



THE CONFERENCE

1ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Women, Children
& Social Welfare



Government of Nepal
Central Child Welfare Board



Child NGO Federation-Nepal



Nepal Children's Organization

At last! The much awaited and much talked event "**International Conference on Inter-country Adoption**" is taking place in this enchanting himalayan country of Nepal.

Background

The idea of holding an international conference on inter-country adoption was first initiated by Child NGO Federation-Nepal (CNFN) a couple of years ago. In this context, CNFN held dialogues with Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MUWCSU). Besides the Ministry, it also held discussions with concerned government authorities, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), various national and international organizations, child home operators, stakeholders and other concerned people. But due to the non-conducive political situation in the country and frequent changes in the government, none of the governments could make their political commitments and give assurances of their support to hold such conference. However, with the restoration of democracy in the country, the efforts were rejuvenated and finally the final date for holding the conference was approved by the Main Organizing Committee chaired by the State Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare.

Objectives

Broader Objective

To discuss and share experiences on various aspects of adoption, including building and strengthening of people's attitudes and beliefs about adoptions; on the lives and life-styles of the adopted Nepalese children living abroad; their proper care and upbringing; elimination of difficulties and problems in the procedure of adoption; and appointing the adopted children as the goodwill ambassadors of the country.

Specific Objectives

- ✓ To gather national and international support to build a common consensus with the government of Nepal to ratify the Hague Convention of May 1993 on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption;
- ✓ To facilitate the natural wishes, desires and feelings of parentless children's want of parents and childless parents' want of children, and also to evaluate whether these wishes, desires and feelings are really addressed or not;
- ✓ To discuss on the prevailing legal provisions, traditions and best practices regarding child adoption in different countries and replicating the best practices of these countries;
- ✓ To give appropriate and necessary suggestions and recommendations regarding adoption law and procedures to the government so that adoption becomes easier, beneficial to all parties involved realizing the dreams and wishes of adopting parents and adopted children.
- ✓ To prepare and publish a detailed profile of adopted Nepalese children living in various countries.

Participants

The conference has participants of two levels:

National level

- a. Representatives from concerned Ministries and government authorities of Government of Nepal.
- b. Representatives from Embassies and diplomatic missions in Nepal.
- c. UN agencies, donor agencies, National and international NGOs, adoption agencies, children homes, stakeholders, intellectuals, media professionals and families of adopted children.

International level

- a. Representatives from government authorities of different countries;
- b. Representatives from adoption agencies of different countries;
- c. International experts and intellectuals presenting papers during the conference;
- d. Families (Parents) of adopted Nepalese children based in different countries.

Conference Venue

The conference will be held at Hotel Soaltee - situated at the heart of Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) - a city full of temples and gods and goddesses. It is one of the most exclusive five star hotels of the country that provides all types of facilities and services to its clients.

Date

Considering that the Conference will have delegates and participants from different parts of the world, who would like to see and enjoy the enchanting natural beauty of the country, the conference date has been scheduled from 11-13 March 2007. This may be one of the best seasons for the foreign tourists and visitors coming to Nepal to make full enjoyment of their visit.

The UN Declaration and the CRC

The 1986 United Nations Declaration on Social and Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children has specifically stated that if a child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable mannered be cared for in the country of origin, inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing the child with a family (Article 17). The Declaration also stresses prevention of abduction and improper financial gain, as well as protection of the child's legal and social interests.

As Nepal is a signatory to the UN Convention on Child Rights, and is bound to follow all the provisions in the Convention. The conference will highlight on various related Articles of the provision of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, which specifically deals with adoption. Likewise, Article 35 specifically provides that there must be adequate protection from sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

The Hague Convention

Similarly, the Hague Convention of May 1993 on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption, which was designed to set up a mechanism for international cooperation to give practical effect to the CRC provisions relating to inter-country adoption also provides for responsibilities and tasks to be shared between the States of origin and the receiving States, while respecting organizational diversities and national legislation. The Convention has also clearly mentioned that adoption is not an individual affair, which can be left exclusively to the child's birthparents or legal guardians, or to the prospective adoptive parents or other intermediaries, but rather is a social and legal measure for the protection of children.

Although the Hague Convention was adopted in May 1993 and was entered into force in May 1995, Nepal is yet to ratify it, and is therefore not obliged to follow the Articles of it.

Expectations from the Conference

The conference is expected to identify the flaws of inter-country adoption, right from the initial stages to the effective monitoring of the adopted children living abroad, and address the problems and hassles encountered during the inter-country adoptions process. It is also expected that the Conference will be able to come-up with an easier and better system/mechanism of adoption procedures making the adoption system more friendly.

More importantly, the Conference is expected to build a common consensus on the need of Nepal ratifying different International Conventions on Child Rights and child protection (with special reference to adoption) and strictly implementing the provisions made in these Conventions.

It is hoped that the conference, through the sharing of and discussion on experiences and Best Practices of different countries would help us in designing and developing an effective legislation on adoption policy in the context of international adoption. The Conference is also expected to further strengthen the Hague Convention.

Lastly, the Conference is expected to help in eliminating the existing rumors and negative attitudes regarding adoption of children by foreigners and will highlight on the need of assessing and evaluating the existing monitoring system, giving new hopes to the adopted children and their adoptive parents. Beside all things, the main focus of the conference will be on the **appointment of the adopted Nepalese children as the Goodwill Ambassadors** to the respective countries to where their new parents belong to, and will be assigned the duty of playing the key roles in establishing a strong bond between the two countries and as well.