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EDITORIAL

Intercountry adoption in 2010: a contrasted picture

At the beginning of this year, the ISS/IRC both enthusiastically and critically looks at the world of intercountry adoption in 2010 as well as how it has contributed to change.

2010 started terribly with the tragedy of the earthquake in Haiti is still having an impact one year later. Even now its indirect consequences concerning intercountry adoptions are felt and the issue of whether or not to resume procedures in this country is far from being solved (see page 5). This catastrophe has yet again shown that emotional, opportunistic or political responses still too easily, take priority over unanimously accepted standards relating to the protection of children in the context of disaster. The ISS/IRC report on 'expedited proceedings' (now available in French) has clearly demonstrated that the absence of coordination among receiving States can only lead to a worsening of the protection of children's rights. Considering the current situation in Haiti, there is an urgent need for actors to commit to finding a common approach in relation to this country.

Significant progress

As evidenced by the considerable space granted to Guatemala in this issue (see pages 3 and 6), significant progress has been achieved in this country in child protection matters. Even though obstacles remain that must be overcome, the united efforts of the Guatemalan Government, the Hague Conference, UNICEF and other involved organisations, such as the ISS/IRC, have

already made the way for considerable advances.

This comment is also relevant to Vietnam, where, following our assessment mission in 2009, and thanks to the excellent cooperation of the Vietnamese Central Authority and UNICEF, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam approved a new law on adoption in 2010, as well as an implementation decree. The contents of these laws were the subject of constructive exchanges of views among the Vietnamese legislators, ISS/IRC and UNICEF. Moreover Vietnam signed the THC-93 on 10 December of last year and is awaiting its ratification.

The ISS/IRC's services were also requested in the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Mali throughout 2010. We are pleased to note that our services have been appreciated and often followed by positive changes.

Finally, please allow us to highlight that the implementation of the Guidelines on Alternative Care of Children is also advancing, as seen by ISS/IRC's first mission focusing on this issue, which took place in Syria at the end of 2010.

What comes next?

Most certainly, there will not be a lack of work in 2011. As reported in last December's Monthly Review, this year the ISS/IRC will address the issue of the adoptability of children described as disabled: a difficult

subject, which will undoubtedly require significant efforts. Other projects are already ongoing (a Guidebook for adoption applicants, the update of the Ethical Guidelines on Adoption, new assessment missions, the publication of a study on the grey zones of intercountry adoption, etc).

Of course other significant needs have been identified (e.g. the situation of intercountry adoption in Cambodia and Ethiopia), and this will require the mobilisation of additional resources.

The ISS/IRC therefore hopes to contribute for a long time to the protection of the rights

of children deprived of a family, and like every year, would like to thank the Central Authorities and international organisations, which, thanks to their support, enable it to undertake its mission. Thanks also to those, who regularly express us their support and interest in reading this Review.

The ISS/IRC team
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