



Office of Children's Issues Bilateral Engagement Adoptions Division Update on Division's Activities February 2024

The first quarter of fiscal year 2024 was a productive time for the office of Children's Issues (CI). The office led a great many meetings and engagements, with foreign governments and stakeholders overseas and within the United States, all with the goal of making sure intercountry adoption remains a safe and transparent way to provide permanency to children in need of a home around the globe.

The following list is a sample of the many activities the office undertook in the last quarter and gives a snapshot of our efforts:

November was **National Adoption Month**, and CI worked with embassies and consulates around the world and with our partners in the United States to conduct outreach activities on intercountry adoption. We encouraged consular officers overseas to reach out directly to local adoption authorities, judges, and advocacy groups to highlight that adoptions are a priority for the U.S. Department of State. CI also led a social media campaign, with messages published on [Instagram](#), [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), and [Facebook](#), both domestically and overseas, to educate about the adoption process. Finally, within the U.S. government, CI arranged a panel discussion between Department and partner agency officials and academic experts in the field of adoption.

In December, CI hosted **the Hague Permanent Bureau's Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)** for discussions on the state of adoption and adoption regulations in the region. Coordinating messaging and engagement with

international bodies like ROLAC lets both CI and the international organization amplify areas of agreement on policies of permanency that help more children reach stable, loving homes.

Children's Issues sent representatives to present at the **Global Consultation Conference in Manila, Philippines** from October 9 to 13. The Bilateral Engagement Division Chief provided his perspectives and priorities for intercountry adoption on a panel of foreign receiving countries for children from the Philippines. This was an important opportunity to also learn about regulatory and legal changes to the intercountry adoption process under the newly organized Philippine National Authority for Child Care.



Domestically, CI held a call with adoption service providers and prospective parents on the state of adoptions in the People's Republic of China (PRC). This underscored our efforts to persuade the PRC government to allow the completion of adoptions that were in process when they suspended adoptions.

Finally, CI held numerous meetings and calls with adoption authorities and multilateral groups around the globe. These calls helped to maintain relationships, identify and address roadblocks in the adoptions process, advocate

for strong safeguards to protect children in need of permanency, and promote open and transparent adoptions. These engagements included:

Colombia: CI began talks with the central authorities of both Colombia and Mexico to establish working-level exchanges of information and best practices between the two countries with an eye towards creating permanent relationships between them and finding ways to improve adoption processing.

El Salvador: In November, CI and U.S. Embassy San Salvador provided adoption service providers (ASPs) with an invitation to an event hosted by El Salvador's Oficina para Adopciones (OPA) to discuss new procedures for the authorization of ASPs and Convention case processing. This event followed close engagements between CI and OPA, and the efficient processing of the first new Convention cases since 2017. Twenty-three ASPs attended the event which included a robust Q-and-A session.

Guyana: In January, CI met with authorities from Guyana's Ministry of Human Services and Social Security (MHSSS) to discuss updates on Guyana's progress implementing the Hague Adoption Convention. CI will continue to engage closely with MHSSS on legislative and procedural issues to build their capacity to process adoption cases under the Convention.

India: CI and other receiving countries conducted a productive virtual meeting with representatives of the Indian Central Adoption Resource Authority to discuss legal and regulatory updates on intercountry adoption.

Jamaica: In September, CI and USCIS conducted a productive virtual meeting with representatives of the Jamaican Child Protection and Family Services Agency to discuss updates on Jamaica's progress implementing the Convention, and answer questions concerning non-Convention case processing. CI plans to travel to Kingston this year to

provide the Government of Jamaica with support and resources for Convention accession.

Meetings with ICAN in Bern, Switzerland: Bilateral Adoptions and Adoptions Oversight Divisions Chiefs met with European countries' Central Authorities to discuss new intercountry adoption developments, legislative reforms, upcoming field missions, and other matters of mutual interest.

Mexico: In November, CI and U.S. Embassy Mexico City spoke with a group of ASPs about recent changes that are streamlining the adoption processes. Due to CI and Mission Mexico's engagement, the Mexican government will begin accepting digital versions of some documents, and they will centralize adoptee passport appointments in two offices. CI and Mission Mexico also shared best practices for scheduling adoption-related visa and passport appointments with offices in the Mexican government.