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Press Release

DHS Announces 18-Month Extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) For Nationals of Honduras and Nicaragua

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced an 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nationals of Honduras and Nicaragua until July 5, 2006. Under this extension, those who have already been granted TPS are eligible to live and work in the United States for an additional 18 months and continue to maintain their status. There are approximately 81,875 nationals of Honduras and 4,309 nationals of Nicaragua (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Honduras or Nicaragua) who are eligible for re-registration.

The extension of TPS for nationals of Honduras and Nicaragua is effective January 5, 2005, and will remain in effect until July 5, 2006. Nationals of Honduras and Nicaragua who have been granted TPS must re-register for the 18-month extension during the 60-day re-registration period, which begins on November 3, 2004 and remain in effect until January 3, 2005. In an effort to prevent potential gaps in employment authorization while eligible Hondurans and Nicaraguans wait for their TPS re-registration applications to be processed, DHS is granting a six-month automatic extension of the expiration date of their current TPS-related EADs to July 5, 2005.

A TPS extension is also pending with DHS for El Salvador, which suffered damage similar to that of Honduras and Nicaragua based on a series of severe earthquakes. DHS is favorably disposed to considering an extension for El Salvador if the country conditions there warrant. The current TPS designation for El Salvador expires March 9, 2005.

Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to grant TPS to aliens in the United States who are nationals of countries that are subject to ongoing armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. On January 5, 1999, the Attorney General (who retained authority over TPS designations prior to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003) designated TPS for Honduras and Nicaragua based on the devastation resulting from Hurricane Mitch and subsequently extended the designation four times. The most recent extension expires on January 5, 2005. Due to continued reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Mitch, the U.S. Government has determined that an 18-month extension of the TPS designation is warranted because Honduras and Nicaragua remain unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of its nationals.

To re-register for TPS under the extension, a TPS applicant must submit Form I-821 (Application for Temporary Protected Status) without the filing fee, Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization), and a \$70 biometrics services fee for each applicant age 14 and older. In addition, any applicant under age 14 who seeks an EAD must submit the \$70 biometrics service fee. **Both Forms I-765 and I-821 must be submitted for re-registration.** If the applicant only seeks to re-register for TPS and does not seek to renew an EAD, there is no filing fee for the Form I-765. However, all applicants seeking an extension of employment authorization until July 5, 2006 must submit a \$175 filing fee with Form I-765. Applicants may request a fee waiver in accordance with the regulations, however the biometric fees cannot be waived. **Failure to submit the required documents and fees will result in the rejection of the re-registration application.** Unlike previous extension procedures, TPS re-registrants need not submit photographs with the TPS application because photographs will be taken when the applicant appears at an Application Support Center (ASC) for collection of biometrics.

Please note that Form I-821 has been revised and only the new form will be accepted. Submissions of older versions of Form I-821 will be rejected. This form is available on the USCIS web site at www.uscis.gov and will be made available at local USCIS offices and the USCIS Forms line, 1-800-870-3676.

Please note that the filing location has changed. Applicants should not submit applications to USCIS Service Centers, as this will slow the processing of their applications. **File the re-registration application package at the USCIS Chicago Lockbox at:**

U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services
P.O. Box 87583
Chicago, IL 60680-0583

For non-U.S. Postal Service deliveries, file at:

U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services
427 S. LaSalle – 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

More information can be obtained from the USCIS National Customer Service Center toll-free number: 1-800-375-5283. TPS forms are available from the toll-free USCIS Forms line, 1-800-870-3676, or from the USCIS Web site: www.uscis.gov.

-USCIS-

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) became one of three former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.