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The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and wishes to express its deep concern about the NGO re-registration process as it has applied to adoption agencies. In light of the recent negative press about the Ethiopian adoption process, and the information the Embassy and the Joint Council on International Children's Services provided the Government of Ethiopia about adoption agencies operating in Ethiopia, the Embassy was surprised to learn from Ministry of Justice representatives that all U.S. agencies, with the exception of the two which have already ceased to operate, were summarily re-registered.

The Embassy believes that additional scrutiny of re-registering agencies for compliance with Ethiopian law, for example verification that they have a permanent office in Ethiopia, would be invaluable in ensuring the integrity of the adoption process. In addition the Embassy urges the Government of Ethiopia to take into consideration the information provided in Diplomatic Note 09-1463 of November 19, 2009, in which the U.S. Embassy listed which agencies were accredited by the U.S. Central Authority under the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (the Hague Adoption Convention) and which agencies had signed the JCICS Standards of Conduct.

The Embassy further wishes to inform the Government that when we encounter cases of possible adoption agency misconduct, we conduct a full investigation of that case. When misconduct is confirmed, even if the child qualifies as an orphan under U.S. and Ethiopian law, the Embassy will return the case to MOWA for review before making a final decision on an immigrant visa.

The Embassy looks forward to continued cooperation with the Government on this important issue. The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all foreign missions in Ethiopia the assurances of its highest consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America

Addis Ababa, February 5, 2010



cc: Mr. Tesfaye Yilma, Acting Director General for Europe and the Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Ato Berhanu Tsegaye, State Minister, Ministry of Justice