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Ghana

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Alert: Guidance on Processing of Emergency Adoption Cases during Ghana's Suspension

On April 30, 2013, the Government of Ghana suspended processing of all adoption cases, including intercountry adoptions, pending Ghana's review of its current adoption procedures. This alert provides additional information on how the Ghanaian Department of Social Welfare (DSW) is implementing the suspension and how the suspension impacts processing of related Forms I-600, *Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative*.

Cases Subject to the Suspension

All adoption cases that received final approval by the Ghanaian Department of Social Welfare (DSW) or were filed with a court before April 30, 2013, are not subject to this suspension.

For cases filed with a court on or after April 30, 2013, only emergency cases may proceed to final adoption in Ghana. Emergency cases include children who have special needs or medical conditions, children who could "age out" of adoption eligibility, and children adopted by biological relatives. These emergency cases must be submitted to the Acting Director of DSW for approval before being submitted to a Ghanaian court.

We strongly encourage prospective adoptive parents not to proceed with an adoption in Ghana unless you meet the suspension exceptions described above. If you wish to pursue an adoption in another country due to the suspension, please see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website for more information at [www.uscis.gov/adoption](#).

Guidance Regarding Form I-600 Petition Processing

When filing any Form I-600 petition, U.S. prospective adoptive parents must establish that the adoption or grant of custody took place in accordance with the law of the child's country. For all Form I-600 petitions filed on behalf of a child from Ghana USCIS and the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Accra require evidence that the Minister or Acting Director of DSW has approved the adoption case filed with the court after April 30 to ensure it was completed in accordance with the regulated exceptions to the suspension. In an effort to efficiently process these cases, USCIS Accra will continue to contact the DSW directly for petitions filed in Accra, when necessary, to confirm whether the case was approved by DSW. Prospective adoptive parents may also choose to obtain this evidence directly from DSW and submit it with their Form I-600 petition. The address for the Acting Director of the Department of Social Welfare is P.O. Box MB 230, Accra, Ghana.

Please note there is no fee by DSW or USCIS for confirmation that a specific case was approved by the DSW. If prospective adoptive parents are unable to obtain this information from the DSW, please notify USCIS Accra at uscis.accra@uscis.dhs.gov.

The Department of State and USCIS will continue providing updated information on [adoption.state.gov](#) as it becomes available. If you have any questions about this notice, please contact the Office of Children's Issues at 1-888-407-4747 within the United States, or 202-501-4444 from outside the United States. Email inquiries may be directed to AdoptionUSCA@state.gov.

