



THE UNITED STATES AND THE HAGUE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION CONVENTION



We are pleased to announce that the United States has nearly completed all the domestic requirements necessary for the deposit of its instrument of ratification for the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (the Hague Adoption Convention) in December 2007.

As the U.S. Central Authority under the Convention and the lead Federal agency for its implementation, the Department of State eagerly anticipates the moment when we can join the more than 70 other countries who believe in strong international norms for protecting the best interests of children, as well as the interests of birth parents and adoptive parents in the intercountry adoption process.

According to the terms of the Convention, it will go into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of three months after the deposit of the instrument of ratification.

The Convention strengthens protections for adopted children, birth parents and adoptive parents involved in intercountry adoptions. Its key principles include:

- 1) Ensuring that intercountry adoptions take place in the **best interests of children**;
 - 2) **Preventing** the abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children; and
 - 3) **Facilitating communication** between Central Authorities in countries of origin and destination countries.
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The Hague process in the United States will require that **adoption service providers** show that they meet Hague standards in



an accreditation process. Adoption service providers who do not meet the standards will not be permitted to provide adoption services in Hague member countries. Our Hague regulations also require transparent fees, home studies that are approved by an accredited adoption service provider and mandatory training for prospective adoptive parents.

The United States **signed** the treaty in 1994.

In 2000, Congress passed the **Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA)**, the implementing legislation for the Convention. The Senate gave its advice and consent for ratification of the Convention on the condition that the United States was prepared to meet its obligations under the Convention, as provided in the IAA.

We are proud to say that we are very close to completion of those preparations.

For more information please see our website at travel.state.gov
Or contact the U.S. Central Authority at AdoptionUSCA@state.gov.