

# Govt lifts ban on foreign adoption of Rwandan kids

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Children at Muhura orphanage in Gatsibo District. Foreign nationals can resume adoption of Rwandan children. (File)

Foreigners or persons outside Rwanda can now adopt children in the country, seven years after the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion suspended the so-called inter-country adoption of Rwandan children.

The suspension was lifted this month after government put in place mechanisms in line with The Hague Adoption Convention on the protection of children.

Rwanda ratified inter-country adoption mechanism in 2011, according to the Minister for Gender and Family Promotion, Esperance Nyiransafari.

The convention outlines advantages of a permanent home to a child when a suitable family has not been found in the child's country of origin.

“In 2010, the ministry suspended temporarily receiving new applications for adoption of children in the country by foreigners outside the country pending clear structures and mechanisms required under The Hague Convention. Considering that Rwanda's institutional and legal frameworks have been updated in conformity with the standards of inter-country adoption, the doors are reopened to inter-country adoption,” Nyirasafari told *The New Times*.

According to the ministry, among the procedures they were required to fulfill include the establishment of the National Children Commission, commitment through different laws, including the law relating to the rights and the protection of the child, law governing persons and family, and the ministerial order determining conditions for inter-country adoption.

Minister Nyirasafari said a child can be adopted abroad only after failing to find any Rwandan willing to take up that child through the existing Tumurere Mu Muryango programme.

“Opening doors to international adopters doesn't mean that we are done with the local adoption programme of Tumurere Mu Muryango. We still support the fact that children can be taken good care of locally by fellow Rwandans. The Government is thankful for Rwandan families that have adopted children,” she said.

Ministry figures indicate that from 2012-2016, out of 3,223 children who lived in orphanages, 2,909 were adopted through the Tumurere Mu Muryango programme.

Nyirasafari said the system and procedures are well structured to check fraudsters.

“The inter-country adoption process was designed to prevent abduction, sale, or trafficking in children, and it works to ensure that inter-country adoptions are in the best interests of children. In this interest, close collaboration with our embassies and children councils of the country where the child is adopted is optimal,” she said.

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