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Ethiopia

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Notice: Reminder on proper Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) processing order

The Department of State reminds adoption service providers (ASPs) and prospective adoptive parents that the entire PAIR process must be completed in every case BEFORE the adoption petition is filed at the Federal First Instance Court (FFIC) in Addis Ababa.

The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa notes that many ASPs instead file with the FFIC at the same time as filing the Form I-600 petition with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' National Benefits Center. It appears as though these ASPs aim to present the PAIR letter only at the final adoption hearing. Presentation of the PAIR letter at the final adoption hearing does not comply with the PAIR procedures agreed upon between the Governments of Ethiopia and the United States.

PAIR provides the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA), as well as the prospective adoptive parents, information on the child's likely eligibility for U.S. immigration prior to the adoption proceedings. When an adoption petition is filed with the FFIC, the dossier is immediately transferred to MOWCYA for its review of the child's best-interests. MOWCYA is given a specific time frame to conduct this review and is obligated to provide its determination at the first adoption hearing. MOWCYA requires that the PAIR letter be present at the time of the filing with the FFIC. Dossiers that do not include PAIR letters at the time of FFIC filing risk rejection by MOWCYA at the best-interests determination hearing.