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Cambodia

February 17, 2014

Notice: Update on Status of Intercountry Adoptions from Cambodia

The Department of State's Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Ambassador Susan Jacobs, met with Cambodian adoption officials in Cambodia on January 9 and 10. The Ambassador met with key officials in several Cambodian ministries and authorities that will implement intercountry adoptions once Cambodia resumes processing intercountry adoptions with other countries, including Cambodia's Central Authority, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation; the Ministry of Justice, which works with Cambodia's courts and provides legal advice to the Central Authority; and the Municipal Court of Phnom Penh. Ambassador Jacobs also met with UNICEF and a child protection non-governmental organization to seek their perspectives on Cambodia's child welfare and protection systems.

During Ambassador Jacobs' visit, she noted the Royal Government of Cambodia's significant progress in drafting several procedures that will serve as the legal foundation of Cambodia's system under the Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Convention). Cambodia acceded to the Convention in 2007, passed an intercountry adoption law to implement the Convention in 2009, and has since been working to draft and finalize important implementing procedures. These procedures will govern the authorization of foreign accredited adoption service providers, the implementation of relative adoptions, and the definition of special needs, among other areas.

Ambassador Jacobs also obtained clarification on the Cambodian Central Authority's stated intention to resume intercountry adoptions in 2014. We understand that the Royal Government of Cambodia is preparing for Convention implementation carefully by planning a progressive approach to the resumption of intercountry adoptions. We anticipate that this progressive approach will look first to Cambodia's state-run institutions and target children with special needs. Cambodian officials did not provide a specific timeline of next steps, though several emphasized the importance of finalizing relevant procedures before intercountry adoptions can begin.

During her visit, Ambassador Jacobs observed key areas of Cambodia's child welfare and protection system that, if strengthened, would help to ensure that an adoption is ethical, transparent, and in the best interests of each adopted child. This includes regulation of Cambodia's many unlicensed orphanages, instituting a case management system to identify prospective adoptive children, and duly considering domestic placement options in accordance with the Convention. The Department of State supports the ongoing efforts of the U.S. Agency of International Development and UNICEF to strengthen these and other areas of Cambodia's child welfare and protection systems.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is not processing intercountry adoptions with other countries at this time. Additionally, the Department of State's determination not to issue Hague Certificates in adoptions from Cambodia is still in effect. Please see the Department's January 2, 2013 [Notice](#) for further information related to that determination.

The Department of State will continue to publish updates on Cambodian intercountry adoptions on [adoption.state.gov](#). Please direct any questions related to this Notice or Cambodian adoptions to AdoptionUSCA@state.gov,

1-888-407-4747 within the United States, or 202-501-4444 from outside the United States.