

Hague Convention awareness raising training conducted

BY MESKEREM LEMMA

ADDIS ABABA – A training aimed at raising the awareness of various stakeholders of the 1993 Hague Convention and facilitating ways for its adoption in line with the laws and regulations of the country was held at the Hilton Hotel here yesterday.

Opening the training, Women's Affairs Ministry Child Right Promotion and Protection Directorate Director Yayesh Tesfahuney said that the incumbent government has been taking various measures to protect the rights and safeguard the welfare of children. "The training would be instrumental in acquainting major stakeholders with activities being carried out to ensure the adoption of the convention in the best interest of children," she added.

Accordingly, Ethiopia fully cooperates with other countries in the prevention of child abduction, and trafficking and works with contracting states of the convention, she said.

"In this regard, review and analysis of the domestic child laws vis-a-vis international conventions, guidelines, covenants and procedures has also been undertaken last year," Yayesh added.

She further indicated that in addition to the already existing child laws, the Ministry is striving to formulate comprehensive child policy and plans to form an adhoc committee comprising of various stakeholders entrusted with the task of synchronizing the convention with the country's laws and regulations.

Douglas Webb, Chief of Section Adolescent Development, Protection and HIV/AIDS with UNICEF Ethiopia, said on his part that the training is designed to be participatory and is hoped that all parties present will deliberate on pertinent issues related to intercountry adoption and the 1993 Hague Convention.

"I hope that today is the first of many opportunities for committed professionals and representatives of key ministries like yourselves, to come together to discuss, reflect and analyze the current situation

regarding children outside of parental care, and in particular, the current situation of intercountry adoption."

According to UNICEF 2009 study, 4,200 Ethiopian children are placed with foreign adoptive families out of whom 2,500 are placed in the USA. Some 6,500 children are currently in institutional care this doesn't include those in transition homes.

The convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption or (the 1993 Hague Convention) to date signed by 81 countries, is one of the international child right instruments that works towards establishing minimum standards and safeguards to ensure intercountry adoptions take place in the children's best interest and respect their fundamental rights.

Jointly organized by the Ministry and UNICEF, the day-long training was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and other collaborating institutions.



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