Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 17, 2014

The Honorable Joseph Kabila Kabange
President
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Gombe, Kinshasa

The Honorable Augustin Matata Ponyo
Prime Minister
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Gombe, Kinshasa

Dear President Kabila and Prime Minister Matata Ponyo:

The United States of America values its good relationship with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and is proud to have provided assistance to your government as you continue to confront ongoing challenges. Please know that the people of the United States remain steadfast in their respect for and commitment to the people of the DRC. It is in this spirit of goodwill and respect that we, the undersigned Members of the United States Congress, write to ask for your help in resolving the over 460 adoption cases of Congolese children who either have been adopted or are in the process of being adopted by American families, yet who are unable to obtain exit permits due to a recent DRC suspension.

We understand that your Government has elected to suspend the issuance of exit letters due to concerns about the health and wellbeing of adopted children. We respect DRC's right, and indeed your obligation to ensure that international adoptions of Congolese children are conducted with integrity, transparency and the highest of ethics. As U.S. lawmakers, we share your desire to see that all children living in the United States, including those born in the DRC, are safe and secure. To this end, we would like to offer to support your government in its efforts to ensure that adopted Congolese children are safe and well-cared for and that future intercountry adoptions between our countries continue to be conducted in an ethical, transparent manner.

While we work together to ensure that all Congolese children are protected, we hope you will consider allowing the hundreds of American families who have legally completed the adoption process to move forward. The unexpected delay in the completion of these adoptions has resulted in over 460 children continuing to languish in institutions without a the care of a permanent family. As you know, long-term institutionalization has been proven to lead to neurological and emotional difficulties in children, as the lack of parental bonding damages brain development and a child's ability to form meaningful relationships with others.

In addition to the consequences for children, this suspension is also placing a substantial burden on the adoptive families. Approximately 50 of the 460 pending adoption cases are fully finalized—approved by Congolese courts, the Ministry of Gender and Family, and the United States Embassy in Kinshasa. The General Direction of Migration (DGM) has promised to consider applications for exit letters for completed adoption cases that had been approved by the Ministry of Gender and Family's Interministerial Adoption Committee before September 25, 2013. A number of families meeting that criterion are relying on the DGM's commitment to process their applications for exit permits. It is of great concern to us that these applications be completed as expeditiously as possible. Many

of these American families remain in Kinshasa, jeopardizing their careers and creating great financial difficulties. These families remain committed to the children they are adopting and desire to complete the process and return to the United States to raise these children in loving, caring homes.

More specifically, we respectfully request consideration of the following:

1. Allow for the expedited processing to completion of pending adoptions of children whose health is at risk.

2. Recommence exit permit issuance for families approved by the Ministry of Gender and Family's Interministerial Adoption Committee prior to September 25, 2013.

3. Provide the families who have finalized adoptions on or after September 25, 2013 with a means for obtaining exit permits.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with your Government to ensure both the continuation of international adoptions and the strengthening of our international adoption process. The children involved deserve nothing less.

With sincere respect,

Senator Mary Landrieu
Co-Chair, Congressional Coalition on Adoption

Senator James Inhofe
Co-Chair, Congressional Coalition on Adoption

Representative Michele Bachmann
Co-Chair, Congressional Coalition on Adoption

Representative Karen Bass
Co-Chair, Congressional Coalition on Adoption

Senator John Thune

Senator Tom Harkin

Senator Claire McCaskill

Senator Elizabeth Warren

Senator Kay R. Hagan

Senator Chuck Grassley

Senator Richard Burr

Senator Roy Blunt

Senator Sherrod Brown

Senator Ted Cruz

Senator Debbie Stabenow

Senator Michael Enzi

Senator Barbara Boxer

Senator Jack Reed

Senator Jon Tester

Senator John Boozman

Senator Dan Coats

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Senator David Vitter

Senator Pat Roberts

Senator Rand Paul

Senator John Cornyn

Senator Jerry Moran

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Senator Joe Donnelly

Senator Mark Pryor

Senator Tom Coburn

Senator Lamar Alexander

Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Mark Kirk

Senator Al Franken

Senator Heidi Heitkamp

Senator Deb Fischer

Senator Ed Markey

Senator Jeanne Shaheen

Senator Joe Manchin

Senator John Barrasso

Senator John Walsh

Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Mark Begich

Senator Mark R. Warner

Senator Mark Udall

Senator Mike Johanns

Senator Patty Murray

Senator Richard Blumenthal

Senator Ron Johnson

Senator Tammy Baldwin

Senator Marco Rubio

Senator Tim Johnson

Senator Rob Portman

Senator Carl Levin

Senator Bob Corker

Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley

Senator Saxby Chambliss

Senator Christopher S. Murphy

Representative Collin C. Peterson

Representative Tom Graves

Representative Roger Williams

Representative André Carson

Representative Andy Barr

Representative Sam Farr

Representative Adam Smith

Representative Ann Wagner

Representative Tim Huelskamp

Representative Robert Aderholt

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Representative Trent Franks

Representative Tom Latham

Representative Adam B. Schiff

Representative Jim Renacci

Representative Reid Ribble

Representative Patrick T. McHenry

Representative Mike Pompeo

Representative Steve Israel

Representative John Larson

Representative Jim McDermott

Representative Steve Womack

Representative Steve Daines

Representative Michael McCaul

Representative Joyce Beatty

Representative John Kline

Representative Todd Rokita

Representative Lee Terry

Representative Don Young

Representative Hal Rogers

Representative Stephen Fincher

Representative Bruce Braley

Representative Mike Simpson

Representative Alcee L. Hastings

Representative Steve Stockman

Representative Spencer Bachus

Representative Dave Loebsack

Representative George Holding

Representative Julia Brownley

Representative Jim Cooper

Representative Gerald Connolly

Representative John F. Tierney

Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer

Representative Bill Huizenga

Representative Alan Grayson

Representative Andy Harris, M.D.

Representative Bill Flores

Representative Charles Rangel

Representative Dave Camp

Representative Duncan Hunter

Representative Earl Blumenauer

Representative Ed Royce

Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson

Representative Gary Peters

Representative George Miller

Representative Jason Smith

Representative Jim Jordan

Representative Jim Matheson

Representative Jim Moran

Representative John C. Fleming M.D.

Representative John Conyers, Jr.

Representative John Dingell

Representative John J. Duncan, Jr.

Representative John Shimkus

Representative Kenny Marchant

Representative Kevin Brady

Representative Lamar Smith

Representative Lloyd Doggett

Representative Lynn Westmoreland

Representative Marc Veasey

Representative Marlin Stutzman

Representative Mike Honda

Representative Mike McIntyre

Representative Pat Tiberi

Representative Pete Sessions

Representative Peter DeFazio

Representative Randy Neugebauer

Representative Sam Graves

Representative Sandy Levin

Representative Stephen F. Lynch

Representative Steve Cohen

Representative Steve King

Representative Susan W. Brooks

Representative Suzan DelBene

Representative Suzanne Bonamici

Representative Tim Walberg

Representative Tom Petri

Representative Vicky Hartzler

Representative Blake Farenthold

Representative Peter Roskam

Representative Ann McLane Kuster

Representative Jeff Miller

Representative Mark Meadows

Representative Chuck Fleischmann

Representative Hank Johnson

Representative Pete Olson

Representative Doug Lamborn

Representative Diane Black

Representative Carol Shea-Porter

Representative James Lankford

Representative Tim Griffin

Representative Henry A. Waxman

Representative Wm. Lacy Clay

Representative Walter Jones

Representative Todd Young

Representative Joe Garcia

Representative Tom Cotton

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee

Representative Scott Rigell

Representative Ted Poe

Representative Chris Smith