

DEPARTMENT FOR Children, Schools and Families

Adoptions from Cambodia

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (Kevin Brennan): I am today announcing the outcome of a review of the suspension of adoptions of Cambodian children by UK residents.

In June 2004, the then Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families, the Member for Barking (Margaret Hodge), announced the suspension of adoptions in response to concerns raised and investigated by officials from the DfES (now DCSF) who visited Cambodia, by the British Embassy in Cambodia and, separately, by other stakeholders about the intercountry adoption process in Cambodia.

A review of the suspension was announced last year and was carried out by my Department. The purpose of the review was to update the information on which the suspension was based, to find out what concerns, if any, remain valid and whether there are any other concerns about practices taking place.

The review work assessed the current situation in Cambodia regarding intercountry adoption, including what changes, if any, to practice and legislation have been made in the three years since the temporary suspension was introduced. The review also took account of Cambodia's accession to the Hague Convention (on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption 1993).

On 12 December, the UK lodged an objection to Cambodia's accession to the Hague Convention, in accordance with article 44 of the convention. Cambodia's accession to the convention therefore has no effect as regards relations between the UK and Cambodia. Evidence from the review demonstrates that: adoption legislation, practice and procedure in Cambodia remain insufficient to ensure the proper protection of children and their families; lifting the suspension at the current time would expose Cambodian children and their families to an increased risk of improper practices that are contrary to the principles of the Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption (the Hague Convention) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The suspension of adoptions of Cambodian children by UK residents therefore still remains in place. I will of course consider the effect of any changes to adoption legislation and practice in Cambodia in keeping the suspension under review.

I am also announcing today the outline timetable for the implementation of the statutory provisions relating to the restrictions of adoptions from abroad in the Children and Adoption Act 2006. I intend to implement sections 9 and 10 and, in so far as they are not already in force, sections 11 and 12 of the 2006 Act in summer 2008.