



Advisory: For Immediate Release

THE FUTURE OF GUATEMALAN ADOPTION -- A DISCUSSION WITH UNICEF GUATEMALA

September 18, 2007

Silver Springs, MD, Sept. 18, 2007 – *Ethica* is pleased to announce the inclusion of a forum on Guatemalan adoptions as part of the Adoption Ethics and Accountability Conference, co-hosted by *Ethica* and the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute outside Washington on Oct. 15-16. This forum, being held at the request of UNICEF Guatemala, will allow attendees a unique opportunity to dialogue directly with the key players about the future of adoption from that Latin American nation.

UNICEF, whose stance has often been described as anti-adoption, asked for an opportunity to address that perception as well as to discuss its work and goals in assisting children in need. The Guatemala Forum will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 15, 2007, and will be open to all conference attendees registered for that day.

"Guatemalan adoptions have been receiving a lot of criticism. We hope this will be an opportunity for constructive dialogue on the needs of children and the Guatemalan adoption system. We see this as a chance to lead the discussion from controversy to working solutions," says Linh Song, *Ethica's* Executive Director.

To present a spectrum of viewpoints, UNICEF's representatives will participate on a panel that will also include Tom DiFilipo, president of the Joint Council on International Children's Services, who will discuss agency concerns about adoption from Guatemala and a potential moratorium; and Elizabeth Larsen, a journalist who will discuss the issues from her perspective as an adoptive parent. Most important, the presentations will be limited to allow for audience discussion and questions. All agencies and parents are encouraged to attend and share their views.

"This is a remarkable opportunity for participants in the Ethics Conference to directly address one of the most controversial aspects of international adoption today," said Adam Pertman, Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute.

Americans adopted over 4,000 children from Guatemala last year, making that country the second most popular for international adoption. A recent raid on an orphanage, new policies by the U.S. Department of State, and reports of child trafficking have raised serious concerns about irregularities in the adoption process. The Guatemala Forum at the Ethics Conference will therefore not only be timely, but also will further the event's objective of exploring ethical concerns in adoption policy and practice.

The Guatemala Forum will take place immediately following a "Meet the Bloggers" session. More information about the Ethics Conference, including registration material, is available online at www.ethicsconference.net. For more information about the Forum itself, please contact Linh Song at lsong@ethicanet.org.

Washington, D.C. – October 15/16, 2007
