



REGULATIONS ON THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN IN LIBERIA

DOMESTIC AND INTER-COUNTRY

PART I: PRELIMINARY

1. Purpose and Objective of the Regulation

The purpose and objective of these regulations are to:

1. Establish safeguards to ensure that domestic and inter-country adoptions take place in the best interests of the child and with respect for his or her fundamental rights as recognized in the 1986 Constitution of Liberia and international laws - the Rights of the Child (November 29, 1989) and the Hague Convention (May 29, 1993) harmonized;
2. Control, direct, or manage domestic and inter-country adoptions processes.
3. Set guidelines and regulate domestic and inter- country adoptions so as to avoid fraud in the adoption process and to prevent the abduction, the sale, or trafficking of children and illegal adoption and child abuse.
4. Ensure the uniform application of the amended adoption Act
5. Guide the activities of all parties to adoption in accordance with the amended Adoption Act and international best practices.

2. Citation

These Regulations may be cited as the Domestic and Inter-country Adoption Regulations of Liberia.

3. Definition

In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "Abandoned Child" means a child who has been legally declared an *abandoned child* because -
 - The child does not have adequate parental care or legal guardianship and either

- The whereabouts of a child’s birthparents or legal guardians are deemed unknown after a reasonable effort to locate them or
 - The child’s birthparents or legal guardians have deserted the child for a period of at least twelve (12) continuous months.
2. “Accredited” means an agency which has been evaluated and designated as such (or an equivalent designation) by a designated Accredited Body using uniform standards that work to ensure professional and ethical practices and that align with international standards.
 3. “Accredited Body,” means an Organization or Government entity charged by its national Government’s Central Authority with the accreditation of adoption agencies (The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.76 p.16).
 4. “Adopted child,” means a person under the age of 18 years who has become the legal child of a person or persons other than his or her birthparents through court proceedings as required by the amended Adoption Act.
 5. “Adoptive parent” means an adult that has legally and formally received the physical and legal custody of a child that is not biologically his or her own child through court proceedings as required by this statute;
 6. “Adoption” means a judicial proceeding in which a permanent legal parent-child relationship is established between an adoptive parent and an adopted child and in which the adoptive parent thereby assumes all the rights and incurs all the responsibilities of a parent in respect of that child.
 7. “Adoption Order” means the document issued by the presiding judge authorized by law that finalizes an adoption.
 8. “Adoption Agency” means a duly licensed and accredited organization that provides child welfare services including, but not limited to, receiving applications for adoption evaluating the prospective adoptive parents, evaluating a prospective adopted child views and desires with regard to placement, preparing the adoption home study and uses its expertise with children and social work to aid in matching prospective adoptive parents with prospective adopted children providing pre-and post-adoption services, and assisting with other required procedures, including formal best interest determinations.
 9. “Affidavit of parentage” means a document in which the birth parents of a child attest to their parentage of such child.
 10. “Best interest of the child” means a holistic evaluation of a variety of factors impacting a child’s life and development. In making such an evaluation, the following factors shall be taken into consideration where appropriate:

- The need to balance the short and long term best interest of the child;
 - The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child concerned where appropriate;
 - The child's physical, emotional and educational needs;
 - The likely effects of any changes in the child's circumstances;
 - The child's age, sex, background, and any other attributes;
 - The desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and his or her ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background; and
 - Any other factor that is generally important for the welfare of children in the same category as the child.
11. "Case History Investigation" means a formal examination into a prospective adopted child's health, education, social and family history, the child's desires and wishes in relation to placement, eligibility for adoption, and suitability for adoption by the prospective adoptive parent(s).
 12. "Case History Report" means a report in writing from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Protection prepared after required investigation and analysis indicating whether a specific adoption is in the best interest of a child, and contains a recommendation regarding whether an adoption should be approved by a court, and which provides an explanation for the recommendation, with specific reference to the criteria outline in the best interest of a child determination.
 13. "Central Authority" means a national entity designated to discharge duties to ensure the proper implementation of adoption laws in conformity with best international practices.
 14. "Child" means a person under the age of 18 years.
 15. "Country of Origin" means the sending country in which a child habitually resides.
 16. "Court" means the probate Court or order designated family court.
 17. "Double Orphan" means a child whose birthparents are both known to be deceased.
 18. "Foster care," means the temporary or long term placement of a child who is in the care or custody of an agency in an agency's approved private home. The agency is approved by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection can also place a child in the care or custody of foster parents approved directly by the Ministry.
 19. "Home Study" means an examination into aspects of the prospective adoptive parent(s) home, family, lifestyle, finance and fitness to adopt the child and a formal assessment of the capacity and readiness of prospective

adoptive parent(s) to adopt a child conducted by an agency, including the agency's written report and recommendation.

20. "Inter-country Adoption" refers to a judicial proceeding in which a child habitually resident in the country of origin has been, is being, or is to be moved to another receiving country after his or her adoption in the sending country by a person(s) habitually resident in the receiving country.
21. "Legal Guardian" means a person who has been awarded physical and legal custody by a court order of a child due to abandonment of the child, the death of both of the child's biological parents or adoptive parents, or the legal termination of the parent-child relationship of both the child's biological or adoptive parents.
22. "Legal guardianship" means a court order that designates a person other than the biological parent to provide care, shelter of the child upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection
23. "Licensed" refers to an adoption agency that has been accredited through a process approved by the Government of Liberia or a foreign government with jurisdiction over the adoption agency.
24. "Married" means the legal civil status of a personal of relationship arising out of a civil contract between a male and a female to mutually assume marital rights duties, and obligations, to which the consent of parties capable of making such a contract occurs, or the personal relationship arising out of a customary marriage between a male and a female or common law marriage legally recognized.
25. "Ministry" means the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection, Republic of Liberia.
26. "Parent" means an expectant mother of a birth parent(s), including the birth father of a child who has acknowledged the child or to whom the court has ordered notice to be given", or an adoptive parent(s).
27. "Placement" means the physical arrival of the child in the adoptive home following an adoption.
28. "Placement Services" means any and all services offered by a licensed and accredited agency to a child and prospective adoptive parents with purpose of ensuring a successful adoptive.
29. "Post-placement report" means a comprehensive report of the health and welfare of the adopted child while in the home of the adoptive parents.
30. "Pre-placement services" means any and all services offered by or through an adoption agency to birth parent(s) and a child to evaluate and prepare them for an adoption.
31. "Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) means an adult(s) who is eligible to adopt a child and intends to or has filed a petition for adoption of child or children.

32. "Receiving Country" means the country to which the child be moved after and where the prospective adoptive parents habitually resides.
33. "Sending Country" means the country of origin in which a child habitually resides.
34. "Termination of parental rights" refers to a court-ordered ending the legal relationship between a birth parent and his or her biological child and may include temporary or permanent transfer of all rights and responsibilities for the child to an agency or another person.
35. "Ward of the state" means any child legally declared to be such who is under the legal guardianship of the Republic of Liberia or another country.
36. "Step-mother" refers to a female who is in continuous marital relationship with the biological father of the child; or a female who was previously married to the biological father and has custody of the child.
37. "Step-father" refers to a male who is in continuous marital relationship with the biological mother of the child; or a male who was previously married to the biological mother and has custody of the child.
38. "Adequately educated" a person who is literate and is able to read and understand what they read. A person who is not able to read is not adequately educated.

4. Who May Adopt

Any one desiring to adopt a child domestically or internationally must meet the following criteria:

1. He or she must be able to provide adequate care and ensure normal development until the child reaches the age of 18; this includes making sure that the child attends school regularly and the child is provided with at least two meals a day.
2. He or she must be 21 years of age and at least 15 years older than the prospective adoptee;
3. He or she must be mentally, physically, emotionally, morally and financially capable of caring for the child;
4. He or she must not have "been convicted of a felony or a serious crime" (The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.4.62: p.7);
5. A married couple may jointly adopt or singly adopt in the case where the other spouse fails to join in the petition or to agree to the adoption is excused by the court, by reason of prolonged unexplained absence, unavailability, incapacity, or circumstances constituting an unreasonable withholding of consent;

6. A single adult.
7. An adult family who has had custody of the child for at least 12 consecutive months.
8. Persons who have one of the following familial relationships to the child:
 - Step-mother
 - Step-father
 - Sister
 - Brother
 - Half-brother
 - Step-sister
 - Step-brother
 - Aunt
 - Uncle
 - Grandmother
 - Grandfather
 - First cousin
 - A child's foster parent, and
 - Legal guardian.
9. A married couple, of which at least one spouse is a Liberian citizen, residing in Liberia;
10. A married couple, composed of two non-Liberian citizens, permanently residing in Liberia;
11. A single Liberian citizen, residing in Liberia;
12. A single non-Liberian citizen, permanently residing in Liberia;
13. A married couple, of which at least one spouse is a Liberian citizen, residing abroad;
14. A married couple composed of two non-Liberian citizens residing abroad;
15. A single Liberian citizen residing abroad;
16. A single non-Liberian citizen residing abroad.

5. Who can be Adopted

Any person below the age of 18 years within the following categories may be adopted:

1. A child who has been abandoned by his or her parents, be it biological or otherwise;
2. A ward of the state in keeping with the domestic law of Liberia, or any child legally declared to be such, who is under the legal guardianship of the Republic of Liberia or any other Government;
3. An orphan or a child whose biological parents are both declared deceased;
4. A child whose parent-child relationship has been legally terminated;

5. A child whose adoptive parent(s) has deceased; and
6. A child whose biological parents or legal guardians have lawfully provided their voluntary and informed consent that the child be permanently adopted in keeping with law.
7. Refugee or immigrant children that are unaccompanied or separated from their parents may be adopted if tracing and family reunification have failed, within the period of 12 months;

6. How to Adopt

1. A prospective adoptive parent(s) must file a petition to the Probate Court to express his or her desire to adopt an identified child, either personally or through an accredited adoption agency or a lawyer;
2. The Probate Court shall inform the appropriate authorities (The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.72: p11), i.e. the Ministries of Gender, Children & Social Protection, and Justice, about the petitioner being filed and then refer the petitioners to these Ministries to obtain comprehensive reports;
3. The Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection performs or designates an accredited social services/adoption agency to conduct a home study of the prospective adoptive parent(s) and a case history investigation of the prospective adoptee;
4. There is a non-refundable USD\$1,500.00 Inter-Country and USD\$250.00 Domestic Adoption Fees. This covers the Designated Ministry and the Adoption Authority processing operation and handling charges as well as travelling and other expenses incurred in conducting the Case History Investigation (The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.72: p.13); the funds will be deposited in accordance with the Public Financial Management Act of Liberia 2009;
5. These investigation processes include the following:
 - Auto-biography and family background;
 - Neighborhood, community, school and county of origin;
 - Physical and mental health evaluation;
 - Financial Statement;
 - Criminal clearances;
 - References;
 - Interviews with all relevant parties;
6. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection shall submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Probate Court, and in the case where the court petition is approved, the court completes the adoption proceedings;

7. For Inter-Country Adoption, once the petition is approved and the Probate Court grants an adoption decree, the adoptive parent(s) through an accredited adoption agency shall file for a visa, for the child where applicable at the embassy of the country of residence;
8. The Principal Registrar (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection) in Liberia will prepare a supplementary birth certificate in the adopted child's new name.
9. Persons with connected family relationship to the child (as listed in section 4, point 8) may use a lawyer to process their petition for adoption should they so wish; and
no connected person shall adopt more than two (2) children with whom they have a family relationship;
10. A stranger may adopt not more than four (4) children;

7. Consent to Adoption

1. For any adoption to be legal, the biological parents must consent to the adoption, unless parental rights have been legally terminated for some reasons, such as unfitness, or for mental problem, etc.;
2. The adoptee's consent must be required if the child is sixteen (16) or above. The cognitive capacity of the child shall be taken into consideration);
3. Legal guardians of the child may also give their consent to the adoption of the child, if the parents are dead;
4. The spouse, if any, of the prospective adoptive parent of the child to be adopted, unless deemed unnecessary by the court because of the spouse's prolonged abandonment of the household or some other extraordinary reason; and
5. Any person lawfully entitled to custody of the child.

8. Withdrawal of Consent to Adoption

Consent given in the below manner may be withdrawn:

1. Where Consent induced by fraud;
2. Where the parents of the adoptee were not adequately educated and could not read and understand the documents presented to them for their consent;
3. Where consent was received through monetary payment or compensation;
4. The court may withdraw consent by court order if the court finds after the hearing, that the withdrawal of consent is in the best interest of child; and
5. Consent to adoption may be withdrawn before the entry of an adoption order by the court upon finding that the adoption was obtained illegally.

9. Pre-Placement Investigation

When a prospective adoptive parent files a petition for the adoption of a child, the court is required to order the Ministry to conduct a pre-placement investigation on the prospective adoptive parent(s) and make a report to the court and/or the appropriate administrative body on the findings. The pre-placement investigation shall include the following inquiries:

1. Whether the home of the prospective adoptive parent(s) is suitable for the placement of prospective adoptee;
2. Whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) has been convicted of a crime or any offence related to mistreatment of a child, offence of a sexual nature, or has a record of child abuse under the laws of any jurisdiction.
3. Whether all local options have been explored, including the provisions of assistance to the biological parent(s) to allow the child to be raised in a safe and positive environment and other suitable family and community-based placement options.

10. Post-Placement Investigation

1. In domestic adoption, the Ministry shall conduct a post-placement investigation after the adoption order within one year of the placement, and a report of this investigation shall evaluate the **continued** placement of the child in the adoption parent(s)' home.
2. In inter-country adoption, the adoption agency in the country of the adoptive parent(s) shall conduct a placement investigation after the adoption order within three years of the **continued** placement and a report of the investigation shall evaluate the placement of the child in the adoptive parent(s)' home.
3. A memorandum of understanding between Liberia **and** the country of the adoptive parent(s) on a reciprocal basis that will allow the central authority to monitor the adopted child in the country of the adoptive parent(s). The **Designated** Authority shall make annual visits and submit an investigative report to the country of origin of the adopted child.
4. The memorandum of understanding shall require if it appears to the Central Authority of either country that the continued placement of the child with the adoptive parent(s) is not in the child's best interests, the Central Authority of the country concerned shall take measures necessary to protect the child, such as:
 - to cause the child to be withdrawn from the physical custody of the adoptive parent(s) and to arrange temporary care;

- in consultation with the Central Authority (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection) of the country of origin, to arrange without delay a new placement of the child with a view to adoption, subject to the adoption requirements of this Act, or, if this is not appropriate, to arrange alternative foster care;
- as a last resort, to arrange the return of the child to the country of origin, if it is in the best interest of the child considering the child's age and degree of maturity, consultation with the child and where appropriate, his or her consent to measures to be taken.

11. Investigation in Inter-Country and Domestic Adoption

a) Home Study:

A home study performed in the prospective adoptive parents' country of residence by a licensed adoption agency to meet the requirements that include the following:

- if married, a copy of prospective adoptive parents' marriage license or customary marriage license;
- the results of a criminal background investigation on the prospective adoptive parent(s) and any adults residing in their home;
- evidence of the prospective adoptive parent(s) financial situation including financial records from two years prior to the petition for adoption;
- copies of the prospective adoptive parent(s) medical reports;
- reports from interviews conducted by an adoption agency regarding the suitability of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to adopt a child with all persons residing in the prospective adoptive parents' home who are capable of expressing their opinions; and
- Other requirements of the Ministry.

b) Case History Investigation:

A Case History Investigation performed in Liberia by the Ministry with the cooperation of the licensed adoption agency meeting the requirements set out in subsection 3 of the Adoption Act that includes the following:

- the child's birth certificate, or an affidavit of parentage from the child's birthparents or affidavit of guardianship from the child's legal guardians, if surviving, with letters from two unrelated and

disinterested people confirming the information attested to in the affidavit;

- the child's medical records and the results of a recent medical examination of the child;
- a report of at least one interview with the child conducted by the adoption agency and the Ministry regarding the child's desires concerning the adoption, where applicable;
- a signed statement from the Ministry representative(s) assigned to the case history investigation attesting to the fact that they have explained the performance and effects of the proposed adoption to the child's birthparents or legal guardians in the parents' or guardians' native tongue and in easy to understand language. Such a statement shall also certify that the representative(s) has not accepted compensation of any kind to obtain parental consent; and
- Any other requirements of the Ministry.

11. Residency of Prospective Adoptive Parents

1. In all inter-country adoptions, prospective adoptive parents are required to reside within Liberia for a period of thirty (90) days or (3) months except the adoptive parent has familiarity with Liberia, meaning they have stayed in Liberia for a period of 90 days and are aware of the culture.
2. In all domestic adoptions, the prospective adoptive parent(s) is required to be a permanent residence for a minimum of one year;
3. There shall be no adoption by proxy. All persons seeking to adopt a Liberian child shall appear in person before the court.
4. A copy of the Adoption Decree must be filed with the Ministry.

12. Penalty for non-accreditation

Adoption agency operating in Liberia without accreditation from the relevant Central Authority, which is the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (**The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.76 p.17**) shall be penalized under the laws of Liberia. The penalties shall include, but not limited to:

- a. Closure of the facility, or imposition of a financial fine; and
- b. Any institution providing adoption services for children in Liberia needs accreditation. Any institution operating without accreditation is illegal and will be closed down and fined five thousand United States Dollars (USD5, 000.00, and reported to the Ministry of Justice for further action.

13. Duty to provide Adoption Agency's Transit Home

1. The adoption agency shall operate a transit home providing a short term accommodation to prospective adoptees;
2. The home shall ensure a safe nurturing and child's friendly environment for a period not more than one year after the child has been identified; and
3. The facility shall meet the criteria of tools on regulations for the use of alternative care for children.

14. Authority and Role of the Ministry in Domestic and Inter-country Adoption

1. The Ministry shall review the comprehensive report from the home study on the adoptive parents and the case history investigation on the adopted child;
2. The Ministry shall order the preference of the prospective adoptive parents in the order below, if it supports the best interest of the child:
 - a. Step-mother, Step-father, Sister, brother, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, step-sister, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, first cousin, a child's foster parent, and legal guardian
 - b. A married couple, of which at least one spouse is a Liberian citizen, residing in Liberia
 - c. A married couple, composed of two non-Liberian citizens, permanently residing in Liberia
 - d. A single Liberian citizen, residing in Liberia
 - e. A single non-Liberian citizen permanently residing in Liberia
 - f. A married couple, of which at least one spouse is a Liberian citizen, residing abroad
 - g. A single Liberian citizen residing abroad
 - h. A single non-Liberian citizen residing abroad.

(The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.76 p.14-15)

3. The Ministry shall take special care to protect the rights of unaccompanied refugees and immigrants' children.
4. The Ministry shall prepare a final comprehensive report based on the home study with its recommendation and the case history investigation reports and forward the same to the court at least 14 days prior to the adoption hearing (The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.76 p.16). In the case of a non-recommendation of the petition, the Ministry shall inform the court appropriately in writing and the report shall be file with the court.
5. The Ministry shall recommend to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the preparation of a memorandum of agreement on inter-country adoption.
6. The Ministry shall provide pre-adoption counseling and support services by licensed social workers to:
 - a. Birthparent(s) before and after birth of a child when the birthparents have expressed to put the child for adoption;
 - b. Counseling sessions that are provided to prospective adoptive parents;
 - c. counseling sessions for a prospective adoptee;
7. The Ministry shall develop a pre-adoption program;
8. The Ministry shall adopt regulations necessary to implement the adoption law and also put in place official mechanism for lodging a complaint with the Ministry against an accredited agency.
9. The Ministry as the Central Authority shall grant accreditation, and may revoke the same when an agency fails to demonstrate the competence necessary to carry out properly the tasks with which it was entrusted.
10. The Ministry shall regularly review adoption agencies to ensure compliance with the established licensing criteria and may suspend or revoke the licenses of those adoption agencies not in compliance. The Ministry shall have the right to control the number of licenses issued.
11. The Ministry, by regulation, may adopt policies for placement of children entitled to receive foster care and other forms of appropriate family and community-based care at the Ministry's expense. Children requiring foster care or other forms of alternative care shall be place in facilities that best promote a family-like environment, and that keep sibling together whenever possible. The Ministry shall establish regulations regarding licensing of foster homes (The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.90 p.24-25).

15. Preparation of Health, Social, Educational, Family History Report

1. The Ministry, or a licensed adoption agency, shall compile a report on the available health, social, educational and family of the child to be adopted.
2. The report shall include a history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse suffered by the child, information on the parents' substance abuse or mental health issues, if any.
3. The person or entity which places the child for adoption shall provide the prospective adoptive parents with a copy of the report as early as practicable before the first meeting of the prospective adoptive parents with the child.

16. Court's Role in Adoption Proceedings

1. The court shall not grant a petition for adoption unless a copy of the health, social, educational, and family history report signed by the child's prospective adoptive parents has been filed with the Ministry.
2. The court by order shall waive the filing of the report if the child's birthparents cannot be located and their absence results in insufficient information being available to compile the report.
3. Upon filing of the report of the person conducting any investigation, the court shall assign the matter for hearing. Notice shall be given to all parties and interested persons, including but not limited to the biological parents or legal guardians of the child, if surviving.
4. The prospective adoptive parents and the child to be adopted shall be required to appear to the hearing unless the presence of the child is waived by the court because it is not in the best interest of the child, or for other good cause, which shall be recited in the order for adoption.
5. All hearings shall be confidential and shall be held in closed court without admittance of any person other than interested parties, necessary witnesses and their counsel (**The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.82: p20**).
6. The agency or individual placing the child for adoption, or the prospective adoptive parents shall file with the court, the address of each parent's name on the original birth certificate and the background information, pursuant to the regulation of the Ministry; or if not available, an explanation of its unavailability.
7. Upon entry of the adoption order, the clerk of the court shall transmit to the Ministry the information provided, and the Ministry shall attach the information to the original birth certificate of the adopted child.

17. Court's Action prior to Adoption Order in both Domestic and Inter-country Adoption

Before the issuance of an adoption order, the court shall perform the following actions:

1. review the prospective adoptive parents petition for adoption;
2. Consider the Ministry's comprehensive report and recommendations;
3. Follow established best interest determination procedures that take into consideration the child's wishes, upbringing and his or her ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background as relate to a domestic or inter-country adoption:
4. Verify that the consent of the relevant parties has been legally and truthfully provided in accordance with the follow procedures:
 - If married, both biological parents of the child must present themselves at the adoption court proceedings, acknowledges on record the permanency of adoption, agree to the severance of their parental rights concerning the child, and confirm on record that they did not receive or provide any remuneration for the adoption, and sign an affidavit attesting to these facts.
 - If only one biological parent has legal parental rights to the child only that parent is required to comply with the above requirements;
 - If either of the child's biological parents is dead or deemed missing after efforts for twelve (12) continuous months to locate such person's whereabouts, only the child's other biological parent is required to comply with the above requirements;
 - Where the child is a double orphan, an abandoned child, or a ward of the state, the child's legal guardian(s) is require to comply with these requirements;
 - Where the child is able to provide his or her own views, the court shall assure that the child is given the right to express those views freely in placement and adoption matters, giving due weight to the views of the child in accordance with the age and maturity of the child;
 - If, for reasons of severe health concerns or physical incapacitation, an individual required to make a personal appearance pursuant to this subsection is unable to attend the proceedings in person, the court may accept video deposition and an affidavit of consent from the individual, and shall note the cause of the non-appearance for the record.
5. Record the presence of the prospective adoptive parents at the court proceedings, if the prospective adoptive parent(s) is present;

6. Verify that the prospective adoptive parent(s) has resided in Liberia for at least thirty (30) days to be acquainted with the cultural and other aspects relating to the child;
 7. Confirm that the adoption is in the best interest of the child; and
 8. Complete the court's adoption processing form.
2. The court may order further investigations and require the relevant parties to present necessary information and documentation in order to aid the court in reaching a decision concerning the adoption order.
3. After completing the actions required, if the court decides that the adoption is valid under the adoption law and is in the best interest of the child, the presiding judge shall issue an adoption order declaring the child to be the lawful child of the adoptive parent(s) and transferring physical and legal custody of the child to the prospective adoptive parent(s). The adoption agency or adoptive parents shall notify the Ministry about the adoption order within five (5) business days after the issuance of the adoption order by the court.
4. The court shall keep a confidential record of all petitions for adoption and all adoption orders.
5. The court shall charge standard fees relating to court actions established by the judiciary.
6. An order of court of any other jurisdiction that terminates the relationship of parent and child or established such a relationship by adoption shall be recognized in Liberia.

18. After Adoption

1. After the issuance of an adoption order, the birth parents of the adopted child are no longer the child's legal parents or guardians, and shall be relieved of all parental responsibilities for the child and shall have no custodial rights over the child, or any right to inherit property from the child in accordance with the laws of inheritance. The right of the adopted child to inherit property from and through his or her birthparent shall terminate upon the making and entry of an adoption order.
2. After the making and entry of an Adoption Order, the relation of parent and child, and all rights, duties and other legal consequences of the relation of an adopted child and his or her birthparent shall hereafter exist between the adopted child and his or her adoptive parents from the date of the adoption order; the adopted child shall be entitled to inherit property from and through his or her adoptive parents in accordance with the laws of inheritance and his

or her adoptive parents shall be entitled to inherit property from and through the adopted child in accordance with such laws (**The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.87: p23**).

3. The adopted child shall be considered the legitimate son or daughter of the adoptive parent(s) for all intents and purposes and is entitled to all the rights and obligations provided by law to legitimate sons and daughters born to them without discrimination of any kind.
4. For each adoption, the clerk of the court granting the adoption shall prepare, within 30 days after the adoption order has been made and entered, a certificate of adoption on a form furnished by the Principal Registrar of Births, Deaths and Burials as prescribed by the Ministry.
5. After the adoption order has been issued, the child's birthparents or **legal guardians**, the adopted child, the Principal Registrar, or any interest party on behalf of the adopted child may file a petition for the revocation of any adoption performed for the following reasons:
 - a. Abuse or neglect of the adopted child by his or her adoptive parents.
 - b. That the adoption in question was procured by fraudulent means or in a way that violates the provisions of the laws and regulations by the Ministry (**The Domestic Regulations Laws Relating to Adoption 2013, 4.88: p.23**).

19. Licensing of Adoption Agencies and Placement

1. The Ministry must license the adoption agency that has an office or facility in Liberia. The Ministry may license adoption agencies if the applicant agency satisfies standards prepared and published by the Ministry.
2. The Ministry shall prepare and publish a set of licensing criteria that shall include:
 - a. Adequate provisions for the health care off a child whose placement is being managed by the adoption agency;
 - b. Provisions for the education of a child whose placement is being managed by the adoption agency;
 - c. Provision for secure and current health and case history records for each child;
 - d. Transparent and adequate financial accounting; and
 - e. Procedures for introducing a child's parents to the prospective adoptive parent(s) or adoptive parents, as applicable.

20. Penalties

1. Any person, who assists in or impedes the placement or adoption of a child in violation of the provision of these regulations or any other adoption laws, shall have committed a misdemeanor of the first degree under the Penal law of Liberia.

2. Any person who makes or receives any payment of anything of value with the intent of furthering or obstructing the adoption process, other than the legal administrative fees and reimbursements or fees charged or requested by the adoption agency, the court, or the Ministry pursuant to regulations shall have committed a felony of the second degree under the Penal Law of Liberia.
3. Any person who attempts to derive or derives improper financial or other gain from an activity related to a domestic or inter-country adoption shall have committed a felony of the second degree under the Penal Law of Liberia.
4. Any person who attempts to deceive or deceives another party in respect of any arrangement that may or may not lead to an adoption shall have committed a felony of the second degree under the Penal Law of Liberia.
5. Any institution providing adoption services for children in Liberia must be accreditation. Any Institution operating without accreditation is illegal and will be closed down and fined Five thousand United States Dollars (USD 5, 000, 00) and reported to the Ministry of Justice for further action.