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Ethiopia

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Notice: Summary of March 11 Ethiopia Conference Call

U.S. Department of State, Office of Children's Issues, Adoption Division hosted a conference call for Adoption Service Providers on March 11, 2011 at 10:45 am to discuss recent announcements made by the Ethiopian Ministry of Women's, Children's and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA). Below is a summary of information presented on the call.

As was stated in the March 9, 2011 Adoption Alert, the Department of State received information on the announcement made by the MOWCYA regarding the planned reduction in workload processing.

- MOWCYA planned to implement a reduction of case processing from approximately 50 cases reviewed per day to no more than 5 cases reviewed per day.
- MOWCYA has stated that this reduction is to improve screening of adoption cases while also devoting existing resources to other priorities on vulnerable children.
- MOWCYA reviews each adoption case at two points in the process: after the match with prospective adoptive parents and after the final court decree to approve issuance of new birth certificate and passport for child.
- MOWCYA has not announced any implementation guidelines on how reduction in processing will affect each stage of the process.
- If only 5 cases are reviewed per day, delays could be significant. Calculations based on rough estimates of cases in process (around 1000) indicate delays of one year or more.
- Department of State defines 'cases in process' as those whose dossier has been accepted up to those cases that have received the final letter approving issuance of passport and birth certificate.
- We are working on getting more details on implementation guidelines.

Since announcement, the Department of State has heard many rumors, but none have been substantiated. The U.S. Embassy can confirm that the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs has shuffled the portfolios of key adoption personnel. The Embassy has not been able to confirm how this reorganization may affect the processing of cases through the ministry.

Additionally, the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa is discussing the possibility of developing a consolidated assistance proposal to MOWCYA to find out what the resource needs are and find what assistance can be given to allow MOWCYA to accomplish their goals.