: The White House recognized Blessed Coffee as "Champion of Change" and the State Department cited Blessed Coffee as a model for Global partnership.
- June 2012: Edible DC, a leading food magazine, featured a cover story recognizing Blessed Coffee as one of the 16 "Game Changers" in the local sustainable food sector.
- May 2013: MD Senator Ben Cardin mentioned Blessed Coffee in his keynote address at the most recent USAID Small Business Conference, citing it as an outstanding example of innovative socially conscious businesses.



Blessed Coffee, 7720 Carroll Ave, Takoma Park MD 20912 - 301-802-2812 - info

