



**Forum: Commission on the Right of Children**

**Question of: Improving adoption systems in LEDCs**

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## **I. Description of the Issue**

The welfare of children is a crucial concern in the modern age of globalization. Every child is deserving of a safe environment, a caring family, and the chance to fulfill their true potential. However, the adoption systems in many Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), frequently struggle to provide vulnerable, orphaned, or abandoned children the necessary amount of support and prospects. The difficulties that these systems face are connected to various different intersectional factors, resulting from a range of aspects such as socioeconomic circumstances, cultural norms and traditions, legal frameworks, and resource constraints.

The issue revolves around the urgent matter of improving child adoption systems in LEDCs. These countries struggle to provide necessary support and prospects for vulnerable children due to various circumstances as mentioned previously in the text. Additionally, More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) aiming to adopt children from LEDCs could advance from the improvements in LEDC adoption systems. The adoption process can be facilitated for both LEDCs and potential adoptive families from MEDCs by addressing the obstacles to adoption in LEDCs, while guaranteeing the welfare and best interests of the children are upheld on an international level.

Adoption systems in LEDCs face a range of difficulties, including inadequate legal frameworks that fail to address the complexities of adoption, limited institutional capacity due to resource constraints, insufficient training and education for adoption professionals, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and cultural barriers that perpetuate negative perceptions of adoption. These factors contribute to the challenges faced by adoption



systems in providing a safe and nurturing environment for orphaned, abandoned, or vulnerable children.

The weak judiciary systems in LDCs, which repeatedly fail to take into account the complexities of adoption, are one of the main problems. It could be that there are legal holes, unclear policies, or outdated laws that do not sufficiently safeguard children's rights and well-being. Additionally, the effectiveness of adoption systems is hampered by limited institutional capacity and lack of resources. Many LDCs can have difficulties handling the rising number of children in need of adoption due to a lack of qualified adoption specialists, social workers, and support services. Even MDC'S struggle with their internal adoption systems. According to *Home for good*, In 2022, there was a 2% increase in the number of adopted children compared to the year before, with 2,950 children being adopted. The average time between a child entering care and being placed for adoption increased from one year and four months in 2021 to one year and six months in 2022. Following placement, it takes an additional average of nine months for the adoption order to be granted and the adoption to be completed. As of October 2022, there were 1,990 children awaiting adoption, and 52% of them had been waiting for 18 months or longer.

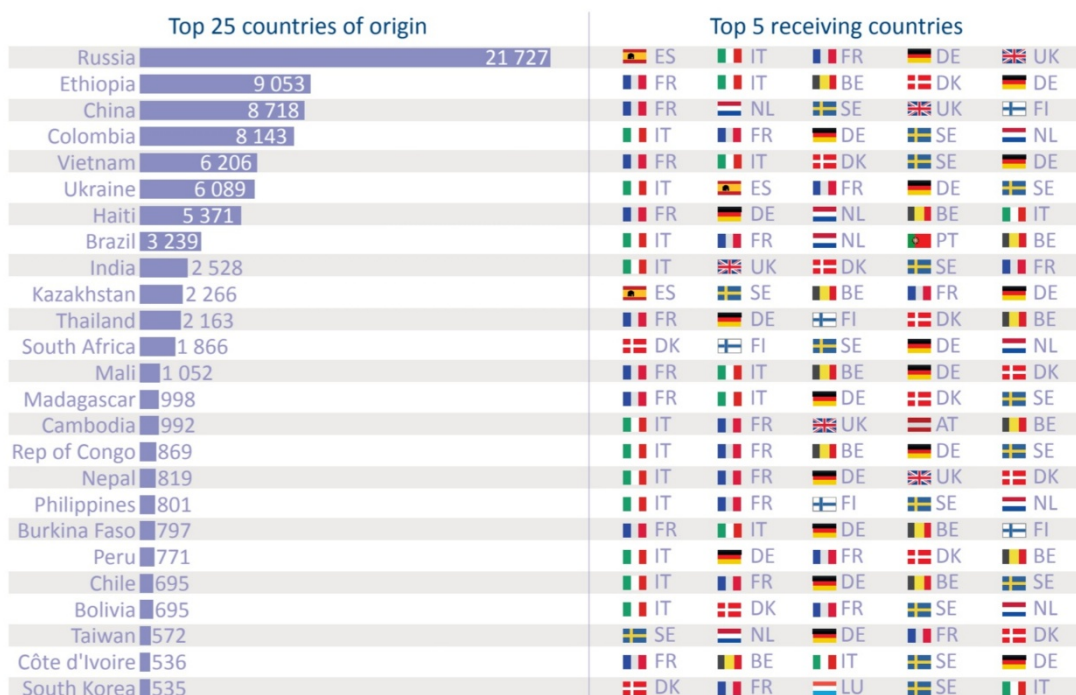
The challenges are made even more daunting by adoption professionals' inadequate education and training. Adoption-related professionals must have a thorough understanding of child development, trauma-informed care, and the moral and legal implications of adoption. The quality of adoption services may suffer in the absence of appropriate instruction and training.

Bureaucratic inefficiencies and lengthy adoption processes also hinder the progress of adoption systems in LDCs. Cumbersome paperwork, excessive red tape, and delays in the decision-making process can prolong the time children spend in institutional care or temporary placements, delaying their transition to permanent, stable families.



In LDCs, cultural norms and traditions significantly impact how people feel about adoption. Adoption’s stigma and prejudices can turn away prospective adoptive families and reinforce the idea that biological family ties are always the better option. It is fundamental to break down these cultural barriers and spread an upbeat perception of adoption as an efficient method of giving kids a loving home.

It is worth noting that LDCs are well-represented in the adoption landscape and therefore play a significant role. As shown in a 2016 briefing from the European Parliament, aight LDC’s were mentioned in a top 25 countries of origin, this emphasizes the importance of addressing the challenges they face in order to improve



the welfare of vulnerable children. (see fig. 1)

Figure 1: Rankings on adoption in Europe, 2016

To address these challenges, efforts should focus on strengthening legal frameworks to ensure the protection and well-being of children, investing in capacity-building for adoption professionals, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and helping awareness campaigns to address cultural barriers and promote a positive perception of adoption. Collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations is



important to effect meaningful change and improve the welfare of vulnerable children in LDCs.

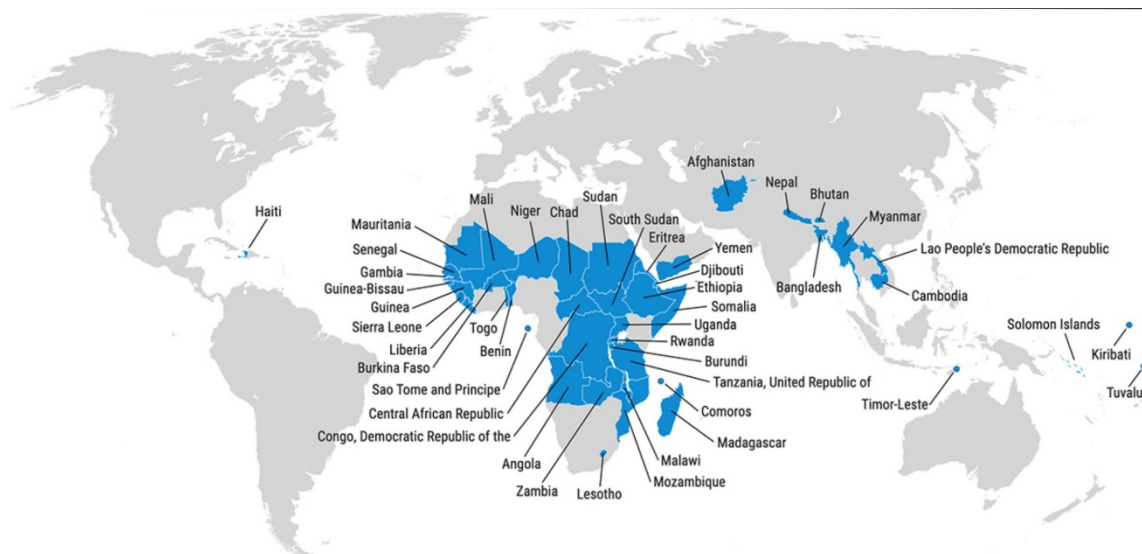
The LDCs themselves are primarily involved in the discussion because they face significant challenges with their adoption systems. The vulnerable children at the center of this dilemma are those who are orphaned, abandoned, or unable to live with their biological families for a variety of reasons. To ensure their wellbeing through providing them stable and nurturing environments, adoption systems must be improved.

Prospective adoptive parents, both from LDCs and MEDCs, play a vital role in the adoption process. However, the challenges faced in LDCs, such as delays, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited resources, impact the ability of prospective adoptive parents to provide safe and loving homes for these children.

Additionally, adoption agencies and social welfare departments in LDCs, are responsible for facilitating the adoption process. However, their ability to ensure efficient and effective placements of children in suitable families is actively impeded.

The issue of improving child adoption systems primarily affects the LDCs worldwide (see fig. 2), where the challenges are particularly pronounced. These countries, including Ethiopia, Haiti, the DRC, Nepal, Bangladesh, and others, are located in various regions such as Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. The socioeconomic circumstances, cultural norms, legal frameworks, and resource constraints within these regions significantly impact the adoption systems.

*Figure 2: Map showing all 46 LDC'S recognized by the UN, October 2022*



## **II. Background Information**

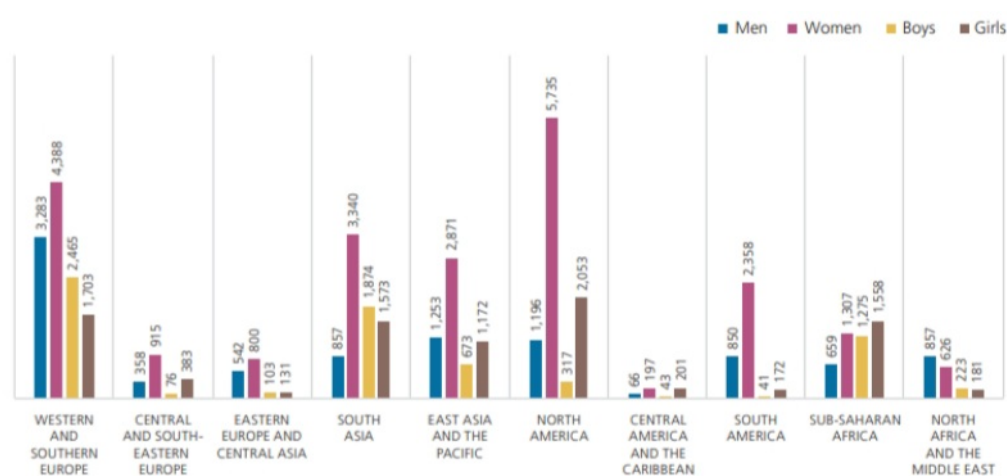
Inefficiencies in adoption systems in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) can be linked to various factors, including inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and outdated legal frameworks. These issues lead to unreliable case management, lengthy waiting periods, and delays, affecting both birth parents and adoptive parents.

The inadequate infrastructure in many LDCs contributes to the inefficiencies in adoption systems. Limited funding, lack of skilled personnel, and insufficient resources dedicated to the processing of adoption cases result in unreliable tracking and processing mechanisms. This leads to delays and challenges for adoptive parents, birth parents, and the overall adoption process.

Furthermore, LDCs often lack a comprehensive and up-to-date legal framework for adoption. Outdated laws and regulations, jurisdictional loopholes, and inconsistencies make it difficult to establish clear guidelines in order to protect the well-being of children involved in the adoption process. The lack of a stable legal framework also creates opportunities for corruption and opacity, leading to fraudulent practices, bribery, child trafficking, and the exploitation of vulnerable individuals.

Depending on regional circumstances, each LDC may face unique challenges related to national laws, international adoption standards, cross-border adoption processes, as well as cultural and social barriers. Language barriers and adoption stigmas can pose additional challenges for both children and parents involved in the adoption process, hindering effective communication and societal acceptance.

The consequences of these inefficiencies in adoption systems impact society at large and especially in the regions where they occur. Children without proper care and protection are at a higher risk of exploitation, abuse, and neglect, perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability. The absence of well-functioning adoption systems limits the number of permanent and stable homes available to orphaned, abandoned, or vulnerable children, resulting in overcrowded orphanages, strained foster care systems, and inadequate support for their physical, emotional, and educational needs. This statistic shows, in how far LEDC-regions are affected by human and especially child trafficking.



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Figure 3 Number of detected victims of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex, by region of detection, 2018

For instance, in Ethiopia, an LDC, the adoption system has faced significant challenges. In the past, there have been cases of fraud and unethical practices, leading to a suspension of international adoptions from Ethiopia. This exemplifies how inadequate adoption systems can create political and social concerns, undermining the integrity of the process and exposing vulnerable children to potential harm. There are clear social, political, and economic issues regarding the insufficient adoption processes in LDCs. The vulnerability and lack of protection for children who need care pose serious social issues. Concerning politics, outdated legislative frameworks and jurisdictional loopholes damage the integrity of the adoption procedure and erode trust regarding the ability of the government to safeguard children who are disadvantaged. Economically, overburdened social assistance institutions and limited



budgets make it difficult to place children in long-term households, impeding their chances of development.

To prioritize children's best interests, assist families, and advance a more inclusive and equitable society in LDCs, a solution to these challenges is essential. These challenges are being dealt with by efforts. For instance, Ethiopia has strengthened its adoption system through reforms that include the creation of the Ethiopian Adoption Authority and changes to the adoption laws and regulations. The improvement of LDCs' adoption systems can be greatly supported by international cooperation, such as teaming up with adoption agencies and organizations.

By improving adoption systems in LDCs, they can provide children with safe and nurturing environments that facilitate their development and long-term success. Enhancing adoption practices can also alleviate the burden on already overburdened social welfare systems and contribute to the overall well-being and development of LDCs. It is essential to continue working towards comprehensive reforms, including infrastructure development, resource allocation, legal framework updates, and cultural awareness, to ensure the protection and well-being of children in need of care.

### **III. Previous Attempts to solve this issue**

In order to enhance the adoption systems in LDCs and safeguard the rights and well-being of children, several measures have been implemented. One example is the strengthening of legal frameworks related to adoption.

For instance, Ethiopia has updated its adoption laws to align with international standards, including *The Hague Adoption Convention*. These regulations aim to prevent unethical practices, ensure transparency, and prioritize the best interests of the child throughout the adoption process. To streamline the adoption process and minimize the risk of corruption or illegal practices, LDCs have established centralized adoption authorities or bodies. Nepal has implemented a *CARA (Central Adoption Resource Authority)* to oversee and regulate the adoption process, including the screening of prospective adoptive parents, matching children with suitable families, and conducting post-placement monitoring. *CARA* helps ensure uniformity in decision-making and maintain ethical practices.



Recognizing the importance of preparing prospective adoptive parents for the challenges and responsibilities of adoption, many LDCs provide pre-adoption training and education. For example, Uganda offers training programs that cover topics such as child development, attachment, and trauma-informed care to prospective adoptive parents. These programs aim to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for parenting adopted children.

Finally, post-placement support and monitoring are vital components of a well-functioning adoption system. In order to facilitate the successful integration of the child into their new environment and ensure their well-being, Haiti has implemented post-adoption services that provide counseling, support, and resources to adoptive families after the placement.

Collaboration and cooperation with international organizations, NGOs, and donor agencies also play a significant role in improving adoption systems in LDCs. For example, *UNICEF* works with countries like Bangladesh to support the development and implementation of child protection policies, including adoption regulations. These partnerships help strengthen adoption systems, promote adherence to international standards, and ensure the protection of children's rights.

Efforts to promote in-country adoption within LDCs are also underway. Cambodia has implemented measures to prioritize domestic adoption by promoting awareness about the benefits of adopting within the country, addressing cultural stigmas associated with adoption, and providing financial assistance or incentives to encourage families to adopt locally.

Improving the overall child welfare system is fundamental to enhancing adoption systems in LDCs. Malawi has invested in social services, healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation programs to improve child welfare and reduce the need for adoption. These comprehensive efforts aim to create a supportive environment for children and families.

#### **IV. Definition of Key Terms**

- Child adoption: The formal process by which a person or couple gains legal custody of a child who is not their biological child, establishing a legally recognized parent-child relationship.
  
- Birth parents: The biological parents of a child who are biologically related to the child.





- Adoptive parents: The individuals or couples who legally become the guardians and parents of a child through the process of adoption, assuming all the rights and responsibilities of a parent.
  
- LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries) or LDCs (Least Developed Countries): Terms used to categorize countries with lower levels of economic development, industrialization, and per capita income compared to more developed nations. These countries often face challenges such as poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, inadequate infrastructure, and high population growth rates.
  
- ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council): One of the six main organs of the United Nations, serving as a central platform for discussing international economic, social, and environmental issues. ECOSOC coordinates the work of specialized UN agencies, promotes international cooperation, and formulates policies and recommendations to address global challenges related to sustainable development, poverty eradication, and human rights.
  
- GA (United Nations General Assembly): The main deliberative and policymaking body of the United Nations, consisting of representatives from all member states. The General Assembly meets annually and discusses and makes decisions on a wide range of global issues, such as peace and security, development, human rights, and international law.
  
- Domestic adoption: The process of legally and permanently placing a child for adoption within the same country of their birth or residence. It involves assessing the suitability of prospective adoptive parents and then transferring parental rights from the birth parents to the adoptive parents through legal proceedings.
  
- CARA (Central Adoption Resource Authority): An autonomous body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development in India, responsible for regulating and



promoting the adoption of Indian children, both domestically and internationally. CARA acts as the central authority for all matters related to adoption in India, including the approval of adoption agencies, matching prospective adoptive parents with children, and ensuring compliance with adoption laws and procedures.

- The Hague: Refers to both a city in the Netherlands and the international legal framework known as "The Hague Convention." The city of The Hague is home to several international institutions, while The Hague Convention is a multilateral treaty aiming to provide protection and cooperation in areas such as international child abduction, inter-country adoption, and the recognition of legal documents across national borders. It establishes guidelines and procedures for addressing legal issues involving multiple countries.

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#### **V. How to Prepare as a Delegate**

In order to have fruitful debates, you as a delegate should prepare yourself and gain knowledge on your topic. This research report only provides you with a brief outlook on the topic of adoption systems in LDC'S. Look up past treaties and resolutions and find out what has been done to improve the situation. Research the given resolutions and look for past treaties involving your country, allies, or political rivals in the committee. Take a critical look at past actions taken and on possible obstacles. Find out what your country specifically has done to improve their adoption systems or relations and what their political standpoint is. If they have done nothing, find out which reasons could have impacted this decision.

After completing your research, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why does the adoption system in LEDCs need to be improved?
- To what extent is my country involved?
- Which nations could be my allies?
- Has my country worked on possible solutions?
- If so, were they successful?



Finally, you can improve your debating skills and the quality of the debate by prewriting your opening speech and writing down key points you want to mention beforehand.

Please make sure to submit your two! position papers and one! resolution until the 09.08. 2023. Please keep in mind, that any document submitted after this deadline, will not be corrected by the Student officers. The final deadline is the 10.01.2023, by then you should have submitted all of your documents. If that is not the case, delegates can be excluded from certain procedures in the debate.

Good luck and best regards, if you seem to have trouble while doing research, feel free to contact me; [larissa.akhbar@gmail.com](mailto:larissa.akhbar@gmail.com) I am more than happy to assist.

## **VI. UN Resolutions**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 21: [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=_en)

Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption:  
<https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/full-text/?cid=69>

UN General Assembly Resolution 64/142:  
<https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/142>

Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children:

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (article 22) 1990: <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-rights-and-welfare-child>



## **VII. Useful Links**

- The U.S. Department of State – Inter-country Adoption: [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Inter-country-Adoption.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Inter-country-Adoption.html)

This website offers comprehensive information on international adoption, including country-specific adoption requirements and processes.

- Joint Council on International Children’s Services (JCICS): [www.jcics.org](http://www.jcics.org)

JCICS is a nonprofit organization that provides resources and information on international adoption. Their website offers valuable information about various adoption programs in LDCs.

- RainbowKids: [www.rainbowkids.com](http://www.rainbowkids.com)

RainbowKids is an adoption advocacy website that provides information about international adoption, including profiles of waiting children from around the world. They also offer country-specific adoption information.

- Adoptive Families Magazine: [www.adoptivefamilies.com](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com)

Adoptive Families is a popular magazine and online resource for adoptive families. Their website contains articles, guides, and resources related to international adoption, including information about adoption in LDCs.

- Adoption.com: [www.adoption.com](http://www.adoption.com)

Adoption.com is a comprehensive online resource that covers various aspects of adoption. While their website primarily focuses on domestic adoption in the United States, they also provide some information on international adoption, including country-specific adoption guidelines and resources.

- The Hague Conference on Private International Law: [www.hcch.net](http://www.hcch.net)

The Hague Conference’s website offers information on international adoption statistics and reports. They compile data from member countries and provide reports on intercountry adoption trends and regulations.

- UNICEF: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

UNICEF’s website provides data and statistics related to child welfare and adoption worldwide. Their “Data and Analytics” section offers reports and resources on child protection, including adoption.

- Child Welfare Information Gateway: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

The Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Their website provides data on domestic and international adoption, including adoption from LDCs.



- International Social Service (ISS): [www.iss-ssi.org](http://www.iss-ssi.org)  
ISS is an organization that focuses on child protection and family welfare internationally. Their website provides reports and statistics on inter-country adoption, including data on various countries' adoption systems.
- Supporting Foster Care ESA 2022 PDF:  
<https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/11121/file/Supporting-Foster-Care-ESA-2022.pdf>  
A UNICEF document providing information about the adoption systems in East and Southern Africa.

## **Sources**

- UNICEF – Intercountry Adoption:  
<https://www.unicef.org/media/intercountry-adoption>
- Save the Children – Adopting the Rights of the Child: A Study on Inter-country Adoption and Its Influence on Child Protection in Nepal:  
<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/adopting-rights-child-study-intercountry-adoption-and-its-influence-child-protection-nepal/>
- UNICEF Help – Children and Adoption:  
<https://help.unicef.org/deti>
- The Social Service Workforce – At Home or In a Home: Formal Care and Adoption of Children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia:  
<https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/At%20Home%20or%20In%20a%20Home%20-%20Formal%20care%20and%20adoption%20of%20children%20in%20Eastern%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia.pdf>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Guidelines for Improving Data on Children and Youth:  
[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/Guidelines\\_ImprovingData.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/Guidelines_ImprovingData.pdf)
- Brown Political Review – Baby Blues: International Adoption Process Needs Overhaul:  
<https://brownpoliticalreview.org/2017/11/baby-blues-international-adoption-process-needs-overhaul/>
- PubMed – Inter-country Adoption: A Review of the Evidence:  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2036871/>
- Queen City Law – International Adoption: The Common Obstacles Parents Face:  
<https://www.queencitylaw.com/blog/2021/06/international-adoption-the-common-obstacles-parents-face/>
- U.S. Senate Joint Economic Committee – A Place to Call Home: Improving Foster Care and Adoption Policy to Give More Children a Stable Family:  
<https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/9/a-place-to-call-home-improving-foster-care-and-adoption-policy-to-give-more-children-a-stable-family>
- FindLaw – Obstacles to the Adoption Process:  
<https://www.findlaw.com/family/adoption/obstacles-to-the-adoption-process.html>



- Connecticut General Assembly – Obstacles to Adoption:  
<https://www.cga.ct.gov/PS98/rpt%5Colr%5Chtm/98-R-0997.htm>
- Council of Europe – Inter-country Adoption: Problems and Solutions: <https://rm.coe.int/1680084823>
- Adoption.org – What Are Some Common Problems of Adoption?:  
<https://adoption.org/what-are-some-common-problems-of-adoption>
- World Population Review – Easiest Countries to Adopt From:  
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/easiest-countries-to-adopt-from>
- UNICEF – Supporting Foster Care: A Report from the Eastern and Southern Africa Region:  
<https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/11121/file/Supporting-Foster-Care-ESA-2022.pdf>
- European Union – Adoption in the European Union:  
[https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/family/children/adoption/index\\_en.htm](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/family/children/adoption/index_en.htm)
- European Parliament – Cross-border Adoptions in the European Union: Achievements and Current Challenges: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583860/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)583860\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583860/EPRS_BRI(2016)583860_EN.pdf)
  
- Figure 1: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583860/EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)583860\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583860/EPRS_BRI(2016)583860_EN.pdf)
- Figure 2: <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/map>
- Figure 3: Depicted in the picture