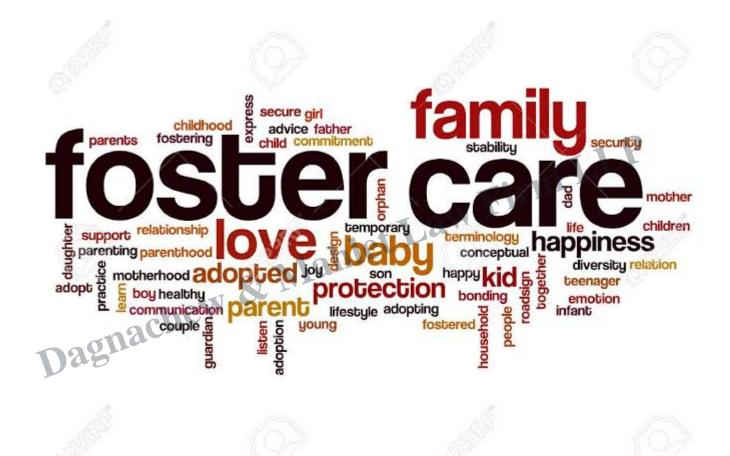
### Foster Care under the New MoWSA's Directive Number 976/2023

### **Description**

By Mahlet Mesganaw, Partner at DMLF



The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs Directive on Alternative Child Care and Support, Directive No 976/2023 was issued in October 2023. The Directive shall enter into force as of the date the Directive has been registered by the Ministry of Justice and posted on the website of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

As part of family based care systems, foster care is a **temporary form** of care where a child is placed by foster care provider to foster carer. The latter shall make an application to be registered as a foster carer by submitting an application to the relevant bureau. The foster care provider shall select, train and approve the foster carer. The foster carer cannot be the child's parent(s), relative or guardian. Rather the foster carer is an outsider who is interested in undertaking care and maintenance of a child.

Foster care bases itself on a **contract agreement**. The foster care contract has to specify the rights and obligations of the child, the foster family, the biological parents(if alive) and of the foster family care service provider organization.

The foster care grants the foster parent the parental responsibilities of maintaining and caring for the child. However, a foster carer cannot take the foster child outside of the jurisdiction of Ethiopia without the approval of leave from a court of law. Such leave shall only be granted upon **exceptional circumstances** being shown. Which court has jurisdiction to hear such cases i.e. the regional court or federal court is not mentioned. Principles and details of what constitutes an 'exceptional circumstances' to grant or disregard leave to travel outside of the jurisdiction of Ethiopia have not been provided by the Directive.

The foster care applicants have to fulfill the following conditions: they should be **Ethiopian nationals** and solely resident in Ethiopia permanently. If they are **foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin**, they have lived in Ethiopia for at least **two years** preceding the foster care placement. The minimum age for a foster carer is 25 and above. If married, the spouse has to give full consent. The consent of any other member of the household may also be necessary, including that of the prospective **foster parent's children**. In addition to these, documents such as Identification card or passport, marriage certificate, proof of income, police clearance certificate, medical certificate, two references of good character, photograph are required to be attached.

Long-term foster care is the placement of a child in foster care, potentially until the foster child reaches the age of **18 years**. A short-term foster care, on the other hand, is a placement of a child in foster care for up to twelve months, upon which the placement can be renewed on an annual basis by relevant bureau or Child Protection Expert for up to three (3) years. Another form of foster care is emergency foster care. In emergency foster care, the emergency foster carers are willing to provide care and protection for the child with short advance notice or on the same day or less than 24 hours. Emergency placement is established for up to ten (10) to fifteen (15) days prior to review by a Child Protection Expert, after which the placement may be converted into short-term foster care as suitable and necessary.

Hence, foster care has been recognized as one form of family based care services. However due to foster care's temporary nature, at least long term foster care is a recommended form of family care **after** reunification with birth parents, or placement in extended family or **adoption**. Community based care or residential care is treated as a last resort.

For any foster care related inquiries you may contact us at info@dmethiolawyers.com

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### RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

By Dagnachew Tesfaye, Partner at DMLF The Alternative Child Care and Support Directive Number 976/2023 by Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, October 2023, incorporates a section namely Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect. The State is given the responsibility to respond to child abuse and neglect. The procedure of

reporting, assessment, court approval, emergency...

June 30, 2024

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The New Public Holidays Proclamation

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June 16, 2024

## **Membership to American Bar Association (ABA)**

Partners to DMLF namely Mr.Dagnachew Tesfaye Abetew and Mrs.Mahlet Mesganaw Getu are proud to announce the membership to the American Bar Association (ABA). We hope the ABA membership will provide us with professional advantages in building networks for rendering life changing legal services for our communities.

June 9, 2024

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# The Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks

By DMLF The Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks is a centralized system that simplifies the process of registering trademarks in multiple countries. It's administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Under this system, trademark owners can file a single application with WIPO to protect their mark in multiple member countries. This...

June 9, 2024

## **Ethiopian National Dialogue**

aw Firm LLP By DMLF The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (hereafter the Commission) was established by Proclamation 1265 /2021(hereafter the Proclamation). The Proclamation was done as of 13th of January 2022. The term of office of the Commission is three (3) years. The term of the Commission shall begin from the time Commissioners have been appointed in accordance...

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