

New Information about the Hague Adoption Convention

The Hague Adoption Convention is a treaty which strengthens protections for children, birthparents and prospective adoptive parent(s), and establishes internationally agreed upon rules and procedures for adoptions between countries that have a treaty relationship under the Hague Adoption Convention. On October 1st, 2008, Seychelles will join more than 75 existing member countries. Regionally, Kenya is also a convention country. The Hague treaty ultimately provides a framework for member countries to work together to ensure that children are provided with permanent, loving homes, that adoptions take place in the best interests of a child, and that the abduction, sale or traffic in children is prevented.

Prospective adoptive parent(s) who file Form I-600A or Form I-600 **prior to October 1st, 2008**, may continue to process their adoptions under the current orphan regulations, if the laws of the country of the child's origin allow for continuation under the orphan regulations. **Parents who do not file adoption paperwork with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by September 30th, 2008 will have their adoptions processed as Hague Adoptions.**

New safeguards administered by USCIS under the Hague include the creation of new forms and improved, centralized examination processes for inter-country adoption applications and petitions under the Hague Adoption Convention. The Application for Determination of Suitability to Adopt a Child from a Convention Country (Form I-800A) **MUST** be filed with a home study before a child is matched with Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAP). Seychelles' Central Authority will be notified of the PAP's approval as adoptive parents. Once the Central Authority matches a child for placement, and **BEFORE PLACEMENT OCCURS**, a Petition to Classify a Convention Adoptee as an Immediate Relative (Form I-800) will be filed with the National Benefits Center to provisionally approve the placement of that particular child with the PAP. After that provisional approval occurs, the child may be placed. It is important to **note that the Hague Convention dictates there be NO interaction between a PAP and the child's parents, care-giver, or legal custodian PRIOR to the Provisional Approval of the I-800, unless the adoption is within a family.**

More information on the Hague Adoption Convention may be found at www.travel.state.gov or www.uscis.gov