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Reference Adoption Malawi  
No. UAI/US.E/MAL/03042009/1

Dear Mr. Peter W. Bodde,

Herewith United Adoptees International is asking your attention for the issue of Intercountry Adoption regarding Malawi.

United Adoptees International (UAI) is the first independent adoption organisation run and managed by Intercountry Adoptees based in the Netherlands. The UAI is representing the interest of Adoptees nationally and internationally in different fields of interests. The UAI policy exist foremost out of; creating (inter)national dialogues and participation in debates regarding adoption as a phenomena and is involved in political and societal field regarding policy developments and discussions about the consequences of (intercountry) adoption for adoptees and international consequences for the long term. The UAI is an acknowledged foundation in the Netherlands which has been consulted more than once by politicians, academics, media and researchers in the field of family life and adoption.

The UAI wants hereby express their concern regarding the development of the explorations of new adoption channels by western parties in new adoption countries. Most of the time non-western countries. Lately the influence and impact of so-called pop culture in the perspective of social views regarding adoption does concerns us very much.

As we assume, you are informed about the additional adoption plan of popstar Madonna in Malawi which has raised international concern. Something which is not been dealt with since her first appeal for adoption by adopting David Banda from this country.

Now ms. Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone seems not to have understood what kind of impact this has on international scale, the UAI wants to express their concern about the development of breaking international guidelines according to the Hague Convention on Adoption and the subsidiary rules regarding this issue.

Malawi, which till the adoption of ms. Ciccone, had no adoption policy, is been confronted with western NGO's and adoption agencies since, creating safety breaches for the well being of the Children of Malawi. The Malawian Government seems not to understand that adoption should be a last resort and not a facility for western couples to adopt children from abroad nor a way to prevent implementation child welfare and child protection programs.



Especially when there are no safety measures like the implementation of child rights laws in such countries as Malawi, intercountry adoption cannot be disconnected from a lack of these essential laws preventing adoption as an easy escape route for countries and a facility for adopters. There is not a clear control on the process of parental consent of releasing their parental rights for the cause of adoption.

Even many parents who are handing over their children to the west expect them back one day, seeing adoption as a long term foster care. Many of them have no idea that intercountry adoption will be a permanent breach in lives of involved.

We know from resources within Malawi, that parents are not informed well enough and have most of the time no clue what adoption might cause to the child and the reality behind adoption.

By accepting such easy breaches of the well being of a generation young people, who are eligible to help their country to build a future, they are been immigrated against their will, to perhaps economically a better life, but without their own consent and understanding to which challenge they have to cope with. Economic wealth may never be the argument for international adoption. As all members of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption agreed on.

With accepting a popstar like Madonna breaking this international treaty and guidelines, we acknowledge that ethics ends by the fame of others. The UAI is highly concerned by seeing this happen decade after decade.

When does the interest of adoptees come first instead the wish of the rich and famous? Child protection first and adoption as a last resort. Like we agreed on in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Hague Convention on Adoption.

Sincerely,  
United Adoptees International

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilbrand W.S. Westra", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hilbrand W.S. Westra BSc MA

Chairman UAI