

(DRAFT REPORT)

**NEW FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN: A REPORT ON THE  
TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN AND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS IN  
GUATEMALA**

(TRANSLATED FROM THE DRAFT SPANISH ORIGINAL - IN SUMMARY FORM)

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1994

Press reports about the trafficking of children, illegal organ transplants and international adoptions for commercial gain have become almost constant. Guatemalan children have been affected by this phenomenon, and also by the rumors concerning them. This is an aggression against children in developing countries and is a cruel and inhuman exploitation of poverty that puts it in the category of slavery. Trafficking in children is a crime with organized criminal participation on an international scale. Sometimes legal means are used for criminal ends.

International adoptions in Guatemala have created a system that functions under a legal umbrella, but which generates profits for a small group of professionals, many of whom are related to those in political power or those who are in high positions in the government. It promotes the buying and selling of children and hides illegal activities such as kidnapping. Some people would argue that sending children from underdeveloped countries to live with a family with more economic resources is in the best interest of the child. This interpretation is far from correct, as it is founded in a system in which children are treated as objects of commerce and not as the subjects of the law. Each year there are between 1000 and 1500 international adoptions finalized. At a cost of \$15,000.00 per adoption, a minimum of \$15,000,000.00 in revenue is generated for the country each year from the buying and selling of children.

Countries such as the United States, Canada, France and Italy which are the principal destinations of these children are mainly concerned with whether or not their own national requirements have been met in order to issue visas. The countries know that there are serious doubts concerning the origin of the children, that excessive profits being made by the professionals involved, and that the children are being treated like merchandise that is bought and sold. Also the means of control of the adoptions are easily circumvented and there are no guarantees for the children involved. It is time to strengthen cooperation between countries and to adhere to the principles contained in the agreement on the rights of the child.

Guatemala maintains hands off policy in the area of adoptions, which are approved on the basis of the documentation presented without any real investigation of the origin of the

child. This reduced the child to an article to be bought and sold, and which violates their basic rights contained in the Convention.

These rights are as follows: a. Countries should take all legal measures necessary to prevent the kidnapping or buying or trading of children for whatever ends and by whatever means; b. countries should protect children against exploitation; c. countries should fight against the illegal trafficking in children; d. that in the case of adoption in another country, the placement of the child should not be for the financial gain of those involved in the process.

The first part of this report will examine different sources concerning these issues, and will then focus on a description and analysis of twenty individual cases.

## **PART ONE**

### **Trafficking in Children**

According to the director of the National Police, there is trafficking in children, but the magnitude of the problem is not known. According to an investigation conducted in 1993, there were 208 cases of children who disappeared. From the first of January to the 20th of July of this year, there were 330 cases of children who had disappeared, of which 239 had been resolved, and 89 are under investigation. For the Sub-director of the Guardia de la Hacienda, there exists evidence that the trafficking in children is linked to forced prostitution, pornography, and drug trafficking. Under-age girls from El Salvador are transported to houses of prostitution through deceit. According to the same source, children are also used as couriers of drugs from Guatemala to El Salvador. Other sources claim that children are taken from their parents, provided with false passports and birth certificates, and then are transported to El Salvador and Honduras where adoptions are arranged. The children then leave for other countries.

### **International Adoption with commercial aims**

Central America has become an area of special interest for international adoptions. The process has become extremely lucrative. For those involved in this business, it is important not only to obtain the children, but also the documents that the adoptive parents will need. The cost of these adoptions varies according to the difficulties involved in the case. Some of the lawyers involved are also high ranking government employees. Some adoption proceedings are completely legal without any criminal context. In these cases the child is surrendered freely by the mother or both parents, or the child has been declared abandoned. However, according to the information obtained, the legal adoption is the exception rather than the rule. Since huge profits are often made, the child has become an object of commerce rather than the focus of the law. It would seem that in the majority of cases, international adoption is the result of a variety of criminal offenses including the buying and selling of children, the faking of births, the kidnapping of children, and the existence of private homes and nurseries where babies are housed awaiting adoption. In the case of buying and selling of children, generally the biological

mother registers the birth of her child and then gives him/her up for adoption. There is a phenomenon that parallels this-- the rental of a surrogate mother and the subsequent abandonment of the child, all previously agreed upon and paid for. In general, the preference is given to children who have not yet had their births registered, or have not yet been born. If the child has been registered there follows an attempt to convince the mother to give up the child in adoption to a foreign family. There are people who dedicate their time to seeking out mothers who, because of poverty or prostitution, might be willing to give up their children or to sell them. This type of activity is not considered a crime according to the law, but it is an illicit act that begins the process of the buying and selling of a child.

A high percentage of the children who are given up for international adoption are the children of prostitutes. They are not only offered money for the child, but are given financial support during the pregnancy and after the birth. Often the child is given a record of live birth and is registered by a false mother.

A smaller percentage of the children come from families living in extreme poverty, and who give up their child for economic reasons. Another group is made up of people living outside the capital city who go there to give birth to their child and then give him/her up for adoption or for sale before returning to their homes. The women often end up in homes where they are given lodging, food, and all necessities before, during and after childbirth. Other mothers are contracted to have a child, register it, take care of it for three months and then give it up for adoption. During these three months they receive medical care, food, and money. After the adoption papers have been signed, the child is given up to a nursery. People who search out these women do so in places like markets, doctor's offices, and even in the hospitals. There are also women who are hired to abandon their children in or near the hospitals. The mothers are paid in advance to leave the child, and often enter the hospital under assumed names. The children are then sent to the Institute for the Orientation for Adoption and Foster Home "La Esperanza", San Gerónimo Emiliani Home and Casa Guatemala. In cases in which the abandonment of the baby has been previously arranged, the interested parties take the mother to the hospital and then attend all the hearings to verify the location of the child.

When the biological mother is not convinced to give up her child, the international adoption network will resort to threats or even baby-stealing. The stolen child will then be registered under false names as the child of a false mother.

The directors of Immigration do not have statistics about children who leave the country by land routes, but the majority who leave by air, do so legally. They feel that the price the adoptive parents pay is for the proper documents that are in order according to Guatemalan law. When the children are stolen, they are provided with a birth certificate and false passport and taken to Honduras and El Salvador to be met by intermediaries.

The international adoption network has created a series of nurseries, foster homes, temporary homes and foster families. The number of children sent to state homes has declined considerably. The reason for the increase in the number of private homes is the

attraction of the profits to be made, and the necessity of concentrating in one place the children awaiting approval of the adoption petitions. Some of these homes are approved by the Ministry of the Interior and function as orphanages or non-profit associations while others are clandestine. In reality they exist to facilitate the work of the international adoption network. They exist in violation of the law since they are businesses that are not registered with the Ministry of Health nor the Ministry of Finance. The clandestine homes are often denounced to the authorities. There is no registry nor control over these institutions by governmental authorities.

Some of the institutions which have adoption programs are: San Gerónimo Emiliani Home, Casa Guatemala, Home for children "Vida Nueva", Institute of Orientation for Adoption and Foster Home "La Esperanza", Guatemalan Association to Assist Children in Need (AGAND), Mi Hogar III, APIF, Hogar Campestre Adventista Los Pinos, Hogar Elisa Martinez (run by the state), Hogar "Amigos de Todos los Niños", Hogar Casa Cuna (Quetzaltenango). These are the homes most used by the judicial system.

These adoption programs are in no way controlled by the Secretary of Social Welfare. Almost 99% of these programs are for international adoptions. When a Guatemalan couple asks to adopt a child, the private homes will automatically reject them. Therefore all the human merchandise stored in these homes are reserved exclusively for international adoptions. National adoptions represent no financial gain. In other words, international adoptions have placed a price on the children given up for adoption.

There is no law regulating these homes. In principal it should be the government that creates and administers the homes. If however there is a need for private homes as a result of the lack of action on the part of the government, then the state should at least regulate the objectives, requirements and characteristics of the homes. It should ensure that they are non-profit institutions.

The persons involved with clandestine homes are seldom tried due to a lack of appropriate legislation, and the fact that their actions are not classified as criminal. Many of these people are related to upper level government employees or are the wives of military officers or deputies. Neither the judicial nor political systems have managed to dismantle these businesses or to condemn the guilty parties. The Ministries of Health, Finances, Interior, the Procuraduría General de la Nación, the juvenile court system and the Human Rights Ombudsman must intervene energetically to find solutions and take concrete actions that will end the impunity with which these centers operate.

During the first quarter of this year, the National Police dismantled 11 clandestine homes, recovering 31 children, and arresting 15 persons including two lawyers. According to the statistics of the Mutual Support Group (GAM), in February of this year a total of 47 children were found in clandestine homes.

The Secretary of Social Welfare has criticized the judicial system for using subjective criteria in determining whether to place a child in a state or private home. In general, judges send those children who do not have families, are under the age of two years, and

are in good health to the private homes-- in other words those children suitable for international adoption. The judges are also criticized for the speed with which they declare a child to be abandoned.

The system of identification of persons in the actual Civil Registry lends itself to every type of falsification. Documents are invented. There exist cases in which intermediaries look for a poor couple who do not have the means to lodge a complaint. They visit this couple with a power of attorney so that a passport can be obtained in the name of their child. They ask for the parents to sign the document in return for money, and the power of attorney is then authenticated by a notary. This document and the birth certificate of the couple's child is then taken to different child. When workers at the Civil Registry detect falsifications they might be threatened if they expose them. Since the Civil Registry performs its functions as a social service without any profit, in reality it serves the ends of the international adoption network that does have money making objectives and many times is involved in illegal activities.

Illegal activities many times take place in the hospitals. At the moment of birth doctors may falsify the birth records, the social workers may facilitate the declaration of abandonment, the doctors may give false information to the biological mother that the newborn is in serious condition. For lack of funds, poor mothers often are not able to return to the hospital daily to visit their newborns who are then declared abandoned or even disappear.

There are secret health centers where abortions and deliveries are performed. These mothers then sell or give away their babies without registering their births.

Notaries play an important role in international adoptions, and these services are a source of income. Many of their activities are illegal and commercial such as being the owners of clandestine homes, contracting agents to obtain children, contacting adoption agencies abroad and contracting attorneys.

Adoptions may cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$30,000 including payments to intermediaries, collectors and homes. Other sources note that the cost may be as high as \$45,000. The price depends on the difficulties that each case may present. Thus a notary has become a businessman who is the owner of a business that arranges international adoptions and buys and sells children. He abuses the public confidence in his profession, and changes the child into an object of commerce. According to the Professional Ethical Code of Lawyers and Notaries, the essential aim of the profession is to serve justice and collaborate in its administration. This norm is not being met by notaries in the case of international adoptions.

Guatemalan lawyers and notaries send letters to adoption agencies abroad offering their services and explaining the cost of an international adoption. The cost includes expenses such as food and care for the children while the adoption is in process, clothing and other expenses of the company actually in charge of obtaining the adoption decree, i.e. the lawyers and notaries themselves. In the United States and other developed countries,

there are private and religious organizations that work on international adoptions and who maintain a commercial relationship with the Guatemalan lawyers and notaries.

During this year there were approximately 280 adoptions in the department of Guatemala arranged by about 20 notaries. The monopoly is in the hands of a small group of notaries.

Since the voluntary regulation of adoptions, judicial and national adoptions are disappearing. Almost all are done by notaries and are international which are initiated in 99% of the cases by families and only 1% by institutions. Notaries have created a system of international adoptions that is a source of millions of dollars in income compared to a national adoption which brings in only about Q2,000. In this way international adoptions have put a price on the children given up for adoption. International adoption represents a business for many people that operate on the basis of a foreign market. The children become merchandise without rights. This is a business surrounded by illegal, irregular and criminal acts.

During the first semester of 1994 approximately 30 national and 280 international adoptions were approved, all obtained through notaries. In 1992, 800 adoptions were obtained and this number remained constant in 1993. To these figures must be added those adoptions obtained outside the capital city. The Immigration department issues about 100 passports a month to children given up for international adoption. The Embassy of the United States annually approves 400 to 500 adoptions, and the Embassy of Canada approves about 100. The Embassy of Italy approves 70 - 100 adoptions, and France approves another 70 - 100. Counting the cost of each of these adoptions at a minimum of \$15,000, it is easy to see the amount of income generated through the buying and selling of children.

The Procuraduría General de la Nación is in charge of overseeing and evaluating adoptions obtained through both the legal system and through notaries. However, they do not investigate the origin of the children involved, but simply verify the validity of documents submitted and determine if all legal prerequisites have been met. At times it seems that their work is merely to give the appearance of legality to the process and expedite the work of the international adoption network. For example a new rule regulating the functioning of the private homes and nurseries has been approved. Whether the Procuraduría has the legal mandate to do this is debatable, but it does give the homes the appearance of legality, even in the eyes of the U.S. Embassy.

For the Ministerio de Gobernación, the priority is working with adolescents to combat prostitution, drug trafficking and dependency, and gangs. International adoption is for them the responsibility of the judicial and social welfare systems. However, the impunity with which certain lawyer deal with adoptions is of importance since they also are high government officials. This Ministry should have as one of its priorities this problem. Immigration also needs to verify the legality of the adoption before a passport is issued to the child. However, they can only analyze the documents presented to them and cannot verify the origin of the child leaving the country. They do often receive information about

persons looking for pregnant mothers in the markets who offer them money for the unborn child.

The National Police consider that it is involved with three aspects of adoption: the buying and selling, the robbing, and the giving away of children. The buying and selling of children is the most common, and there are gangs dedicated to this activity. The heads of these gangs appear to have economic and political influence.

There seems to be no communication or cooperation between the Supreme Court and lower courts, which are the sites of cases of corruption concerning the private homes.

The Agreement on the Rights of the Child leads to children being fully protected by the law. The content of national laws concerning children is generally obsolete and incompatible in spirit and content with the agreement.

The office of the Human Rights Ombudsman has received about 30 claims of children who have disappeared. Some cases were found to be those of older children who had voluntarily left home. Seven cases were of children who were stolen possibly for international adoption with financial ends. These cases have not been cleared up and are still pending in the court system. The Ombudsman views these kinds of cases on an individual level and does not give an opinion on the causes of the problem.

The Ombudsman has only given recommendations in two cases. The first involved a social worker and the wife of an army officer. The social worker was sited for undue influence on a mother to give up a child for international adoption. He sent this to the judicial system to see if there had been any illegal activities. The second case concerned a clandestine home, but the office actions were suspended as it was considered a case between individuals. There was no attempt made to investigate the problem in depth.

In 1991 the Ombudsman created a commission in favor of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, however, it has never made an analysis of the problem of trafficking of children and international adoption.

Non-governmental organizations and society in general agree that the prime motive in international adoptions is money, causing persons involved to commit criminal acts. Children have become goods to be bought and sold on the international market. Because of their actions in support of children's rights, non-governmental organizations and persons who work with them have been subject to acts of violence.

According to information received from the newspaper Siglo XXI, a team of their reporters had prepared a five part series dealing with international adoption and some legal considerations. They received anonymous phone calls asking that these articles not be published. Various lawyers have visited the newspaper to express their opinions that the homes and nurseries are operating legally. The press does periodically publish accounts of raids on the homes, kidnappings and the buying and selling of children.

There is an Interamerican Agreement concerning the adoption laws, but Guatemala has not yet signed it since there seems to be some conflict with national laws. Nor is Guatemala part of the Interamerican Agreement on the restitution of children or of the agreement concerning the trafficking of children. Action is pending in all these areas. In the last agreement the state agrees to cooperate in ending and preventing the trade in children and promoting the return of children who have been victimized, and the punishing of those who are involved in such activities. The state also accepts the annulment of the adoption if it was the result of such trafficking. Guatemala is not part of the International Agreement of The Hague concerning the international kidnapping of minors.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared that international adoption should be considered only when he/she cannot be adequately care for in country and there is not a suitable foster home or adoptive family there. Also there should never be financial gain for those involved in the adoption, and it prohibits the kidnapping or illicit removal of children from their home country. In the Rights of the Child Agreement international adoption is considered a last resort, with preference given to the child remaining with its own family and culture. Never is there to be an economic gain as part of the process.

## **PART TWO**

This part consists of a study of some of the more important cases of international adoption. All have one common characteristic--lack of legal recourse to penalize the persons involved in illicit acts. Investigation of these cases is limited since people have been threatened for exposing the clandestine homes. Parents who have had their children stolen are afraid to speak out because of threats or because they hope to still see the children again. This is an alarming reality that almost daily, children are snatched from their parents' arms or taken from their homes through trickery, and yet the cases are not reported.

I. The sister-in-law of the then Army Chief of Staff was arrested for operating an unauthorized site housing 34 children who supposedly were to be adopted internationally. She was never prosecuted.

II. An attempt was made to buy and sell children and to pressure parents to sell children in 1988. The woman involved attempted to pass on money to a mother who had recently given birth in return for the newborn baby. When the mother refused, she tried to forcible take the child.

III. This case involved a biological mother who gave up her baby for adoption by a couple in the United State against the wishes of the rest of the family. The adoptive parents paid \$10,000 for the child. This child had a true home in country, and the adoption process was realized through two notaries who had never seen the child. Also the child had never really been in the custody of the mother who gave him up. This case was handled very quickly and the grandparents had never been consulted. The child received a passport without appearing at Immigration and was therefore a false



document. The head of the adoption agency in the United States went to Guatemala to tell the extended family that they would never know the whereabouts of the child unless they signed a document giving up all rights to the child and stopping their suit to nullify the adoption. It seems completely inhumane to take this child from a caring home and place him in a totally strange environment.

IV. The case of the stealing of an 8-month-old baby who was taken from the arms of an older sister in a market in Zone 19 occurred in 1992. Three men and three women offered clothes for the baby and food to the older siblings. In the end they forcibly took the baby and fled in a car. Nothing more has been learned concerning the whereabouts of this child.

V. A clandestine home for children was discovered in the center of the city and three persons were arrested and three babies were rescued. It was discovered that a social worker, married to an Army officer offered Q20,000 per child to mothers who left their children in a government run day care center. They also tried to influence pregnant mothers who used the center. If the mother refused to give up the child, the social worker threatened their other children who were in the day care center.

VI. A clandestine home was discovered in Fraijanes in 1994 and a lawyer involved was arrested when he was transporting two babies in his car. The families of the children were threatened to not try to recover the babies since they were going to be adopted by families in the United States.

VII. The reporters from Siglo XXI and their sources were threatened when they were going to publish a series of articles about international adoptions. When the publications of the articles was postponed, the threats stopped.

VIII. In 1994 there was a confrontation between the population of Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa and security forces when an U.S. citizen was accused with kidnapping of children and stealing human organs. The population took measures in their own hands since there had been cases of the buying and selling and robbing of children in their own small town.

IX. There were disturbances in Santa Catarina Pinula when three suspects were accused with kidnapping children. This is a grave problem that has not been dealt with by the security forces, and there is a lack of confidence in the authorities.

X. There were disturbances in San Cristobal Verapaz when residents tried to lynch a North American journalist who they accused of trying to steal a child. This shows the alarm in the general population about the kidnapping of children and the possible traffic in illegal human organs.

XI. A two-year-old girl was almost stolen in 1994, but through the intervention of friends and neighbors, the child was saved and one of the accused was detained.

XII. A home in Mixco was discovered in 1994 where three children were staying who had supposedly been sold by their mothers in Santa Lucia. The children were in the process of being adopted abroad in return for certain sums of money.

XIII. A minor who worked in a home of a family gave birth to a child that the family wished to register as their own and keep.

XIV. A newborn disappeared from San Juan Hospital and supposedly died and was buried shortly later. The mother never knew if the baby who died was really her own.

XV. An attempt to lynch a North American citizen occurred when she was accused with stealing babies. It was later verified that the woman was in the process of legally adopting the child.

XVI. A child was stolen from the arms of his mother who asked for help from the National Police and the agents refused.

XVII. A three-year-old child was stolen from his mother while she was working for a family in Zone 8. Thus far no official action has been taken.

XVIII. In Zone 1 a house with 5 young children was discovered and all the children were said to be awaiting adoption. One child seems to have been stolen from his parents a year earlier. Three of the children were taken by two lawyers to Canada. The father of the child reported that the baby had been stolen, and that he had received calls asking for money for the return of his son.

XIX. A mother entered the hospital under an assumed name to give birth. When she left the hospital she gave her newborn to a Porto Rican man and his Guatemalan wife. The couple registered the child as their own, obtained a passport and began the process of getting a visa. The Embassy required a physical examination of the supposed mother, and the biological mother went in her place to the doctor who reported the illegality. The Embassy reported this to the judge and noted that the lawyer involved had been involved in other problem cases.

XX. A four-year-old child was robbed and false documents were obtained for him. Those persons involved are still awaiting trial.

## **PART THREE**

### **Conclusions**

1. The trafficking in children and international adoptions for economic ends represent cruel and inhuman exploitation of the poor. It is an aggression against children in developing countries and falls in the category of slavery.

2. The trafficking of children in Guatemala is a real problem although the true magnitude and seriousness is not known.
3. In spite of the fact that no concrete evidence of the sale and illegal transplant of organs have been found, this should be investigated at a national and international level.
4. There is no clear political policy that is implemented correctly and no desire to end the buying and selling or stealing of children for international adoptions.
5. The heads of the adoption networks act with impunity since they have close connections with those in political and economic power.
6. Many times lawyers, who are also high government officials, use their own offices and privileges to facilitate adoptions.
7. The majority of international adoptions are business deals in which the child becomes goods to be traded for the monetary gain of others.
8. International adoption networks use the methods of buying and selling children and stealing children for adoption.
9. The networks have also created centers to house children and pregnant women.
10. The homes serve as a support to the adoption network since they take care of children waiting their turn to leave the country once the adoption has been approved. They appear to be non-profit centers of social welfare, but in reality they seriously violate the rights of the children.
11. The state should create and administer these types of homes and supervise them. Judges should only send abandoned children to homes approved by the state and ones that are non-profit.
12. There has been no action by the state to regulate these homes that continue to function with impunity. Neither the police nor the judicial system has been able to dismantle these homes or punish the guilty persons.
13. There are also clandestine medical centers where abortions are performed, and women also give birth and turn over their newborns without registering them. Even in state hospitals there are previously negotiated abandoning of newborns, false information given by doctors to mothers, social workers who facilitate the abandonment.
14. The system of identification of persons by the Civil Registry leads to many irregularities. The ease of inscription and the lack of control are the two characteristics of the system.

15. The business of international adoptions is a monopoly in the hands of a few notaries who earn large sums of money in the process. The notary has become a businessman who is the agent for international adoptions and who often violates his professional ethics.

16. International adoption has become a national tragedy.

17. There is no communication or cooperation between the Supreme Court and the lower courts where corruption can be found.

18. Cooperation between countries should be evaluated and analyzed. Countries to which the children are sent are mainly interested in whether the legal prerequisites for the issuance of a visa have been met. They should use their control to respect the origins of the children.

19. The state should take into account the principles found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **Recommendations**

### **The Executive Branch of the Government**

1. Institutional reform should be undertaken to create a system to protect the rights of children established by international agreements, the Constitution of the Republic, and other national laws so that the security of the child is paramount.
2. The Ministry of Foreign Relations must finalize the process for the ratification of international agreements such as: a. The Interamerican Agreement on Conflicting Laws Governing the Adoption of Minors; b. The Interamerican Agreement on the Restitution of Children; c. The Interamerican Agreement on the Trafficking of Minors; d. The Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Kidnapping of Minors; and e. The Agreement on the Protection and the Child and Cooperation in International Adoption.
3. A Central American policy concerning the problems of international adoption should be formulated.
4. Authorities must investigate crimes related to adoptions.
5. The Procuraduría de la Nación should suspend all adoptions until the Adoption Law has been passed.
6. The Procuraduría should implement Accord 235-94, creating an adoption registry.
7. The Secretary of Welfare should supervise state hospitals to avoid fraudulent activities related to adoptions.

### **The Judicial Branch**

8. There should be a structural in the judicial system to end impunity.

### **Legislative Branch**

9. Changes should be introduced in the manner of registering births and the lack of control of the Civil Registry.

10. Legislation should be passed to protect the rights of children, to allow the annulment of adoptions that were granted through illegal activities, to forbid adoptions that generate profits for individual, and to forbid the buying and selling of children for adoption.

### **The Preeminence of International Law**

11. Guatemala, in article 46 of the Constitution recognizes that in terms of human relations, the treaties and agreements that have been ratified take precedence over local law. Therefore the principal in the Convention on the Rights of the Child should regulate international adoptions and the trafficking of children.

12. The human rights Ombudsman should take a more active role in the defense and protection of children's rights.

### **Society**

13. The state and society should create an institutional mechanism to promote a system to protect the rights of children, with the active participation and leadership of society.

14. The Comisión Pro-Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño should undertake a detailed analysis of the trafficking of children.

### **Bar Association**

15. The Association of Lawyers should make sure of the professional behavior of its members especially in the area of international adoptions.

16. The Association should take a stand against the buying and selling and robbing of children.

### **Cooperation between Countries**

17. Those countries who receive children should apply the principal of the Convention in deciding whether or not to give visas.

18. These countries should urge Guatemala to adopt measures in accordance with the Convention.