



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Intercountry Adoptions by Americans Lowest Since 1981

April 1, 2016 – Alexandria, VA – The U.S. Department of State has released its [FY 2015 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption](#), revealing that American families adopted 5,648 foreign-born children in 2015. This marks a 12% decline from the 6,441 foreign-born children adopted the previous year and a 75% decline since intercountry adoptions reached a peak in 2004, when 22,991 foreign-born children were adopted. This is the lowest number of intercountry adoptions since 1981.

National Council For Adoption (NCFA), a non-profit organization committed to adoption advocacy, awareness, and education efforts, notes that this continued decline in intercountry adoptions has a tragic impact on the growing number of orphaned and abandoned children who desperately need a family.

“We would welcome a world in which all children *everywhere* received loving and permanent care from their biological families or from extended family or adoptive families in their birth countries,” says NCFA president and CEO Chuck Johnson. “The reality is that the world’s orphan population is growing by the millions and that many of these children will *not* be reunited with family members or placed with relatives or domestic adoptive families. Instead, they are left homeless or living in orphanages or institutions, which are often under-funded, under-staffed, and don’t provide the one-on-one care children need in order to thrive. For thousands of children, intercountry adoption will be their only opportunity to live, learn, grow, and thrive within a family, and be protected from trafficking, forced into the sex trade, homelessness, or premature death.”

There are several factors that contributed to the decline in intercountry adoptions. Some of the multi-year decline can be attributed to Russia and Guatemala closing intercountry adoptions to the United States in recent years and, specifically, fewer adoptions from Ethiopia, Haiti, and Ukraine in 2015.

“It’s a vicious and dangerous cycle,” says Johnson. “Developing nations have large orphan populations and intercountry adoption is a viable solution for some of them. Yet, intercountry adoption is not allowed because the developing nation doesn’t have an advanced child welfare

system or an ability to offer other solutions like family preservation services or domestic adoption or they can't provide the level of oversight to the adoption process deemed necessary by the United States."

Many child welfare leaders and scholars from around the world are committed to improving the care their countries provide for orphaned or abandoned children within their own borders. NCFA has worked in concert in the last year with leaders from China, Colombia, Hong Kong, and Ukraine amongst others to share ideas about in-country options like family preservation, foster care, and domestic adoption processes and support. There is a great opportunity and need for all nations to learn from one another and support one another in our common goal of finding solutions for children living outside of family-based care.

In the United States, the federal government can play a key role in reversing the trend of declining adoptions by working collaboratively with the adoption community to find solutions; seeking country-specific solutions that will open doors of opportunity for orphaned or abandoned children to be adopted; and providing technical assistance to countries who want to engage in intercountry adoption, but need support to put appropriate oversight in place. In recent months, NCFA has been grateful to see meaningful improvements from Department of State's Office of Children's Issues in communication, openness to consider country-specific solutions, and willingness to provide support to sending countries, adoption service providers, and adopting families. Still, we think there is much work to be done to provide the appropriate support to ensure more children find their way to willing, waiting families. National Council For Adoption continues to call on Congress to provide more mission-specific direction to the Department of State and more clearly define their responsibilities as the United States' Central Adoption Authority to ensure that this new approach is long-lasting and continues to improve. Ultimately, we at NCFA believe that recent changes in practice paired with additional mission-specific directives will result in the U.S.'s ability to serve more children through intercountry adoption, while also ensuring legal, ethical, and transparent practices.

Lastly, Mr. Johnson expressed, "I am hopeful that this is the last year that I am asked to comment on the decline, but, instead, be able to celebrate next year with the Child Welfare community the increase in the number of children who find loving families through intercountry adoption."

Click here to view the [FY2015 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption](#) and the accompanying [narrative](#).

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ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is a global adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. As the authoritative voice for adoption, NCFA's areas of focus include domestic infant adoption, adoption and permanency outcomes for youth in foster care, and intercountry adoption. Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, NCFA serves children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. In

addition, we work tirelessly to educate U.S. and foreign government officials and policymakers, members of the media, and all those in the general public with an interest in adoption.

For more information, visit www.AdoptionCouncil.org.