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*Advancing freedom and prosperity through evidence - based research and advocacy*

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The President

Ghana Bar Association

3H/NO. 15, Haile Selassie Avenue

Ridge- Accra.

## Request for Review and Reduction of Legal Fees for Adoption Processes in Ghana

Dear Mr. Boafo,

Hope this letter finds you in good health. I am writing on behalf of the IMANI Center for Policy and Education to voice our concerns over the published legal fees of the Ghana Bar Association's (GBA) related to the adoption procedure in Ghana. In order to make adoption more affordable for a larger portion of Ghana's population, we would like to respectfully ask that these fees be reviewed and maybe reduced.

For children who are unable to live with their biological families, adoption is an essential means of finding them permanent homes. Giving children the needed stability, affection, and the chance to flourish in a caring environment is not just an act of kindness but also a crucial social service that has a huge positive impact on their life. However, many would-be adoptive parents find it extremely difficult to proceed with the adoption process because of the hefty legal costs involved, particularly for those from middle-class and lower-class backgrounds.

**Challenges Posed by High Legal Fees**

1. Financial Barriers: Many well-meaning people and families who want to adopt but cannot afford the hefty expense of legal services in the adoption process become discouraged. As a result, there are fewer adoptions, and more kids are placed in foster care for extended periods of time. There have been noted challenges over the adoption processes filed at offices of the Social Welfare Department- with some complaints of extortion from staff facilitating this important process (from accounts shared by private individuals). In addition to this, legal fees for adoption is said to be set between $2000 to $4000 dollars. Meaning, in the current circumstances, the least fee for adoption is GHS 29,000 in order to secure the required court documentation to complete the process. The high fees charged offer yet another layer of frustration for prospective families.

2. Inequitable Access: Less wealthy families bear a disproportionate share of the financial cost of adoption, which restricts the pool of potential adoptive parents and lowers the likelihood that many children will find a permanent home.

3. Social and Economic Impact: Long-term social and economic ramifications of prolonged child institutionalization include increased state expenses for care and support services as well as possibly unfavorable results for the children involved.

**Benefits of Reducing Legal Fees for Adoption**

1. Increased Adoption Rates: Reducing legal fees would probably encourage more adoptions, which would relieve the strain on childcare centers and orphanages by giving more kids stable, loving homes.

2. Enhanced Social Equity: Lowering the adoption costs would enable a wider range of people to participate in the process, fostering social justice and guaranteeing that the ability to adopt is not restricted by one's ability to pay.

3. Positive Public Perception: A more reasonably priced adoption procedure would improve the public's opinion of the legal profession by demonstrating a dedication to the welfare of society and the most vulnerable children.

**Request for Action**

We respectfully ask that the Ghana Bar Association evaluate the present adoption legal fees and look into potential reductions in light of these factors. This can entail offering pro bono assistance in situations involving lower-income families or establishing a standard charge for adoption services that is more reasonably priced.

We believe taking such action would show how committed the GBA is to advancing social justice and improving the welfare of underprivileged children. Moreover, it would be consistent with the worldwide movement promoted by numerous international child welfare groups towards adoption procedures that are more egalitarian and inclusive.

**Conclusion**

We firmly believe that a reexamination of adoption-related legal costs would significantly improve Ghana's adoption environment. We would be willing to have additional conversations with your prestigious organization to go over this issue in greater detail and look into potential solutions.

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to your positive response and to working together towards a more accessible and compassionate adoption process in Ghana.

***Yours sincerely,***

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