

Cambodian Adoptions
Talking Points For Congressional Briefing
Update and Consultations on Adoptions
April 8, 2002

- Under the special humanitarian initiative, 79 parents and 87 children have been cleared for final adoption in Cambodia. Approximately 2/3 of the prospective adoptive parents who had gone through the official Cambodian process have been cleared. The Adoptions Team in Washington, DC has personally contacted each family by telephone and Federal Express, and has faxed a copy of their notification letter to the Members of Congress who have inquired on their behalf.
- Orphanage visits have continued successfully and the Task Force anticipates completing all orphanage visits by the end of April – as projected in the March 1 briefing.
- Nearly all orphanages in Phnom Penh have been visited, and two orphanages in the provinces will be visited this week. Because the Task Force must be accompanied by Cambodian authorities on their visits to orphanages, the Khmer New Year precludes any visits during the week of April 15. This delay was accounted for in the original schedule established by the Task Force. After the Cambodian holiday, orphanage visits to the provinces and southwest of the country will resume.
- The US Embassy in Phnom Penh will remain open during the Khmer New Year to conduct visa appointments for cleared families who had their Receiving Ceremony and medical examination conducted prior to the holiday. Receiving ceremonies will commence again during the week of April 22.
- The Task Force will be submitting to INS and State Department in Washington, DC the specific details of any cases that were reviewed by the Task Force in Cambodia but that could not be readily cleared. The Task Force may determine that some of the concerns about and deficiencies found in the files may be remedied by additional action, documentation, or investigation, while other cases may not be approvable based on the facts of the case. Cambodian officials may also have serious concerns about specific cases. As we have emphasized from the beginning, review by the Task Force does not guarantee that the Government of Cambodia will approve a final adoption or that the US Government can approve an orphan petition or issue the immigrant visa.
- The suspension in Cambodia was imposed for good reason. As we have outlined in previous briefings, there are serious deficiencies in the Cambodian legal framework on adoptions, and very real trafficking concerns. Because of the situation the suspension generated, we created the Task Force and undertook the special humanitarian initiative. Our continued progress depends on continued cooperation with Cambodian authorities, and will of course be informed by the Task Force's current work on those cases that had proceeded through the official Cambodian process.
- We have made a conscientious and concerted effort to gather information from those effected by the suspension, and thank the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute and you for your cooperation in communicating with prospective adoption parents regarding their concerns.
- It is premature for there to be any additional decisions made with respect to those parents whose cases do not meet the current criteria of the special humanitarian initiative. Should additional decisions be made that effects this caseload, it will be properly announced.

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