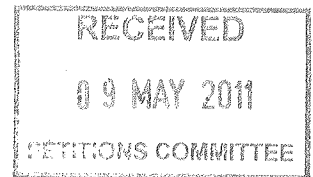




ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP



AG-MC11/04698

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

3 MAY 2011

Dear Mr Murphy

I refer to your letter of 30 March 2011 regarding a petition from “The Australian Adoption Community” presented by the Member for Forde, Mr Bert Van Manen MP, seeking the establishment of an intercountry adoption program between Australia and Burundi (petition number: 432-723).

As the Australian Central Authority under the *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption*, my Department has primary responsibility for developing intercountry adoption arrangements with other countries. The Australian Government takes an appropriately cautious approach to this task. It must be satisfied that potential programs are able to fully comply with the principles of the Hague Convention and that the best interests of the child remain paramount.

My Department has conducted assessments to determine whether it would be appropriate for Australia to establish an intercountry adoption program with Burundi. These assessments identified concerns about the adequacy of safeguards to protect children from improper practices. I also understand that efforts are continuing in relation to the repatriation and resettlement of displaced Burundians, with a view to reuniting Burundian children with their families. My Department does not consider that an intercountry adoption program would be viable at this time.

I trust this information is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely

Robert McClelland