



Separate Statement by Four Members of this Working Group

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We believe that the situation of unparented children in the world today is one of such desperate need that it calls for action on a grand scale to do whatever can be done to provide the permanent nurturing parental care vital to healthy emotional and physical growth to as many children as possible, as promptly as possible. We also believe that such permanence is in the best interest of every child, which should truly be the principle driving the development of policies both nationally and internationally, and should take priority over adult interests and national, ethnic, racial and other group interests. Accordingly:

- We should recognize that, save for being raised by parents of origin capable of providing loving, nurturing and stable parental care, permanence through adoption – whether domestic or international – generally serves the needs of unparented children better than any alternative.
- We should recognize that children need nurturing care from early infancy on, and that delay in providing such care damages their life prospects.
- This means that unparented children who cannot be reunified in a timely way with parents of origin capable of parenting should, for their own sake be moved promptly to adoption.
- It means that unparented children available for adoption who cannot be immediately placed within domestic adoptive homes should, for their own sake be placed without delay in available international adoptive homes.
- It means that countries should develop methods of identifying unparented children, assessing the possibilities for family reunification, terminating parental rights for children who cannot appropriately be reunified in a timely way, and moving as many of those children as possible as promptly as possible to adoptive homes.
- Paid foster care and guardianship arrangements have their place. Sometimes a child's relatives will be genuinely interested in parenting, and will not be interested in adopting for reasons consistent with the child's best interests, and in these cases foster or guardianship arrangements may be more appropriate from the child's perspective than adoption. Often children will need to be housed somewhere while placement options are assessed and parental rights terminations pursued. Appropriate foster care will generally serve children's interests far better than institutional care.
- Paid foster care and guardianship should not be generally preferred over adoption, whether domestic or international, simply because they serve to keep the child in the country or near the family of origin.