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Nepal

December 14, 2014

Notice: U.S. Delegation Visits Nepal for Update on Government's Child Welfare System

Representatives from the Department of State and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) concluded a four-day visit to Nepal on November 19. The delegation was led by Ambassador Susan S. Jacobs, Special Advisor for Children's Issues at the Department of State.

In August 2010, the Department of State and USCIS suspended processing of new adoption cases from Nepal involving children claimed to have been found abandoned because of concerns regarding the reliability of supporting documents, and because circumstances of alleged abandonments could not be verified by the U.S. government due to obstacles in the investigation of individual cases. The United States continues to process adoption cases from Nepal involving relinquishment by known birth parents. The visit's purpose was to learn about the Government of Nepal's current child welfare system and adoption procedures, and to demonstrate the U.S. government's support for the Government of Nepal's efforts to seek permanent solutions for children in need of families and safeguard the integrity of intercountry adoptions. (Note: The United States was the last receiving country to suspend adoption case processing in 2010.)

The delegation met with officials from the Nepalese Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), the Intercountry Adoption Management Development Board (ICAB) and selected ICAB members, the Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB), and representatives from local District Child Welfare Boards. Additionally, the delegation met with a member of the Child Care Home Monitoring Committee, Kaski District, and co-author of a recent report on monitoring of children's homes for the Kaski (Pokhara) Office, the board of directors of Bal Mandir children's home in Kathmandu, the former head of the Pokhara Children's Home Operators Association, the director of the government maternity hospital, officials from the National Center for Children at Risk, and with senior and working-level officials of the Nepal Police, including the Women and Children's Services Directorate at police headquarters.

The delegation also held informative discussions with representatives of foreign governments, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The delegation hosted a roundtable discussion with 15 non-governmental organizations involved in various aspects of child welfare work in Nepal. The delegation also met separately with UNICEF and Terre des Hommes, both of which have been designated by the Government of Nepal to assist in drafting reforms to Nepal's child welfare system. On November 19, the delegation hosted a public town hall meeting for interested stakeholders.

In these meetings, the delegation learned more about proposals to reform Nepal's child welfare system, the circumstances under which children enter children's homes and may become eligible for both domestic and intercountry adoption, and modifications to the country's procedures for intercountry adoptions. Attendees at the public town hall meeting provided valuable ideas for improving Nepal's child protection systems, including those related to adoption.

The delegation was encouraged by the Government of Nepal's interest in partnering with the international community to further reform Nepal's child welfare and adoption systems. Safeguards under consideration include the establishment of reasonable limits and accountability for adoption fees and services, and meaningful monitoring and oversight of children's homes. The Department of State and USCIS are exploring next steps, including procedures to document and trace the origin of children in institutional care and how the international community might support the Government of Nepal's efforts to strengthen its child welfare system.

We will continue to provide updates as they are available. You can also view additional information and past adoption notices and alerts related to intercountry adoptions in Nepal from [here](#).