

NOTICE  
Department of State  
August 2, 2007

### **U.S. Embassy Uses DNA Testing to Protect Children Adopted in Guatemala**

Effective August 6, 2007, the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala will require a second DNA test, to verify that the adopted child for whom an immigrant visa is being requested is the same child matched at the beginning of the adoption process with the birth parent. The Embassy is taking this step in response to concerns about the unregulated adoption process in that country. The Embassy already requires one DNA match between a relinquishing parent and prospective adoptive child as part of the immigrant visa process for Guatemalan children adopted by American citizens. This new procedure will apply to adoption cases finalized by Guatemalan authorities and submitted to the Embassy on or after August 6<sup>th</sup>.

The United States supports the highest standards of practice in international adoption. Due to concerns about the Guatemalan adoption process, the U.S. government must apply an extraordinary level of scrutiny to adoption cases there. This second DNA test will confirm that the child applying for the visa is the same child originally matched with the birth mother who voluntarily consented to the adoption. The first DNA matching test typically occurs a number of months before the adoption process is completed and the visa is issued.

We support the efforts of the Government of Guatemala to reform its adoption process to meet its obligations as a member of the Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention. The Hague Permanent Bureau's international advisory group of experts, including U.S. representatives, are providing technical assistance to the Government of Guatemala as it works toward implementation of a Hague Convention-compliant adoption process.

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