

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION POLICY STATEMENT

International Adoption should be an integral part of a comprehensive strategy to address the problems of unparented children, together with the development of better temporary care for children pending permanent placement, the development of in-country adoption and other truly permanent nurturing placement options, and the provision of social services to parents so that they can keep and nurture their children.

International Adoption is consistent with other positive social responses to the problems of unparented children, bringing new resources into poor countries to support such efforts, and developing new awareness of and concern for the plight of poor children and poor communities worldwide.

Adoption, whether domestic or international, generally serves children's interests better than any form of state-sponsored care, whether that be foster care or institutionalization, although there will always be exceptions to this general rule, including for example situations in which placement of a child in a permanent, nurturing kinship foster care situation will be preferable for that specific child to adoption.

Children whose original parents cannot provide permanent nurturing care should generally be placed as soon as possible in a permanent adoptive home, whether domestic or international.

Efforts should be made to identify in a timely way all unparented children and to promptly free for adoption all children who cannot or should not be reunited with their birth parents in the near future, and for whom there is no other preferable permanent parenting solution immediately available.

Children free for adoption should be placed as soon as possible in appropriately screened adoptive homes, whether domestic or international: no children should be held whether in foster care or institutions for any period of time for the purpose of placing them in-country; any in-country preference should be implemented through a concurrent planning strategy, planning simultaneously for both domestic and international adoption, and preferring domestic adoption only if it will involve no delay in placement for the child.

International Adoption should not be made more difficult for parents to accomplish than domestic adoption; given the inherent difficulties posed by adopting in a different country, efforts should be made to coordinate the adoption systems and related laws and policies of sending and receiving countries to reduce these inherent difficulties and make the international adoption process more comparable to the domestic process from the viewpoint of adoptive parents.

Adoption abuses, such as kidnapping and baby selling (defined as payments to birth parents designed to induce them to surrender their child and their parenting rights), should be dealt with by enforcing the laws prohibiting such practices, and where needed developing new laws and policies to discourage such practices, without unduly restricting the placement of unparented children in domestic or international adoption, and without unduly limiting the private agencies and other adoption intermediaries that facilitate such adoption.