

RELEASED IN FULL

5-12

090717 Notes from Meeting with Amb Hilima Mohamed MFA

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These notes are meant to be included in an adoption update cable that I hope to send within the next week, that details post's workload, efforts, challenges, etc. The cable should include things like the following:

- Post's workload continues to increase at a rate of about 20 percent over last year's total of over 1,800 cases. This is in contrast to number of the three other leading missions, the French, Spanish, and Italian missions, that report their numbers are somewhat smaller than in the previous year.
- Post has a vigorous outreach strategy to agencies and others that includes quarterly meetings at the Embassy with all U.S. affiliated agencies, regular email announcements to them and their U.S. headquarters, and annual visits to the agencies. Additionally, consular management meets with visiting reps of U.S. headquarters of agencies, updates Country Specific Info on CA's adoption website, and corresponds frequently with the Joint Council, the xxxx (McLean group), and others, and has accompanied reps from these association in calls on GoE authorities.
- In its regular meetings with EU member missions' consular managers, post discusses intercountry adoption challenges with its counterparts at other missions.
- In June, Post asked consular officers from the French Embassy to join it in a series of meetings with Ethiopian authorities aimed at beginning a dialogue that will lead to the GoE adopting a plan for meeting requirements for Hague membership. This strategy is in recognition that the GoE needs to seriously address the lack of oversight and control over the intercountry adoption process, and it seeks to take advantage of the French Embassy's expertise in providing technical assistance for Hague approval. Not only is the French Embassy the designated mission among EU member states to assist governments aspiring to Hague membership, but the French Embassy recently gained a new officer assigned specifically to focus on intercountry adoption and child protection. That officer is an expert on the Hague and formerly worked for the Hague. Cons Section Chief has invited her and the French Consular Section Chief to join him in calls on key Ethiopian officials, including the officer responsible for intercountry adoptions in the Ministry of Women's Affairs (Ato Yitne) and on the officer in the MFA responsible for women's affairs and trafficking in persons. Together they have urged that the GoE consider establishing an inter-ministerial working group or committee charged with exploring ways to strengthen control and accountability in the intercountry adoption process, including consideration of proposals made by groups such as the Joint Council, and with the ultimate goal of being prepared to join the Hague eventually. GoE authorities have been open to such suggestions and appear to share concerns, but often are not familiar with proven methods of improving control. Cons section chief and his French counterparts have discussed hosting a workshop, at which experts in adoption process would make presentations, establish contacts with the key Ethiopian authorities invited to attend.