

ACTION OCS-01

INFO LOG-00 AF-00 AMAD-00 CA-01 DS-00 EUR-00 UTED-00  
H-01 TEDE-00 L-00 NSAE-00 DHS-00 CAEX-00 SSO-00  
SS-00 TEST-00 VO-01 ECA-00 DSCC-00 SAS-00 /004W  
-----980F1E 251408Z /38

**RELEASED IN FULL**

R 251402Z AUG 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3614  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 ADDIS ABABA 002908

NAIROBI ALSO FOR DHS - PLEASE PASS HQ  
JOHANNESBURG AND FRANKFURT FOR REGIONAL CONSULAR OFFICERS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: CASC, KOCI, CVIS, ET  
SUBJECT: THE ETHIOPIAN ADOPTION PROCESS

**SUMMARY**

1. THIS CABLE DISCUSSES THE ETHIOPIAN ADOPTION PROCESS AND DEALS PRIMARILY WITH THE ADOPTION OF ORPHANS. THESE ARE CHILDREN THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN I-600 PETITION AND BE CLASSIFIED AS EITHER IR-3 OR IR-4 IMMEDIATE RELATIVES. PLEASE NOTE THAT WHEN WE REFER TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS, WE MEAN A SINGLE ADOPTIVE PARENT OVER 25, OR A MARRIED COUPLE.

**THE EXPERTS**

2. THREE AMERICAN ADOPTION AGENCIES HAVE BEEN LICENSED TO FACILITATE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS TO THE U.S. THEY ARE AMERICANS FOR AFRICAN ADOPTION ([WWW.AFRICANADOPTIONS.ORG](http://WWW.AFRICANADOPTIONS.ORG)), ADOPTION ADVOCATES INTERNATIONAL ([WWW.ADOPTIONADVOCATES.ORG](http://WWW.ADOPTIONADVOCATES.ORG)), AND WIDE HORIZONS FOR CHILDREN ([WWW.WHFC.ORG](http://WWW.WHFC.ORG)). ADOPTION ADVOCATES INTERNATIONAL AND AMERICANS FOR AFRICAN ADOPTIONS HAVE WORKED SUCCESSFULLY IN ETHIOPIA FOR MANY YEARS. THEY ARE EXPERT AT MANAGING THE ETHIOPIAN ADOPTION PROCESS. WIDE HORIZONS FOR CHILDREN IS A BRAND NEW ORGANIZATION AND WE CANNOT COMMENT YET ON THEIR EXPERTISE.

3. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF UNSCRUPULOUS ADOPTION FACILITATORS HERE TOO. WHILE EXPERT AT THE PROCESS, THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO SUBMIT FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS TO THE ETHIOPIAN COURTS, MARKET CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION WHO ARE NOT BONA FIDE ORPHANS, AND CHARGE EXORBITANT FEES FOR THESE SERVICES. WE REVIEW APPROVED I-600A AND I-600 PETITIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE LOCAL CONTACT/REPRESENTATIVE IS NOT ONE OF THESE.

**REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer**

WHERE DO THESE CHILDREN COME FROM?  
-----

4. ETHIOPIA, A COUNTRY OF ALMOST 66 MILLION PEOPLE, IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE MILLION ORPHANS. RELATIVELY FEW OF THEM ARE TRULY HOMELESS OR LIVE IN ORPHANAGES. THE STRONG, COHESIVE NATURE OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY HERE MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT A CHILD WITH A LIVING PARENT WILL BE ABANDONED. OTHER RELATIVES OR COMMUNITY MEMBERS OFTEN TAKE IN CHILDREN WHO HAVE LOST BOTH PARENTS. THIS IS NOT TRUE OF CHILDREN ORPHANED BY AIDS, WHICH CARRIES A SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL STIGMA. THE HIGH HIV INFECTION RATE, THE EFFECTS OF ENDEMIC MALARIA AND TUBERCULOSIS, LINGERING DROUGHT, DISLOCATIONS OF ENTIRE COMMUNITIES DUE TO ETHIOPIA'S CHRONIC FOOD CRISIS, AND CIVIL UNREST IN BORDER AREAS ARE HAVING AN INCREASINGLY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON RURAL COMMUNITIES. INTERESTINGLY, MANY ABANDONED AND DESERTED CHILDREN ARE INFANTS, RATHER THAN OLDER CHILDREN.

5. IN THE CAPITAL, THOUGH, IT IS A DIFFERENT STORY. ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS TELL US THERE ARE MANY ABANDONED AND DESERTED CHILDREN OF ALL AGES IN ADDIS ABABA. THE NATIONWIDE HARDSHIPS LISTED IN PARA 4 ARE SENDING FLOODS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS INTO THE CITY. CHILDREN ARRIVE WITH A PARENT, BUT OFTEN ARE SEPARATED FROM THEM BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE ON THE STREETS OF THIS DESPERATELY POOR CAPITAL CITY.

6. THE 10 PERCENT PLUS NATIONAL HIV/AIDS INFECTION RATE IS CREATING AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ORPHANS OF ALL AGES. MANY CHILDREN BEING OFFERED FOR ADOPTION, PARTICULARLY OLDER ONES, ARE THE DISEASE-FREE OFFSPRING OF HIV POSITIVE PARENTS. BECAUSE NO EFFECTIVE TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE IN ETHIOPIA, THE GOVERNMENT DECLARES CHILDREN OF THE AIDS-INFECTED TO BE ORPHANS. THIS ALLOWS THEM TO ENTER ORPHANAGES DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THEIR PARENTS BECOME INCREASINGLY DEBILITATED AND UNABLE TO CARE FOR THE CHILDREN. IT IS COMMON FOR AN AIDS ORPHAN TO HAVE LOST BOTH PARENTS TO THE DISEASE. WE ROUTINELY TEST ALL ORPHANS FOR HIV INFECTION.

7. ORPHANS AVAILABLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION ARE IDENTIFIED AS SUCH BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS OFFICE (MOLSA). MOLSA PLACES ABANDONED CHILDREN IN ORPHANAGES OR FOSTER HOMES, PENDING ADOPTION. IN ADDIS ABABA, THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA HAS A FEW SUCH HOMES, THERE IS ONE RUN BY A ROMAN CATHOLIC SISTERHOOD, AND ANOTHER, FOR CHILDREN ORPHANED BY AIDS, RUN BY MOTHER TERESA'S SISTERS OF CHARITY. THERE ARE TWO AMERICAN ADOPTION AGENCIES THAT ALSO HAVE THEIR OWN FOSTER HOME - ADOPTION ADVOCATES INTERNATIONAL AND AMERICANS FOR AFRICAN ADOPTIONS. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF OTHER NGO ORPHANAGES. THERE ARE SOME ORPHANAGES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. SOMETIMES, ORPHANS RESIDE WITH A RELATIVE OR MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY UNTIL AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY IS IDENTIFIED, OR MOLSA PLACES THEM ELSEWHERE.

8. WHEN A CHILD IS ABANDONED, BY LAW IT COMES INTO THE CUSTODY OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE POLICE, OVER-BURDENED RELATIVES, AIDS

CARE CENTERS, ETC., ALL REPORT ABANDONED AND ORPHANED CHILDREN

ADDIS ABAB 00002908 002 OF 005

N THE CHILD. BOLSA, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE POLICE AND, IN THE CASE OF AIDS ORPHANS, CLINIC WORKERS, DETERMINES (IF POSSIBLE) THE IDENTITY OF THE CHILD, ITS PARENTAGE, AND WHETHER THERE IS A LIVING, AIDS-FREE PARENT. IT IS A CRIME TO ABANDON A CHILD, REGARDLESS OF A PARENT'S CIRCUMSTANCES, AND BOLSA AND THE POLICE INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF CHILD-ABANDONMENT AND DESERTION. WHEN THE INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED, AND THE CHILD IS DEEMED TO BE AN ORPHAN, THE DOSSIER IS FORWARD TO MOLSA IN ADDIS ABABA. A CHILD ABANDONED IN ADDIS ABABA IS REPORTED DIRECTLY TO MOLSA.

9. MOLSA HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ACTIVITIES REGARDING CHILDREN IN THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING WELFARE, FOSTERAGE, IN-COUNTRY AND FOREIGN ADOPTION, AND INVESTIGATION OF NEGLECT AND ABUSE. WHEN MOLSA RECEIVES THE DOSSIER, IT DETERMINES WHETHER THE CHILD IS SUITABLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION. IT PLACES ORPHANS IN VARIOUS ORPHANAGES AND FOSTER HOMES, INCLUDING WITH THE AMERICAN AGENCIES. PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS CAN CONTACT MOLSA DIRECTLY REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF AN ORPHAN FOR ADOPTION. THEY CAN ALSO CONTACT ONE OF THE THREE AMERICAN AGENCIES CURRENTLY LICENSED TO FACILITATE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION TO THE STATES (SEE PARA 2).

WHO CAN ADOPT?  
-----

10. CURRENTLY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS LIMITING NEARLY ALL PRIVATE ADOPTIONS TO THOSE PROSPECTIVE PARENTS WHO ARE ETHIO-AMERICANS ADOPTING ORPHANED RELATIVES. ALL OTHER PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS SHOULD GO THROUGH ONE OF THE THREE LICENSED AGENCIES. THE AGENCIES MANAGE THE ENTIRE PROCESS - WITH DHS, THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE EMBASSY. PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS WHO USE ONE OF THE THREE LICENSED AGENCIES DO NOT HAVE TO COME TO ETHIOPIA.

11. ETHIOPIAN-AMERICANS WHO ARE ADOPTING ORPHANED RELATIVES DO NOT HAVE TO COME TO ETHIOPIA TO PROCESS THEIR ADOPTIONS. THEY CAN HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE WITH A POWER OF ATTORNEY REPRESENT THEM IN COURT. MARRIED PARENTS NEED TO BE SURE THAT BOTH HAVE GIVEN THE REPRESENTATIVE A POWER OF ATTORNEY SO THAT BOTH PARENTS' NAMES APPEAR ON THE ADOPTION DECREE.

12. PARENTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED MOLSA PERMISSION TO ADOPT PRIVATELY MUST COME TO ETHIOPIA TO MANAGE THE PROCESS. ONLY ONE PARENT HAS TO APPEAR, BUT, IF MARRIED, MUST BRING A POWER OF ATTORNEY FROM THE OTHER PARENT. IF THESE PARENTS PLAN TO FILE THE I-600 AT THE EMBASSY, THEY NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT THE PARENT THAT COMES TO FINALIZE THE ADOPTION IS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADOPT  
-----

13. OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR AN ADOPTION BY FOREIGN PARENTS IS AN EXTREMELY DOCUMENT-INTENSE AND TIME-CONSUMING EXERCISE. THE ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, DC, CAN PROVIDE ADVICE REGARDING THIS PROCESS. IT STARTS WITH A LETTER FROM AN AGENCY, OR THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS, TO MOLSA REQUESTING THE ADOPTION. THE LETTER SHOULD STATE WHY THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS WANT TO ADOPT A CHILD FROM ETHIOPIA. THAT LETTER IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF PAPERWORK, WHICH PARALLELS TO A CERTAIN EXTENT THE DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED TO FILE AN I-600 PETITION:

-- AN ORIGINAL ETHIOPIAN POLICE CERTIFICATE FOR EACH OF THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS.

-- A MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR EACH OF THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS, WITH AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO AMHARIC.

-- ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR EACH OF THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS, WITH AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO AMHARIC. IF THE ORIGINALS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, CERTIFIED COPIES MUST BE AUTHENTICATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. THAT AUTHENTICATION MUST ALSO BE TRANSLATED IN AMHARIC.

-- THE ORIGINAL HOME STUDY, WITH AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO AMHARIC.

-- A STATEMENT FROM THE ORGANIZATION THAT DID THE HOME STUDY THAT IT WILL PROVIDE REPORTS ON THE CHILD UNTIL HE OR SHE IS 18 YEARS OLD. THOSE REPORTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA AT SIX MONTHS AND ONE YEAR AFTER THE CHILD COMES TO AMERICA, AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER.

-- A BANK STATEMENT, WITH AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO AMHARIC.

ADDIS ABAB 00002908 003 OF 005

AMHARIC. IF THE ORIGINAL IS NOT AVAILABLE, A CERTIFIED COPY MUST BE AUTHENTICATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. THAT AUTHENTICATION MUST ALSO BE TRANSLATED IN AMHARIC.

-- THREE LETTERS OF REFERENCE, WITH ORIGINAL TRANSLATIONS INTO AMHARIC.

-- IF THE PARENTS DO NOT COME TO ETHIOPIA, TOGETHER, TO OVERSEE THIS ENTIRE PROCESS, THEN ONE MUST EXECUTE A POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR THE OTHER, OR FOR THEIR LOCAL AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE. THAT POWER OF ATTORNEY MUST BE AUTHENTICATED AT THE ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, DC. IT MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO AMHARIC.

-- LATELY, MOLSA HAS BEEN ASKING THE EMBASSY FOR A LETTER IN SUPPORT OF REQUESTS FOR ADOPTION. IF WE HAVE AN APPROVED I-600 OR I-600A ON FILE, WE PROVIDE A LETTER STATING THAT THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS HAVE BEEN FOUND ACCEPTABLE BY THE

US GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT A FOREIGN-BORN CHILD, THAT THEY HAVE THE PERMISSION OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE TO BRING A CHILD TO THE US FOR ADOPTION, AND THAT THEY MAY RE-ADOPT THE CHILD IN THEIR HOME STATE. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, HAVE THE RESOURCES TO SHEPHERD AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY THROUGH THE ENTIRE ADOPTION PROCESS.

-- IF A CONTRACT TO ADOPT THE CHILD HAS BEEN SIGNED, THAT CONTRACT, WITH AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO AMHARIC, MUST ACCOMPANY THE REQUEST. ADOPTION CONTRACTS SURRENDERING CHILDREN FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER ARE VERY COMMON LEGAL INSTRUMENTS HERE, PARTICULARLY WHEN THERE IS ONE SURVIVING PARENT, OR ANOTHER PERSON HAS ACQUIRED LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP OF THE CHILD.

14. THIS ENTIRE PACKAGE GOES TO MOLSA WHERE A COMMITTEE REVIEWS IT. FURTHER INVESTIGATION IS DONE IF DEEMED NECESSARY, AND A RECOMMENDATION IS MADE. ONLY IF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AGREE, AND SIGN THE RECOMMENDATION, IS THE REQUEST APPROVED.

15. THERE ARE A FAIR NUMBER OF UNSCRUPULOUS ADOPTION FACILITATORS IN ETHIOPIA. PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS MAY NOT USE ANY OTHER BROKER, ATTORNEY, LAWYER OR FACILITATOR, ETHIOPIAN OR FOREIGN, TO REPRESENT THEM IN COURT. IF THE EMBASSY RECEIVES A PETITION THAT NAMES ONE OF THESE FACILITATORS, WE WILL SEND IT BACK TO DHS AND NOTIFY THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS. THESE FACILITATORS ARE WELL KNOWN, AND MOST HAVE A HISTORY OF ATTEMPTING TO TRAFFIC CHILDREN, OR WORSE. MOLSA ALSO WILL NOT RECOMMEND AN ADOPTION BY ANY FAMILY REPRESENTED BY ONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS.

#### THE ADOPTION

-----

16. THE ADOPTING FAMILY, A LICENSED AGENCY ON THEIR BEHALF, OR THEIR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE SUBMITS DOCUMENTS TO AN ORPHANAGE REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR THE FAMILY TO ADOPT. DOCUMENTS VARY FROM ORGANIZATION TO ORGANIZATION. IF APPROVAL IS GRANTED THEN THE ADOPTING FAMILY, OR A LICENSED AGENCY ON THEIR BEHALF, SIGNS AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ORPHANAGE FOR A SPECIFIC CHILD.

17. THEN THE ADOPTING FAMILY, A LICENSED AGENCY ON THEIR BEHALF, OR THEIR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE SUBMITS THE SIGNED AGREEMENT TO THE COURT REQUESTING AN ADOPTION DECREE. THIS USUALLY NECESSITATES A PERSONAL APPEARANCE BY THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY, THE LICENSED AGENCY ACTING ON THEIR BEHALF, OR THEIR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE. AT THIS POINT, THE COURT SENDS A REQUEST FOR COMMENTS TO MOLSA. NEXT, MOLSA CONSIDERS THE DOSSIER ON THE SPECIFIC CHILD, THE DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE ADOPTING FAMILY, CONDUCTS ANY FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS DEEMED NECESSARY, AND PROVIDES A FINAL COMMENT TO THE COURT. IF IT IS FAVORABLE THEN THE COURT ISSUES THE FINAL ADOPTION DECREE, OFTEN IN THE FORM OF A FINAL VALIDATION OF AN EXISTING ADOPTION CONTRACT. THE ISSUANCE OF THE FINAL DECREE ALSO OFTEN NECESSITATES A PERSONAL APPEARANCE BY THE PETITIONER OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVE.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A COURT DECREE, WITHOUT A MOLSA CERTIFICATE HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE COURT, IS NOT CONSIDERED VALID FOR ADOPTION PURPOSES.

18. AFTER THE ADOPTION IS FINALIZED, MOLSA PREPARES A REQUEST TO THE CITY OF ADDIS ABABA FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A NEW BIRTH CERTIFICATE, AND A REQUEST TO THE OFFICE OF SECURITY, IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE AFFAIRS FOR A PASSPORT FOR THE CHILD IN ITS NEW NAME. BOTH OF THESE ISSUANCES ARE BEST FACILITATED IF THE REQUESTS ARE HAND-CARRIED BY AN INTERESTED PARTY. MOLSA ISSUES A "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN" CERTIFICATE IDENTIFYING THE CHILD AS AN ORPHAN.

ADDIS ABAB 00002908 004 OF 005

CHILDREN BACK WITH THEM, THEY CAN FILE THEIR I-600 AT THE EMBASSY. MOST OF THEM DO NOT ARRIVE IN TIME TO SEE THE CHILD BEFORE THE ADOPTION IS FINALIZED.

20. WE TAKE IN DOCUMENTS MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY BETWEEN 1 PM AND 3 PM FOR PRESCREENING. INTERVIEWS ARE CONDUCTED ON TUESDAY AND THURSDAY MORNINGS. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR AN IMMIGRANT VISA (DS-230 APPLICATION PARTS I AND II, MEDICAL EXAMINATION, CORRECT PHOTOS, AND DESTINATION ADDRESS IN THE US) THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED AT THIS POINT ARE:

-- THE APPROVED I-600A OR I-600, WHICH SHOULD ALREADY BE ON FILE.

-- THE HOME STUDY, INCLUDING A STATEMENT THAT THE CHILD CAN BE RE-ADOPTED IN THE STATE.

-- THE NEW BIRTH CERTIFICATE, AUTHENTICATED AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND A COPY.

-- THE NEW PASSPORT, AND A COPY OF THE DATA PAGES.

-- THE ORIGINAL MOLSA CERTIFICATE THAT THE CHILD IS AN ORPHAN, WITH A PHOTOCOPY. THESE ARE ISSUED IN ENGLISH.

-- THE ORIGINAL ADOPTION DECREE FROM THE COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE AND THE ORIGINAL ADOPTION CONTRACT, WITH COPIES, AND AN ORIGINAL TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH, WITH COPIES.

-- IF THE CHILD HAS A SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITION, THEN WE REQUIRE A NOTARIZED STATEMENT FROM THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS INDICATING THEIR AWARENESS OF THE CHILD'S AFFLICTION AND WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED WITH ORPHAN PROCESSING.

-- IF SERIOUS DOUBTS AS TO THE ABILITY OF THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE CHILD ARE RAISED (THIS HAPPENS RARELY), WE ASK FOR PROOF OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

-- PARENTS WHO ARE ADOPTING MORE THAN ONE CHILD NEED TO REMEMBER THAT ADDITIONAL I-600 FILING FEES ARE REQUIRED IF THE CHILDREN ARE NOT FULL SIBLINGS. THE IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION

AND ISSUANCE FESS TOTAL \$400 FOR EACH APPLICANT.

WHEN ALL THE DOCUMENTATION IS IN ORDER, WE RETURN THE ORIGINALS. WE ASSESS THE CHILD AND COMPLETE THE I-604 ORPHAN INVESTIGATION. IF THERE IS ENOUGH TIME, WE TRY TO ISSUE THE IMMIGRANT VISA THE SAME DAY.

EMBASSY COMMENTS

21. IF THE CHILD NEEDS TO TRANSIT GERMANY OR THE U.K. EN ROUTE TO THE U.S. (MOST COMMON ROUTE IS THROUGH FRANKFURT) THE CHILD MUST HAVE A GERMAN OR BRITISH TRANSIT VISA. THESE ARE USUALLY ONLY ISSUED BY THOSE EMBASSIES AFTER THE FAMILY HAS BOTH THE IMMIGRANT VISA AND AIR TICKETS IN HAND. ADOPTIVE PARENTS WHO TRAVEL TO ETHIOPIA TO PICK UP THEIR CHILDREN SHOULD PLAN ON AT LEAST TWO WORKING DAYS BETWEEN THE INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT, ASSUMING ALL GOES WELL THEN, AND THEIR DEPARTURE FROM ETHIOPIA.

22. THE COST OF THE DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESSING IN ETHIOPIA IS NEGLIGIBLE. MOLSA'S SERVICES ARE FREE. THE COURT COSTS AMOUNT TO ABOUT A DOLLAR AND A QUARTER. THE MOST EXPENSIVE PART OF THE ENTIRE PROCESS IS THE COST OF TRANSLATING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DOCUMENTS INTO AMHARIC. THIS CAN RUN AS HIGH AS A DOLLAR A PAGE.

23. THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING ORPHANS, APPROVING ADOPTIONS, AND PROCESSING IMMIGRANT VISAS FOR THEM IS EXTREMELY RIGOROUS HERE. THAT'S BECAUSE TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN IS A BIG BUSINESS, ACCORDING TO MOLSA REPRESENTATIVES. THE EMBASSY HAS HEARD OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS PAYING MORE THAN \$10,000 PER CHILD FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF AN UNLICENSED FACILITATOR. THESE FACILITATORS ARE RUMORED TO GO OUT INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE AND "COLLECT CHILDREN", SOMETIMES BY CONVINCING PARENTS THAT THEIR CHILDREN WILL HAVE A BETTER LIFE ABROAD. SOME NATURAL PARENTS HAVE EVEN COLLUDED WITH THE FACILITATORS IN PROCURING THEIR OWN DEATH CERTIFICATES. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SOME CHILDREN HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED FOR ADOPTION, AND SOME TAKEN ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BORDERS TO APPLY FOR VISAS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, SOME AS FAR AWAY AS HAITI. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT DEPORTED ONE AMERICAN WOMAN AFTER ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING WERE LEVELED AGAINST HER. A COUPLE YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF MORE THAN

ADDIS ABAB 00002908 005 OF 005

THREATENED. WE BELIEVE THAT THE RIGOROUS DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS, AND THE REQUIREMENT THAT MOST ADOPTIVE PARENTS ONLY USE LICENSED AGENCIES, WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD STOPPING THIS ACTIVITY IN THE FUTURE.

24. THE EMBASSY CAN ASSIST OTHER POSTS AND DHS WITH INVESTIGATIONS RELATED TO PETITIONS FILED FOR ETHIOPIAN ORPHANS. DOCUMENTS CAN BE SCANNED AND E-MAILED TO CONSADDIS@STATE.GOV, OR FAXED TO (251-1) 55-10-94.

HULL

NNNN