UNCLASSIFIED
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AMB: DYAMAMOTO
CONS: FCANTRELL
CONS: SDISKEL
AMB DCM CONS PB PAS

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA SBCSTATE WASHDC

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: CVIS, CASC, ET
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF ADOPTION AGENCIES QUARTERLY MEETING

REF: (A) Addis Ababa 1764 (B) Addis Ababa 1894

1. SUMMARY: On October 9, 2008, Embassy Addis Ababa conducted a quarterly meeting with U.S. adoption agencies operating in Ethiopia. The main topic discussed was the Government of Ethiopia's Review of Intercountry Adoptions. Agencies were very concerned about the 1.4(D)

They expressed

a strong desire for the Embassy to raise some points with the GOE and to help them find a forum by which they can discuss issues with the GOE. END SUMMARY

2. There were approximately 30 attendees from 20 agencies for the meeting on October 9, 2008. Topics covered were the Government of Ethiopia's Review of Intercountry Adoptions and review of Definitions, Forms and Procedures.

3. The Government of Ethiopia's Review includes three committees. The First Committee is reviewing government structures and laws with the goal of ratifying the Hague Convention. The Second Committee is reviewing all adoption agencies for violations and procedural corrections. The Third Committee is reviewing all orphanages providing children for intercountry adoption. The GOE has three
stated future goals for their adoption program: 1) more Ethiopian children adopted domestically, 2) stabilization of numbers adopted abroad, 3) greater follow-up post adoption.

4. Agency input was that

ConOff agreed that this has been our impression as well. The agencies expressed a desire to create an advocacy network amongst American agencies only. They stated that many points from the Joint Council on International Children’s Services were good, but that they didn’t agree with all of them. They believe that European agencies are not close to the professional standards of US agencies and association with them has been rarely beneficial. ConOff encouraged the agencies to work together and think about nominating spokesmen to discuss their issues with the GoE. A major concern of agencies was that they feel that

They expressed a strong desire for the Embassy to help them find an appropriate forum for which to express these concerns. ConOff agreed to discuss the situation with the Consular Chiefs to determine a good solution. The agencies gave a loud round of applause for the representative that raised these concerns, indicating it is a widespread concern.

5. Agencies had very mixed responses about GoE officials visiting the U.S. for post-adoption checks. Some felt that the officials had come for the

Some had experience with officials that

Others had positive experiences with knowledgeable officials. They believed that the trips were good PR for intercountry adoptions. All agreed
that officials traveling to the U.S. should be knowledgeable about adoptions.

6. The agencies raised serious concerns about [__________]. When the courts re-opened in October, many agencies were informed that children with one living birth parent would no longer be approved by MOWA without further investigation. The agencies said they had no problem with two living healthy birth parents not being approved, but that a ban on a single living parent would end in disaster. They believe that if young single mothers know that children won’t be adoptable, that they are more likely to leave them on the streets or let them die. ConOff agreed with that assumption and added that it’s also likely that orphanages will be more likely to falsify parental information to hide the fact that the single parent is known. Agencies also expressed concern that [______________] to children staying longer in orphanages or transition homes without good medical care, putting children at risk. ConOff agreed to discuss with Consular Chiefs to find an appropriate manner of bringing these concerns to the GoE. ConOff reiterated that the Embassy has asked the GoE on several occasions that whatever policies they decide to follow, children that have already been referred and are in the pipeline must go through in a timely manner. Agencies wondered aloud whether the GoE is really thinking through their decisions and expressed concern about MOWA leadership.

7. The meeting lasted appx. 2 hours. The topics discussed were obviously of high concern to the agencies, as nearly every representative raised at least one point or question. It appears that the consular section’s efforts to reach out to agencies have paid off, as they see the Embassy as a concerned party that cares about the welfare of orphaned children and is willing to raise pertinent points to the GOE.

YAMAMOTO