

Annual Report on Intercountry Adoptions

The 2017 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption, as required by Section 104 of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000, provides data on intercountry adoptions to and from the United States in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017, as well as additional related information.

FY 2017 Overview

The Department of State (Department) continues to build upon the multi-pronged adoption strategy we have pursued diligently over the past two years. It encompasses a range of proactive measures to promote intercountry adoption as a viable option for vulnerable children. We use bilateral and multilateral cooperation and stakeholder outreach to develop a more stable global environment for intercountry adoption. During FY 2017, diplomats ranging from Adoption Division country officers to Assistant Secretaries of State traveled to six continents, engaging with policy leaders from dozens of countries. Their efforts were buttressed by domestic and international outreach in support of intercountry adoption, conducted by dedicated officers from the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs and diplomatic missions around the world.

The changing landscape of intercountry adoption continues to reflect trends discussed in prior annual reports. We see many positive changes for children as some countries begin to reduce stigmas associated with unwed mothers, promote domestic adoption, and strengthen measures to prevent illicit practices. The changing demographic of children eligible for intercountry adoption mirrors that of children eligible for adoption through U.S. domestic foster care – most children are older, or part of sibling groups, and the vast majority of them have special needs. We know many such children live without family care and would benefit tremendously from placement and permanency with a loving U.S. family. Our efforts focus on maintaining and strengthening the capacity and policy framework in countries of origin to include intercountry adoption as a viable option every time child welfare officials work toward permanency for children in need.

In FY 2017, the number of adoptions to the United States increased in 42 countries. A dozen countries on four continents saw double digit increases in adoptions to the United States, including Nigeria, Colombia, India, and Sierra Leone. Furthermore, we saw the first intercountry adoptions in a year or more from nine countries, including Yemen (6), Zimbabwe (3), and Laos (2). The Department engaged with countries that had suspended intercountry adoption, most notably in Peru and Ethiopia, to resolve hundreds of cases, and encouraged other countries, like Croatia, to begin or resume intercountry adoptions to the United States. We engaged bilaterally to gain clarity on laws and procedures that might facilitate increased opportunities for children who need permanent homes. We focused on improved communication and collaboration with Congress, adoption service providers, adult adoptees, and other stakeholders.

The overall number of adoptions to the United States in FY 2017 was 4,714, a decline of 658 from the previous year. This decline is primarily attributable to changes in two countries – China and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The drop in China, to 1,905

intercountry adoptions, mostly stems from changes in Chinese domestic laws related to the governance of non-governmental organizations. These laws were not targeted specifically at adoption, but have had a detrimental impact on the partnerships between U.S. adoption service providers and specific provinces that were designed to improve opportunities for children with special needs. Ninety-eight percent of the intercountry adoptions from China involved children with special needs. We are actively engaged in dialogue with our Chinese counterparts on this issue. The decline from the DRC stems from the fact the country no longer issues exit permits to adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents. The Congolese government has indicated it is working on legislative changes regarding adoption. However, until the Congolese government provides further clarity, the Department strongly recommends against the initiation of new adoptions in the DRC.

In FY2017, 83 children were adopted from the United States to seven countries, including Canada (41), Ireland (12), and the Netherlands (20).

Overcoming Barriers

Post placement and post-adoption reporting: In our 2016 Annual Report, we outlined several barriers to intercountry adoption and noted we were taking proactive measures to overcome them. Throughout 2017, we undertook significant effort to work with adoption service providers and adoptive families to encourage submission of overdue post-adoption reports. Foreign officials tell us these missing reports cause policy makers to be concerned about the welfare and whereabouts of children adopted by U.S. citizen families and thus risk undermining intercountry adoption programs in those countries. In May 2017, the Department published information on its website explaining why compliance with post-adoption reporting requirements is critical and provided country-by-country requirements. We asked adoption service providers to encourage submission of outstanding reports on May 15, 2017, a day specifically designated as Post-Adoption Report Day. Country officers in the Office of Children's Issues, Adoption Division, devoted hundreds of hours to guiding and assisting adoptive parents so that they could submit overdue reports. Countries of origin received scores of overdue post-adoption reports as a result of this initiative. This encouraged Peru to lift a temporary suspension on adoption processing related to missing post-adoption reports, and conversations continue with Kazakhstan and Guatemala about the resumption of intercountry adoption.

Unregulated Custody Transfer (UCT): The Department continued to combat UCT, a dangerous practice that places vulnerable children at risk and raises concern from countries of origin about whether adopted children are safe in the United States. The interagency working group on UCT meets quarterly and focuses on raising UCT awareness and developing preventive strategies, such as improving pre-adoption training and access to post-adoption services for intercountry adoption families,. The Department works closely with partners such as the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services), the National Association of Attorneys General, and the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children to coordinate an effective response to UCT situations and to examine best practices for protecting children who are placed in the care of U.S. adoptive families. We are in regular contact with child welfare authorities in many states and welcome the Joint Editorial Board of the Uniform Law

Commission's decision to undertake a study of UCT as an issue for a uniform law following passage of a law in Utah. The Utah law could serve as a model for future legislation.

Improving confidence in U.S. providers: As noted in the FY 2016 report, other countries' concerns about the actions of some U.S. adoption service providers and their foreign representatives continue to imperil intercountry adoption. When speaking with foreign counterparts, we strenuously assert that accredited and approved U.S. providers must meet strict professional and ethical standards. Those statements carry weight when our foreign interlocutors observe the U.S. system holding U.S. providers accountable when they deviate from the Adoption Convention.

In FY 2017, after an extensive review of the accreditation function central to the U.S. intercountry adoption system, the Department worked with the Accrediting Entities (AE), who are responsible for monitoring and oversight of U.S. providers, to increase enforcement of requirements to supervise foreign providers. On July 28, 2017, the Department designated Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity, Inc., (IAAME) as an AE under the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 in accordance with 22 CFR Part 96. The designation is for a period of five years. These adjustments and improvements contribute substantially to greater trust and confidence in U.S. providers on the part of officials in countries of origin.

In conclusion, the Department's vision for intercountry adoption in the coming decade encompasses continued cooperation with countries of origin currently placing children into the United States as well as engagement with countries with whom we have never had or no longer have intercountry adoption programs, seeking to promote intercountry adoption to the United States as an option for children. We will gain the confidence of these interlocutors by identifying the benefits deriving from effective oversight and greater accountability of U.S. providers.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Bureau of Consular Affairs • U.S. Department of State



FY 2017 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption (March 23, 2018)

Pursuant to Section 104 of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA) (PL 106-279), the U.S. Department of State submits the FY 2017 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption.

IAA §104(b) Report Elements:

- **§104(b) (1):** Tables 1 and 2 report the number of intercountry adoptions in FY 2017 involving immigration to the United States, regardless of whether or not the adoption occurred under the Hague Adoption Convention.
- **§104(b) (2):** Table 3 reports the number of intercountry adoptions in FY 2017 involving emigration from the United States, regardless of whether or not the adoption occurred under the Hague Adoption Convention.
- **§104(b) (3):** In FY 2017, adoption service providers (ASPs) reported 13 disrupted placements in Convention adoptions, i.e., cases in which there was an interruption of a placement for adoption during the post-placement (but pre-adoption) period. Table 6 summarizes this information.

In addition, information received from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) pursuant to §422(b)(12) of the Social Security Act indicated 88 cases of children from other countries entering state custody as a result of the disruption or the dissolution of an adoption. This information was provided in the annual update from states on progress made toward accomplishing goals and objectives in the Child and Family Services Plan. This information was submitted by states to HHS through an Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). The most recent APSRs were submitted on June 30, 2017 and contained information from FY 2015 as well as FY 2016. All of the information provided by states in the APSR was included in this count, regardless of the date provided from the states on specific actions taken in a case or when it was reported to the state.

- **§104(b) (4):** Table 4 reports the average time required for completion of a Hague Convention adoption.
- **§104(b) (5):** The current list of agencies accredited and persons approved is available on the Council on Accreditation's website at <http://coanet.org/accreditation/who-is-accredited/who-is-accredited-search/>.
- **§104(b) (6):** During FY 2017, the Secretary temporarily debarred adoption service provider European Adoption Consultants, Inc. (EAC) for a period of three years.. As a result of this temporary debarment, EAC's accreditation was cancelled and immediately ceased to provide all adoption services in connection with intercountry adoptions. The Department's decision was made pursuant to the Assistant Secretary's debarment authority in the adoption accreditation regulations under 22 CFR Part 96.85 (b), which implements the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 and the Universal Accreditation Act of 2012. The Department found substantial evidence that the agency was out of compliance with the standards in subpart F of the accreditation regulations and evidence of a pattern of serious, willful, or grossly negligent failure to comply with the

standards and of aggravating circumstances indicating that continued accreditation of EAC would not be in the best interests of the children and families concerned.

- **§104(b) (7):** ASPs reported charging between \$0 and \$64,357 for all adoption services, with half charging less than \$30,400 and half charging more. Table 5 reports by Convention country of origin the median fees for country-specific services, including foreign country program expenses, contributions, care of child expenses, and travel/accommodations.
- **§104(b) (8):** Fees for accreditation of agencies and approval of persons ranged from \$2,318.75 to \$3,906.25. The Council on Accreditation's accreditation fee is based on documented revenues from the applicant's intercountry adoption programs. Accrediting Entity fees are found at the following links: [Council on Accreditation fees](#).

Table 1: Incoming Adoptions by Country of Origin (* denotes a non-Convention Country)			
Country or Territory of Origin	Adoptions Finalized Abroad	Adoptions to be Finalized in the U.S.	Total Adoptions
Albania	5	0	5
*Algeria	0	4	4
Armenia	10	0	10
*Bangladesh	0	10	10
Belize	0	1	1
Brazil	20	0	20
Bulgaria	147	0	147
Burkina Faso	3	0	3
Burundi	21	0	21
*Cameroon	18	4	22
Canada	0	5	5
*Central African Republic	4	0	4
China	1905	0	1905
Colombia	181	0	181
*Congo, The Republic of	4	0	4
*Congo, Democratic Republic of the	9	17	26
Costa Rica	15	0	15
Cote d'Ivoire	3	1	4
*Dominica	4	0	4
Dominican Republic	11	0	11
Ecuador	5	0	5
*Egypt	0	1	1
El Salvador	9	0	9
*Eritrea	0	1	1
*Ethiopia	311	2	313
Georgia	2	0	2
*Ghana	21	0	21
*Grenada	5	0	5
Guatemala	1	0	1
Guinea	1	0	1
*Guyana	21	1	22
Haiti	227	0	227
*Honduras	14	0	14
Hong Kong SAR	0	7	7
Hungary	23	0	23

Country or Territory of Origin	Adoptions Finalized Abroad	Adoptions to be Finalized in the U.S.	Total Adoptions
India	219	2	221
*Iran	0	7	7
Italy	1	0	1
*Jamaica	15	36	51
*Japan	3	19	22
*Jordon	0	1	1
Kenya	1	0	1
Kyrgyzstan	14	2	16
*Laos	2	0	2
Latvia	71	0	71
*Lebanon	2	2	4
Lesotho	2	0	2
*Liberia	16	4	20
Lithuania	2	0	2
*Malawi	4	0	4
*Malaysia	2	0	2
Marshall Islands, Republic of the	10	0	10
Mexico	12	0	12
Moldova	1	0	1
Mongolia	1	0	1
*Morocco	0	31	31
*Nepal	1	0	1
New Zealand	0	1	1
*Nicaragua	13	0	13
*Niger	0	2	2
*Nigeria	174	2	176
*Pakistan	0	30	30
Panama	1	0	1
Peru	4	0	4
Philippines, The	0	111	111
Poland	65	0	65
Romania	2	0	2
Rwanda	0	1	1
*Samoa	7	0	7
Serbia	3	0	3
*Sierra Leone	40	4	44
South Africa	20	0	20
*South Korea	276	0	276

Country or Territory of Origin	Adoptions Finalized Abroad	Adoptions to be Finalized in the U.S.	Total Adoptions
*St. Kitts & Nevis	2	0	2
*St. Vincent & the Grenadines	4	0	4
*Sudan	0	2	2
*Taiwan	34	10	44
*Tanzania	3	0	3
Thailand	1	33	34
Togo	2	0	2
*Tonga	1	1	2
*Uganda	11	44	55
*Ukraine	180	35	215
United Kingdom	15	2	17
Vietnam	30	0	30
Yemen	0	6	6
Zambia	2	0	2
*Zimbabwe	3	0	3
Total	4272	442	4714

Table 2: Incoming Adoptions by State

State	Adoptions Finalized Abroad	Adoptions to be Finalized in the U.S.	Total Adoptions
Alabama	136	11	147
Alaska	11	1	12
Americans Overseas	6	0	6
Arizona	40	2	42
Arkansas	27	7	34
California	291	43	334
Colorado	133	8	141
Connecticut	29	6	35
Delaware	7	1	8
District of Columbia	11	1	12
Florida	152	14	166
Georgia	183	7	190
Hawaii	8	6	14
Idaho	27	3	30
Illinois	193	21	214
Indiana	132	10	142
Iowa	63	10	73
Kansas	41	6	47

State	Adoptions Finalized Abroad	Adoptions to be Finalized in the U.S.	Total Adoptions
Kentucky	126	4	130
Louisiana	23	1	24
Maine	20	1	21
Marshall Islands	1	0	1
Maryland	136	15	151
Massachusetts	44	5	49
Michigan	147	12	159
Minnesota	149	11	160
Mississippi	48	2	50
Missouri	102	15	117
Montana	14	0	14
Nebraska	31	1	32
Nevada	4	1	5
New Hampshire	26	2	28
New Jersey	78	13	91
New Mexico	12	1	13
New York	165	27	192
North Carolina	182	12	194
North Dakota	8	0	8
Ohio	136	20	156
Oklahoma	41	4	45
Oregon	53	4	57
Pennsylvania	150	9	159
Puerto Rico	1	0	1
Rhode Island	6	1	7
South Carolina	65	6	71
South Dakota	10	1	11
Tennessee	159	27	186
Texas	362	44	406
Utah	53	4	57
Vermont	3	1	4
Virgin Islands	1	0	1
Virginia	163	20	183
Washington	145	3	148
West Virginia	21	0	21
Wisconsin	81	15	96
Wyoming	16	3	19
Total	4272	442	4714

Table 3: Outgoing (Emigrating) Adoptions		
Receiving Country	U.S. State from which the Child Emigrated	Number of Outgoing Adoption Cases
Austria	Maine	2
	New York	1
Canada	California	5
	Florida	26
	Hawaii	1
	Illinois	1
	Louisiana	1
	Nevada	1
	New York	1
	New Jersey	1
	South Carolina	4
Germany	New Jersey	3
Ireland	California	3
	Florida	2
	Maine	1
	New Jersey	6
Mexico	California	2
	Florida	1
Netherlands, The	Florida	9
	Hawaii	1
	New Jersey	9
	Texas	1
Switzerland	Florida	1
Total		83

Table 4: Convention Adoptions and Average Number of Days to Completion by Convention Country		
Convention Country	Number of Convention Cases	Average Days to Completion
Albania	5	252
Armenia	10	408
Belize	1	487
Brazil	21	280
Bulgaria	147	336
Burkina Faso	3	563

Convention Country	Number of Convention Cases	Average Days to Completion
Burundi	21	553
Canada	5	492
China	1897	194
Colombia	181	313
Costa Rica	15	511
Dominican Republic	11	674
Ecuador	5	568
El Salvador	9	646
Georgia	2	346
Guinea	1	490
Great Britain And Northern Ireland	17	514
Haiti	227	463
Hong Kong S. A. R.	7	354
Hungary	23	260
India	221	478
Italy	1	679
Kenya	1	873
Latvia	71	356
Lesotho	2	355
Lithuania	2	224
Mexico	12	774
Moldova	1	379
Mongolia	1	370
New Zealand	1	173
Panama	1	288
Peru	4	158
Philippines	111	434
Poland	65	404
Romania	2	232
South Africa	20	377
Serbia	3	254
Thailand	34	517
Togo	2	694
Vietnam	30	378
Zambia	2	444

Table 5: Median ASP Convention Adoption Fees

Convention Country of Origin	Median Fees	Convention Country of Origin	Median Fees
Albania	\$25,300	Latvia	\$14,850
Armenia	\$31,650	Lesotho	\$24,750
Belize	\$13,850	Lithuania	\$21,000
Burundi	\$18,875	Mexico	\$16,550
Brazil	\$13,900	Moldova	\$14,000
Bulgaria	\$14,500	Mongolia	\$19,945
Burkina Faso	\$18,500	New Zealand	24,520
Canada	\$20,000	Panama	\$13,527
China	\$16,610	Peru	\$11,905
Colombia	\$16,750	Philippines	\$9,150
Costa Rica	\$16,680	Poland	\$20,217
Dominican Republic	\$13,500	Romania	\$23,400
Ecuador	\$6,750	South Africa	\$20,716
El Salvador	\$14,580	Serbia	\$13,155
Georgia	\$18,800	Thailand	\$13,145
Guinea	\$6,250	Togo	\$6,200
Haiti	\$33,295	United Kingdom	\$11,000
Hong Kong S. A. R.	\$9,550	United States	\$11,155
Hungary	\$20,650	Vietnam	\$16,072
India	\$16,000	Zambia	\$2,300
Italy	\$12,785		
Kenya	\$6,250		

Table 6: The Number of Convention Placements for Adoption in the United States that were Disrupted

Country from which the Child Emigrated	The Age of the Child at Placement	The Date of Placement for Adoption	The Reasons for the Disruption	The Resolution of the Disruption	The Agency that Handled the Original Placement	Plans for the Child
Canada	6	16-Sep-2015	Behavioral	Remain with Adoptive Parent	Dillon International, Inc.	No Further Action
China	11	23-May-2017	Unknown	Remain in China	CCAI	No Further Action
China	2	13-Jun-2017	Behavioral	Remain in China	CCAI	No Further Action
China	11	8-Jul-2017	Child declined consent	Remain in China	CCAI	No Further Action
Colombia	11	2-Mar-2017	Child declined consent	Remain in Colombia	All God's Children International dba Families are Forever International	No Further Action
Colombia	5	30-Jun-2017	Behavioral	Remain in Colombia	All God's Children International dba Families are Forever International	No Further Action
Hong Kong	3	31-Mar-2016	Failure to Attach	Placed for Adoption	Lifeline Children's Services, Inc.	No Further Action
Latvia	12	14-Jun-2016	Behavioral	Remain in Latvia	CCAI	No Further Action
Philippines	11	20-Feb-2016	Marital and Financial	Re-placed for Adoption	Christian Adoption Services, Inc.	No Further Action

Philippines	8	20-Feb-2016	Marital and Financial	Re-placed for Adoption	Christian Adoption Services, Inc.	No Further Action
Philippines	14	7-May-2016	Abuse by Adoptive Parents	Re-placed for Adoption	Christian Adoption Services, Inc.	No Further Action
Philippines	15	11-Apr-2016	Abuse by Adoptive Parent	Child in Respite Care	Great Wall China Adoption	Unknown
Uganda	4	7-Jul-2016	Birth parent withdrew Consent	Remain in Uganda	Little Miracles International, Inc.	No Further Action