Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 16, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write to ask for your personal engagement to resolve over 900 international adoption cases of Congolese children who either have been or are in the process of being adopted by American families, yet who are unable to obtain Congolese exit permits due to a suspension in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We understand that you have invited President Joseph Kabila to Washington in August for the first ever U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, and we urge you to use this event and the time leading up to it as an opportunity to press for an expeditious resolution that is in the best interest of these children.

In September 2013, the DRC suspended the issuance of exit permits for children adopted by foreign parents, reportedly due to concerns about suspected malfeasance in the local DRC adoption process and lack of information about the well-being of adopted children after they arrived in their new homes. This suspension is having tragic consequences for these children as they wait to be united with their American families. Already, 10 children who were matched with American families have died since the suspension went into place and many more have urgent, life-threatening medical problems. There are over 350 children who have been legally adopted by US families and have been given Congolese passports and U.S. visas, but are still waiting for exit letters to be able to leave the DRC.

Overcoming this impasse is a priority for many in Congress and we appreciate the State Department's efforts to raise this issue with its Congolese counterparts. In April of this year, a bipartisan and bicameral group of 170 Members of Congress wrote to President Kabila and Prime Minister Matata Ponyo, urging the DRC government to resume processing exit permits for adopted children. To date, there has been no official response to this letter. Secretary Kerry raised this issue directly with President Kabila during his visit to Kinshasa in May and later that month the DRC government did release exit letters for 19 children adopted by American families, 4 of whom were medically fragile. Unfortunately, this represented only a small percentage of the completed cases and leaves dozens of critically ill children without the medical care they need to survive. The U.S. Department of State has continuously engaged the Congolese government to resolve the remaining completed cases, but to date all overtures have been unsuccessful. For example, when the DRC Director of General Migration (DGM) Francois Beya visited the United States in June, he received multiple requests for meetings ranging from State Department officials to Members of Congress. Mr. Beya declined to schedule any meetings on

the suspended exit permit issue. That is why we are requesting your direct engagement with President Kabila.

We respectfully request that you raise this human rights crisis with President Kabila prior to his attendance at the U.S.-African Leaders Summit next month, and then use the opportunity of the summit to press for a firm resolution. We would appreciate your leadership on this issue to help unite these children and their families.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

Senator Mary Landrieu

Senator James M. Inhofe

Representative Michele Bachmann

Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson

Representative Trent Franks

Representative Collin C. Peterson

Senator Bob Corker

Senator Mitch McConnell

Senator Barbara Mikulski

Senator Tom Harkin

Senator Claire McCaskill

Senator Elizabeth Warren

Senator Kay R. Hagan

Senator Charles E. Grassley

Senator Richard Burr

Senator Roy Blunt

Senator Sherrod Brown

Senator Ted Cruz

Senator Debbie Stabenow

Senator Michael B. Enzi

Senator Barbara Boxer

Senator Angus S. King, Jr

Senator John Barrasso

Senator John Boozman

Senator Dan Coats

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Senator Pat Roberts

Senator Rand Paul, M.D.

Senator John Cornyn

Senator Jerry Moran

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Senator Joe Donnelly

Senator Mark Pryor

Senator Pat Toomey

Senator Lamar Alexander

Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Mark Kirk

Senator David Vitter

Senator Al Franken

Senator Heidi Heitkamp

Senator Deb Fischer

Senator Edward J. Markey

Senator Jeanne Shaheen

Senator John Walsh

Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Tim Kaine

Senator Mark R. Warner

Senator Mark Udall

Senator Mike Johanns

Senator Patty Murray

Senator Rob Portman

Senator Ron Johnson

Senator Tammy Baldwin

Senator Marco Rubio

Senator Tim Johnson

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley

Senator Joe Manchin

Senator Carl Levin

Representative Karen Bass

Representative Tom Latham

Representative Ed Royce

Representative Chris Smith

Representative Roger Williams

Representative Jim Renacci

Representative André Carson

Representative Reid Ribble

Representative Andy Barr

Representative Patrick T. McHenry

Representative Sam Farr

Representative Mike Pompeo

Representative Adam Smith

Representative Aaron Schock

Representative Ann Wagner

Representative John Larson

Representative Tim Huelskamp

Representative Jim McDermott

Representative Bobby L. Rush

Representative Steve Womack

Representative Steve Daines

Representative Michael McCaul

Representative Joyce Beatty

Representative John Kline

Representative Bradley Byrne

Representative Chellie Pingree

Representative Don Young

Representative Corrine Brown

Representative Stephen Fincher

Representative Bruce Braley

Representative Mike Simpson

Representative Alcee L. Hastings

Representative Cynthia M. Lummis

Representative Spencer Bachus

Representative Filemon Vela

Representative George Holding

Representative Frank R. Wolf

Representative Jim Cooper

Representative John F. Tierney

Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer

Representative Bill Flores

Representative Bill Huizenga

Representative Charles Rangel

Representative Dave Camp

Representative Earl Blumenauer

Representative John C. Fleming M.D.

Representative John Shimkus

Representative Kenny Marchant

Representative Lloyd Doggett

Representative G. K. Butterfield

Representative Marc Veasey

Representative Marlin Stutzman

Representative Mike Honda

Representative Gene Green

Representative Pat Tiberi

Representative Pete Sessions

Representative Stephen F. Lynch

Representative Howard Coble

Representative Steve King

Representative Susan W. Brooks

Representative Suzan DelBene

Representative Suzanne Bonamici

Representative Blake Farenthold

Representative Ann McLane Kuster

Representative Chuck Fleischmann

Representative Mark Meadows

Representative Diane Black

Representative Doug Lamborn

Representative James Lankford

Representative Tim Griffin

Representative James P. McGovern

Representative Tom Cotton

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee

Representative Scott Rigell

Representative Ted Poe

Representative Adam B. Schiff

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

Representative Jim Costa

Representative John Garamendi

Representative Kevin Cramer

Representative Kristi Noem

Representative Mark Pocan

Representative Marsha Blackburn

Representative Michael Burgess

Representative Mike Conaway

Representative Mike Fitzpatrick

Representative Mike Rogers - AL

Representative Niki Tsongas

Representative Rick Nolan

Representative Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Representative Scott Perry

Representative Sean Duffy

Representative Steve Stivers

Representative Susan A. Davis

Representative Ted S. Yoho

Representative Terri Sewell

Representative Tom McClintock

Representative Frederica Wilson

Representative Wm. Lacy Clay

Representative John Yarmuth

Representative William R. Keating

Representative Kevin Brady

Representative Steve Stockman

Representative Julia Brownley

Representative Vicky Hartzler

Representative Michael H. Michaud

Representative Beto O'Rourke