

PRESS RELEASE & FEATURE STORY



“A new Convention...designed to respond to the needs of children and other dependents by providing international procedures which are simple, swift, cost-effective, accessible, and fair.”

1. Unpaid child support – as well as support of other dependent family members – amounts to billions of Euros worldwide. When the person liable for support lives abroad, the difficulties of recovery are often insurmountable. At present, international procedures are typically slow, complicated, costly, and under-utilized. They are simply not serving the needs of the children and other family dependents who, in a mobile world in which multinational families are no longer exceptional, are increasing in number exponentially. The new Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance is designed to respond to the often modest needs of children and other dependents by providing international procedures which are simple, swift, cost-effective, accessible, and fair.
2. The XXIst Diplomatic Session of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, to negotiate the new Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and other Forms of Family Maintenance, will begin with an **Opening Ceremony on Monday, 5 November 2007** at 11:00 a.m. in the Academy Building of the Peace Palace (The Hague) in the presence of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Verhagen, and the Minister of Justice, Ernst Hirsch Ballin. The Diplomatic Session will conclude on **Friday, 23 November 2007** at 11:00 a.m. with a Closing Ceremony and **signing of the Final Act** in the Academy Building of the Peace Palace in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Maxime Verhagen, and the Diplomatic Representatives. Delegates from more than 100 states as well as non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations are invited to participate.
3. **A press conference will follow the Closing Ceremony of the Diplomatic Session on Friday, 23 November 2007** in the Academy Building of the Peace Palace. All media interested in attending should contact Frederike Stikkelbroeck by phone at + 31 70 302 9968/+31 70 363 33 03 or by email at secretariat@hcch.net **no later than 31 October, 2007**.
4. The Hague Conference is the worldwide intergovernmental organisation for cross-border co-operation in civil and commercial matters. It has 67 Members located on every continent. Furthermore, more than 125 States are Parties to one or more Hague Conventions. Please see the Hague Conference website for more information: www.hcch.net.

WHAT	Diplomatic Session & Signing of the Final Act (text and Protocol) of the new Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and other Forms of Family Maintenance
WHEN PRESS PRESENT	Opening Ceremony: 5 November, 2007, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Closing Ceremony: 23 November 2007, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Press Conference: immediately following the Closing Ceremony
WHERE	Academy Building of the Peace Palace, Carnegieplein 2 (The Hague)
CONTACT/REGISTRATION	Frederike Stikkelbroeck, Attaché to the Secretary General Permanent Bureau, Hague Conference on Private International Law 6, Scheveningseweg, 2517 KT The Hague, The Netherlands Tel: +31 (70) 363 33 03 or +31 (70) 302 99 68 (direct); Fax: +31 (70) 360 48 67 E-mail: secretariat@hcch.net ; website www.hcch.net Registration deadline: 31 October 2007 (e-mail preferred)
MEDIA FACILITIES	Press kits will be available for the Opening Ceremony and for the Closing Ceremony (Signing). A Press Room will open at 10am on these dates. Please note that there are a limited number of workspaces available. Complimentary WIFI access, electric outlets, etc. can be provided. Photographs of the Diplomatic Session are available upon request.

FEATURE STORY



“A new Convention...designed to respond to the needs of children and other dependents by providing international procedures which are simple, swift, cost-effective, accessible, and fair.”

1. Helga has not received any maintenance payments for her three children since their father left four years ago. She said: "If we received €60 a week from him it would be really helpful." She has been told by local authorities that her husband cannot be located, and is thought to be abroad. The lack of support has made her dependent on public benefits, and she has been forced to move to a shelter with her children because she cannot afford the house where they once lived.
2. Reginaldo and Maria have been fighting for custody of their only son for seven years. Because the parents live in different countries, the amount of support their son is entitled to and the applicable laws governing the support order are in dispute.
3. Aminata would be able to independently live in a 2-bedroom apartment with her two children if she had a reliable, consistent way to receive the child support payments her ex-husband irregularly provides from abroad. She also faces delays in receiving any money that is sent from local authorities. Therefore she lives in a run-down and unsafe neighbourhood with her two young daughters.
4. Helga, Reginaldo, Maria, and Aminata’s daily life stories are typical. They could benefit from the simple, swift, cost-effective, accessible and fair procedures provided for in the Convention as soon as it is in force. The Convention will benefit not only tens of thousands of dependents, but also taxpayers, whose burden increases when private obligations are not fulfilled.
5. The new Convention builds upon the best features of existing international instruments, it facilitates the use of new technologies in streamlining the international processes, and, through a system of Central Authorities, promotes close co-operation between the child support agencies and authorities in the different Contracting States. Together with the existing Hague Children’s Conventions, like International Child Protection, Child Abduction, and Inter-Country Adoption, the new Convention will form part of a formidable arsenal of international instruments designed by the Hague Conference to give real and practical effect to the Rights of the Child.
6. The signing of the Final Act marks agreement on the final text of the Convention (and Protocol) negotiated during the Diplomatic Session. The Convention and Protocol will then open for formal signature and ratification by States and the European Community which are Members of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and by the other States which participate in the Diplomatic Session. Any other State not present during the Diplomatic Session may accede to the Convention after it has entered into force.

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