

Central Adoption Resource Authority
Ministry of Women & Child Development
R.K. Puram, New Delhi

**MINUTES OF THE 33RD MEETING OF STEERING COMMITTEE OF
CENTRAL ADOPTION RESOURCE AUTHORITY (CARA)**

The 33rd Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) chaired by Shri Indevan Pandey, Secretary, MWCD (Chairperson of the Steering Committee of CARA) was held on 11th August, 2022 at 2:30 PM in the Conference Room, MWCD, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

2. The list of participants is attached. The meeting was held virtually, while the Chairperson, Member Secretary, JS (IM) and other official members of the Ministry were physically present.

3. At the outset, the CEO & Member Secretary, CARA welcomed the Chairperson of the Steering Committee and all the other Members of the Committee. With permission of the Chairperson of the Steering Committee, Member Secretary & CEO, CARA began the proceedings of the 33rd Meeting of the Committee.


PROGRAMME MATTERS

Agenda No. 33.01: Issuance of No Objection Certificate with approval of CEO & Member Secretary-CARA

4. While discussing draft Adoption Regulations 2022 on 26th April 2022 under the chairperson-ship of Secretary MWCD, it was decided that since various agencies and authorities are involved before the issuance of NOC to check all procedural requirements, adding yet another level to further scrutinise the already verified documents by NOC Committee only prolongs the process, at times even for months leading the child to stay long in the institutional care despite the fact that a family is already waiting for them. To address such delays it was decided that CEO and Member Secretary of CARA should take steps to dissolve the existing NOC Committee and approve the cases.

5. Accordingly, CARA has complied with the directions and it has been issuing NOCs with the approval of CEO & Member Secretary since 1st week of June 2022. At present, there are five stages of processing cases of NOC like Professional/Assistant level, Asst Director level, Dy Director level, Director (Programme) level and finally approved by Member Secretary & CEO.

6. This system of issuing NOC is being submitted for the ratification of the Steering Committee.


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Decision: Some Members expressed concern that without the NOC Expert Committee, CARA's responsibilities would multiply. In this regard, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee stated that the Government is attempting to improve governance by reducing the number of decision-making layers. He raised the long delay caused at the NOC Committee level delaying the rest of the procedure followed in cases of inter-country adoptions. Additionally, all necessary documentation from stakeholders would already be uploaded before it comes to the NOC Committee. Since CARA strives for simplification and digitalization of various certificates on compliance of requisite documents, adding another level of Expert Committee seems unnecessary, he said. Further CEO & Member Secretary of CARA added that the experts from AIIMS, Delhi, are already on CARA's panel to provide feedback on the children's medical conditions in case of requirement of a medical review. The decision was ratified.

Agenda No. 33.02: Request received from IDM Singapore for PAPs regarding seniority of OCI PAPs in the matter of Inter-Country Adoption.

7. In an email sent to CARA on July 6, 2021, Mr. Kartik Balasubramaniam and Mrs. Nandita Nanda Kumar claimed that they approached Ms. Sreyashi Sengupta, an IDM, Singapore social worker, in 2016 to begin their adoption application. The PAPs claim that they followed all necessary documentation procedures and provided the social worker with a cheque for SGD-2,000 as HSR Fees, but the social worker did not register the PAP.

8. The PAPs then approached IDM Singapore, where the IDM acknowledged Sreyanshi Sengupta's wrongdoings and advised them to begin their adoption application afresh. The PAPs claim that they have lost five years since 2016 and have asked for assistance in adopting a girl child from the state of Maharashtra or MP who is between the ages of two and four.

9. IDM, Singapore registered the PAPs Mr. Kartik Balasubramaniam and Mrs. Nandita Nanda Kumar with reg. no ESIN2022011239087 (date of registration is 12/01/2022). IDM, Singapore, has requested to consider the seniority of the PAPs which has been considered. **(Annexure-A)**

Decision: One of the members sought clarification whether the Home Study Report (HSR) of PAPs is updated and the reason for the PAPs seeking restoration of seniority after five years. In this regard, CEO, CARA, explained that the PAPs had provided evidence of paying to the social worker through their bank statement and the IDM Singapore had recommended the restoration of seniority and therefore, this case was considered as a special case. Secondly, the PAPs Home Study Report has been conducted recently and the delay in the case was due to the fact that the PAPs were raising their grievances at various levels in Singapore and CARA and moreover being OCI PAPs, earlier they were not at par with Indian PAP; hence they also expected delayed referral. The decision taken in this regard by CEO CARA was ratified.

Agenda No. 33.03: Procedure for Children adopted under HAMA who want to relocate the child abroad.

10. The procedure laid down vide Notification of the HAMA Regulations on 17th Sept 2021 for adoptions completed before 17th Sept 2021 do not conform to the requirements of the Hague Convention. In such cases the verification letter issued by DM does not carry a detail background report as stipulated under Article 4 & 16 of the Hague Convention which is also a point of objection by the receiving country. There is also no stipulation of home study report (Article 15). Therefore, receiving countries decline to issue Article 5. In such cases, Central Adoption Resource Authority has preferred to issue support letter to Regional Passport Officers certifying the validity of the adoption based on adoption deed and verification letter issued by the District Magistrate.

11. Accordingly, CARA has not received permission of Article 5& 17 of the receiving country. Proposal has been forwarded to Ministry of Law and Justice by MWCD on the following:

- a. Whether CARA needs to mandatory comply Art 4 & 16 of the Hague Convention and should improve the Schedules as required?
- b. Whether compliance of Art 4 & 16 should only follow in all cases after compliance of the Art 15 by the receiving country as it has been provisioned in the HAMA Regulations notified on 17th September 2021 for only those cases where adoption deeds have been registered after 17.09.2021

12. A detailed note is placed at **Annexure-B**. The issue may kindly be discussed in the Steering Committee.

Decision: The Steering Committee was informed that there are approximately 70 cases under HAMA, 1956 pending in CARA for issuance of NOC. However, CARA is unable to issue NOC in cases where adoption of children under HAMA, 1956 have taken place prior to 17th September 2021 as the procedure is not in compliance with the Hague Convention. On the basis of adoption deed and verification certificate from DM concerned, CARA has been issuing support letters to enable the adoptive parents to relocate the child through the immigration route. While CARA had written to Central Authorities of concerned countries to issue Article 5 and 17 to enable CARA to issue NOCs in HAMA cases, none have complied. However, one AFAA from Canada responded that they would consider cases of HAMA, 1956 if CARA provided Articles 4 and 16, which call for the requirement of a family background report and the consent of the child in cases that took place before September 17, 2021.

13. The Committee decided that the formats and schedules of "Procedure for children adopted under Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, by parents who desire to relocate the child abroad" may be improvised to address the concerns of other Central Authorities with regard to the Hague Convention.

ADMN & FINANCE MATTERS

Agenda No. 33.04: Approval of Accounts for the financial year 2021-22

14. As per Section 69(3)(b) of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Steering Committee of CARA shall approve the Annual Accounts which has to be produced before the C & AG for audit every year. The Internal Audit of the CARA accounts by a C & AG empanelled auditor has already been completed for the year 2021-2022.

15. The Financial Statement for the year 2021-22, which was prepared and certified by the Chartered Accountant, is placed here for the approval of the Steering Committee of CARA and for onward submission to C & AG for audit. **(Annexure-C)**

Decision: Approved

Agenda No. 33.05: Approval of Head wise allocation of Budget Estimate (BE-2022-23) sanctioned by MWCD for FY 2022-2023

16. With the approval of Competent Authority, CARA has proposed a Budget Estimate (BE) of Rs.10.00 crore for the financial year 2022-23. Head wise allocation of proposed BE is placed at **Annexure-D**

17. Ministry of Women and Child Development has already approved CARA's proposal and has sanctioned Rs. 10.00 crore only as BE for CARA during the year 2022-23. Steering Committee may kindly approve the Head wise allocation of BE sanctioned by MWCD.

Decision: Approved

Agenda No. 33.06: Approval of Amendments in the existing Recruitment Rules of CARA.

18. As the existing RR has caused long stagnation in the matter of promotion of internal staff, proposal for amendments in the existing Recruitment Rules of CARA has been prepared by the Internal Committee constituted by CEO, CARA. The said proposal was forwarded to the administrative Ministry and further to IFD of the Ministry for their concurrence. However, IFD has observed that CARA has proposed creation of 03 posts of Section Officer (Level-8) and 01 post of Assistant (Level-6) by surrendering 04 posts of Assistant Director (Level-10) including proposal for restructuring of the pay scales of PS and Accounts Officer. IFD has also stated that as the issue of creation of posts is involved in this proposal, the matter would need to be referred to DoE for approval. IFD has advised to place the matter before the Steering Committee for their approval first and then re-submit it to IFD with financial implications. In this regard, a note containing proposed revisions is placed at **Annexure - E.**

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Decision: The Committee approved the amendments proposed including the following:

- a) Surrendering of 04 posts of Assistant Directors having pay scale of level-10 and in the place creation of 03 posts of Section Officer (Level-8) and 01 post of Assistant (Level-6) by surrendering 04 posts of Assistant Director (Level-10) [02 posts of AD(Prog) plus 02 posts of AD(Admn)];
- b) Revision of the pay scale of Accounts Officer in CARA at par with other organisations of MWCD (NCW, NCPDR, CSWB), wherein Accounts Officers with same duties and responsibilities are having higher pay scale. Hence, the change in pay scale Level-7 to Level-9 for Accounts Officer, CARA.
- c) Revision of the pay scale of PS in accordance with recommendation of 7CPC. Also as per existing RR, PS and PA are in the same pay scale, i.e. in Level-6. Hence, we propose to revise the pay scale from Level-6 to Level-7 in case of PS, CARA.
- d) The re-designation of post of Assistant or Research Asst as Asst Section Officer may be avoided as such positions are exclusively recruited through the Staff Selection Commission directly for various central government departments. However, it was agreed for re-designation of other positions like Data Entry Operator to Senior Secretariat Assistant (SSA), Lower Division Clerk (LDC) to Junior Secretariat Assistant (JSA) as per the recommendation of 7CPC.

Agenda No 33.07: Revamping of IT application with the technical cooperation of AICTE

19. Presently, the Child Adoption Programme is administered through the online CARINGS Portal and it needs a complete revamp and redesigning with the latest open source technologies for which CARA has been coordinating with the AICTE/Ministry of MoE. Vide meeting dated 03.03.2022 held under the Chairmanship of Secretary, WCD it was agreed by the chief coordinator of AICTE to complete the project by 30.06.2022 but so far the work has not been completed within the fixed timeline. The amount of effort involved in creating an improved version of the IT application and additional new modules like that of DM/ADM, CMO, foster adoption, root search for older adoptees including new CARA website are going to take some more time, thus extension of the time line may be considered.

20. So far the work has been completed with the help of the technical interns. Secretary, WCD earlier approved engagement of four Developers for continuation of the Project after 30th June 2022. As decided, the manpower resources would be hired through the GeM to complete the task in a time-bound manner including the software development, pre-testing, security audit & hosting, maintenance, updation and after development support. In this regard, it may be mentioned that the Steering Committee earlier approved the revamping proposal in its 29th Meeting held on 05.01.2022 followed by a review meeting held on 03.03.2022 chaired by Secretary, WCD

(Annexure F1) and further, one TSG for the CARA's IT application is placed at **Annexure-F2** for reference.

Decision: Approved in principle but the proposal may be forwarded to Ministry of Women and Child Development as required under CARA's Rules and Regulations (2018).

Agenda No. 33.08: Information about recruitment of professionals for strengthening of CARA and against Help Desk

21. Based on the recommendation of the Steering Committee, the IFD concurred 44 personnel in all on a contractual/outsourced basis. The hiring procedure/recruitment process has already started. Out of 12 staff sanctioned against Help Desk, 11 staff have already been hired through the GEM. The Help Desk will be operational in two shifts (8 am to 2 pm and further 2 pm to 8 pm from Monday to Friday) w.e.f. 1st August 2022.

22. As far as hiring of professionals and Executive Assts, a meeting was held with the GeM authorities on 21-07-2022 to work out the process for hiring such staff on fixed remuneration basis and the same is in the process of finalisation. In view of the decision of the central government to opt GeM only for hiring man power resources, the guideline has been revised accordingly(**Annexure-G**). Further the maximum age of senior professionals has been revised as 55 years instead of 50 years.

Decision: The Chairperson of the Committee requested the members to check whether the Helpline is working properly and to provide inputs directly to CEO, CARA in case they face any issue. One of the members requested for uploading of last referral date and category of children to be made available for prospective parents to reduce the grievances on the Helpline. As far as hiring of professionals and Executive Assts is concerned, the Committee approved the revised TOR.

Agenda No 33.09: CPWD Proposal for renovation of CSWB Building

23. This is in reference to the Meeting of the Sr. Officers of MWCD held under the Chairmanship of Secretary, MWCD on 6th December, 2021 where it was decided that "post closure of CSWB, its office space may be utilized for CARA/NIPCCD". Accordingly, a team of Officers of CARA visited the building of CSWB at Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi to seek the possibility to shift the Office of CARA from its present location. It has been observed by the Team that the building is in a dilapidated condition and needs repair & maintenance before shifting. Accordingly, CPWD was asked to prepare an estimate about the civil and electrical work. The proposal was forwarded to IFD through MWCD.

24. The preliminary cum detailed estimate has been framed to cover the probable cost of above mentioned work amounting to a) Electrical Rs. 5,59,74,193/- and b) Civil Rs. 3,44,16,200/-, a total of Rs. 9,03,90,393/-.

(Rupees Nine Crore Three Lakhs Ninety Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Three Only).

25. IFD has raised some queries which are being addressed. One of its suggestions is that the Governing Council of CARA/CSWB Board examines and approves such proposal before approval of MWCD is accorded. In this regard, details are placed at **Annexure-H**

Decision: The CPWD proposal was approved. However, the queries raised by IFD being administrative in nature, may be responded by CARA.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA WITH APPROVAL OF CHAIRPERSON:

Agenda No. 33.10: Inquiry of NCPCR regarding child Sita placed in inter-country adoption

26. CEO CARA informed the Committee regarding a complaint received from the NCPCR on the aforesaid issue where the Commission had raised concerns regarding a special need child Sita allegedly placed in inter-country adoption in violation of priority principle and in this regard has initiated enquiry through the DM concerned. The child was found in Bareilly by a couple who had found the child and had incurred all the medical expenses for the child. The couple had registered with Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) and was interested in adopting Sita. However, the child has been placed in inter-country adoption through following procedure as per Regulation 8(c) of the Adoption Regulations 2017 and the matter is pending in the court. The Committee was informed that the case has been kept in abeyance till the report of NCPCR is received.

Agenda No. 33.11: Story books/pictorial material on various stages and process involved in adoption prepared during SAMVAD by NIMHANS in collaboration with MWCD.

27. National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore has developed story book and pictorial IEC material in collaboration with Ministry of Women and Child Development, New Delhi under SAMVAD. These are mainly stories on various processes involved with adoption i.e. child being orphaned, living in a new physical environment, child going through health issues in absence of his/her parents, finding a new home and beginning of new relationships, experiencing new emotions, adjusting to a new family, child going through questions around belongingness and identity etc. These materials could be utilized to develop Audio-visual and other IEC materials for dissemination during the training programmes being conducted by CARA and for promoting wider publicity and awareness on the subject with the stakeholders all over the country.

28. The proposal was approved. It was decided that the proposal may be prepared by CARA for forwarding it to the media section of the Ministry. JS

(IM) also informed that the Ministry also has received a proposal from NIMHANS to develop AV material.

Meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.


Thirty Third (33rd) Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

Attendance Sheet- Steering Committee Members

1. Shri Indevar Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development
2. Ms. Indra Mallo, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development
3. Ms. Tripti Gurha, Joint Secretary & CEO CARA, Ministry of Women & Child Development
4. Shri Alex P. Thomas, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development (Representing Ms. Sukriti Likhi, Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser, Ministry of Women and Child Development)
5. Prof. Poonam Saxena, Vice Chancellor, National Law University, Jodhpur-342304 **(through VC)**
6. Ms. Shirali Radhakrishan Tyabji, Room No 49, India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi 110003 **(through VC)**
7. Ms. Sangeeta Bangiwar, H.No. 103, Mont Vert Tropez, Wakad, Pune-411057 **(through VC)**
8. Mr. Thingnam Roshan Singh SAA Imphal East Wangkhei Ningthemprukhri Makha Leikai, Imphal East 795001. **(through VC)**

Special Invitees

1. Shri Navendra Singh, Director, CARA, Ministry of Women and Child Development
2. Smt. Anubha Goyal, Sr. Tech. Director, NIC, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi **(through VC)**
3. Dr. Jagannath Pati, Director (Programme), CARA
4. Ms. Richa Ojha, Assistant Director, CARA
5. Ms. Indu Vermani, Data Analyst, CARA


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