Office of Communications

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Update

Nov. 19, 2008

USCIS PROVIDES PROCESSING UPDATE ON HAGUE ADOPTIONS DURING NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

WASHINGTON – In recognition of National Adoption Awareness Month, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is reminding prospective adoptive parents to submit complete application and petition packages for international adoptions under the Hague Adoption Convention to ensure timely processing.

On April 1, 2008, the Hague Adoption Convention went into effect for intercountry adoptions between the United States and other Hague Convention countries. USCIS centralized all Hague processing and adjudication at the National Benefits Center (NBC) in Lee's Summit, Mo. The Hague process requires the filing of Form I-800A, *Application for Determination of Suitability to Adopt a Child from a Convention Country*, and then a Form I-800, *Petition to Classify Convention Adoptee as an Immediate Relative*. Since April 1, 2008, the NBC has received more than 1,300 Hague applications and petitions. The NBC provides end-to-end processing for Hague applications and petitions, and USCIS has found that a majority of cases are incomplete, requiring prospective adoptive parents to submit additional information after they filed their initial application or petition. In an effort to speed up this part of the process, the NBC is working with adoption agency representatives to identify the necessary requirements for an initial Hague application, including:

- Ensuring that your home study is no more than 6 months old at the time that it is filed with USCIS.
- Ensuring that you have a Hague accredited agency complete your home study, or have a Hague accredited agency review and approve it, prior to submitting it, along with your Form I-800A to USCIS.
- Submitting a Consent to Disclose Information supplement if you would like the NBC to communicate with your adoption service provider on issues related to your case as it moves through processing.

The Hague Adoption Convention, which became effective for the United States on April 1, 2008, is an agreement between signatory countries which are working together to ensure protections in intercountry adoptions. These protections include providing adoptees with permanent loving homes; looking after children's best interests throughout the adoption process; and preventing the abduction, sale or illegal trafficking of children. If the adoptive child's country of origin is not a Hague Convention country, the Orphan procedures must be followed. This involves filing a Form I-600A, *Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition*, and/or Form I-600, *Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative*.

For more information on the intercountry adoption process, call the USCIS National Customer Service Center at (800) 375-5283 or (800) 767-1833 (TTY), or visit the USCIS Web site at www.uscis.gov.

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