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## Veteran educator and Diplomat Co-Chairs 2009 LIHEDE 5<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Conference



**Greensboro, North Carolina: 03/11/2008:** Honorable Teta V. Banks, former Consul of the Republic of Liberia at Philadelphia to serve as the 2009 LIHEDE 5<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Conference Co-Chair scheduled to be held in Greensboro, North Carolina in August 2009, under the theme: “Understanding Ourselves and Our History: A Call to Unity & Collective Development in Liberia.

Dr. Banks grew up in Detroit, Michigan where her father, the late Rev. Dr. A.A. Banks, Jr., pastored the historic Second Baptist Church of Detroit and her mother, the late Dr. Victoria Allen Banks, was an educator and religious leader. Her parents were active in the Civil Rights Movement and were personal colleagues of Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mrs. Rosa Parks. Consul Banks was educated at Wellesley College, Howard University, Wayne State University, and Oxford University.

Consul Banks was first appointed in 1993, and retained in 2006 by the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first woman to serve as head of state on the continent of Africa. Consul Banks represents the Liberian government and assists in the rebuilding of the war-torn nation, addressing human rights issues throughout African countries, and the establishment of trade, resources, and cultural relations between the U.S. and Liberia, as well as other African countries. Her major concerns involve rebuilding hospitals and schools, placement of refugees, retraining “toy” soldiers, providing conflict resolution to warring factions, and working closely with the United Nations, international governments, and community groups to address human rights issues. She is a member of the Advisory Council of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (the first of its kind to operate throughout the Diaspora), the Liberian Scholarship Fund, as well as the international investors’ forum to assist Liberia in its redevelopment.

Consul Banks has served in several official capacities including President of the Consular Corps Association of Philadelphia, which consists of 37 member nation diplomats based in the Philadelphia. The consuls represent their foreign countries in matters ranging from international trade, international documentation processing, to humanitarian, educational, and cultural issues and programs. The Corps assists such organizations as the World Affairs Council, the International Visitors Council, Model United Nations program, and Bodine High School for International Affairs. She also serves as Vice President of the United Nations Association, and charter member of the Women’s International Leadership Association.

Consul Banks has been involved in various arenas. She has served on several university faculties, including Washington University, Howard University, Rutgers University, Spelman College, and Gwynedd-Mercy College. She was the founding editor of **Vital Issues: The Journal of African American Speeches, Executive** Director of the Philadelphia Martin Luther King Association for Nonviolence, and Vice Chairman of the Girard College Board of Trustees. She has also served as a consultant to various organizations, including: the Rosa Parks Institute, U.S.

Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Defense, and Pennsylvania Department of Education. Currently she is the Founding Chair of the Institute for International Diplomacy, Vice President of the United Nations Association GP, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Tribune Charities, and a member of the Mayor's Commission on African Affairs. She is the recipient of numerous awards for humanitarian service and civil rights advocacy.

In her letter of appointment, Dr. Syrulwa Somah, Executive Director of LIHEDE, welcomed Consul Banks to the LIHEDE family and described her as an asset to the mission of LIHEDE, as the organization embarks on projects which focus on new frontiers of Liberian history.

Dr. Somah added that her involvement with the organization could not have come at a better time when LIHEDE needs all the valuable human resources to devise and implement the history project of Liberia that will look at the history, migration patterns, interethnic cooperation, linguistic tongues, and social, political, and legal institutions of the various ethnic groups of Liberia, adding, "we have no doubt that you will be a valuable addition to the professional and dedicated staff and members of our group."

Dr. Banks strongly believes that LIHEDE is making history in the field of Liberia history and education with its campaign to honor the history of the Liberian people, adding "Thank you for the gracious invitation to participate in the Jubilee which will be a historic event as it goals focus on honoring our great history and securing our future. It would be an honor to assist in this effort."

As Co-Chair, Dr. Banks and Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Chair are tasked with the formulation of a Master Strategic Program Plan for the Jubilee, overseeing all Conference activities, including encouraging participation and attendance of the Conference by all Liberians, friends of Liberians, groups, organizations, solicitation of Conference funds, designation of speakers, and other things in support of the Conference, and the production of literature/releases to keep the public informed.

Omari Jackson, Member

**2009 LIHEDE 5<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Conference Communications Committee:**

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