

**RAPPORT SUR LES ACTIVITÉS DES BUREAUX RÉGIONAUX
AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET ASIE PACIFIQUE**

établi par le Bureau Permanent

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**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL OFFICES
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE ASIA PACIFIC**

drawn up by the Permanent Bureau

*Document d'information No 1 de mars 2013 à l'attention du
Conseil d'avril 2013 sur les affaires générales et la politique de la Conférence*

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Introduction

The Hague Conference on Private International Law is strongly committed to regional engagement and therefore has established regional offices in two key regions – Latin America (Buenos Aires) and the Asia Pacific (Hong Kong), consistent with its Strategic Plan (2002) and periodic updates which have affirmed this view.¹ With the aim of increasing the visibility of the Hague Conference and the Hague Conventions, and improving the operation of Hague Conventions throughout Latin America and the Asia Pacific region, the Regional Offices in Buenos Aires and Hong Kong provide the following services:

- encouraging and facilitating engagement of regional actors and States in the work of the Hague Conference;
- responding to requests for information regarding the work of the Hague Conference and / or its Conventions;
- encouraging and facilitating networking among regional actors – including National Organs, Central and Competent Authorities, other operators of the Hague Conventions, members of the International Hague Network of Judges, international organisations, practitioners and the academic sector;
- facilitating the accessibility of relevant information to actors in the regions and promoting knowledge of, and best practices under, the Hague Conventions;
- gathering information and conducting research in and for the region in accordance with the work programme of the Permanent Bureau;
- assisting with the development and promotion of Hague Conference tools and guides (INCADAT, INCASTAT, iChild, e-APP, Guides to Good Practice and Practical Handbooks, among others) for persons and entities tasked with implementing and operating Hague Conventions;
- developing and promoting the work of the Hague Conference in other languages (subject to available resources); and
- providing and / or co-ordinating technical assistance to States in the relevant region in the form of training programmes, promotional activities, and seminars for judges, government officials, Central and Competent Authority officers and other professionals responsible for implementing and applying the Hague Conventions.

On a daily basis, government officials, judges, practitioners and academics benefit from the efforts, outreach and tools made possible through the work of the Hague Conference Regional Offices. As extensions of the Permanent Bureau, both the Regional Office for Latin America and the Regional Office for the Asia Pacific were established to provide greater access, knowledge, and support for States in their respective regions in relation to the work of the Hague Conference. In turn, these States provide valuable insight into their practices, policies and procedures for the purpose of expanding the relevance and value of Hague Conventions. As a result, both offices play a key role in facilitating greater regional involvement while simultaneously enhancing the Hague Conference's ability to effectively respond to the needs and priorities of the relevant States.

To achieve this, the Regional Offices respond directly to requests and co-ordinate communication between constituent entities and the Permanent Bureau's headquarters in The Hague. As an additional benefit, the Regional Offices have gradually been able to assume many of the activities and other efforts once handled exclusively by the Permanent Bureau's main office in The Hague.

This Report summarises the activities and accomplishments of both Hague Conference Regional Offices for the period between April 2013 and April 2014. It also provides a summary of the funding and expenditures for both offices, insofar as such costs are beyond the scope of the Organisation's Regular Operating Budget.

¹ See, e.g., *Strategic Plan of the Hague Conference on Private International Law* (April 2002) at Section 4.1.1.

Brief report on the Latin America Regional Office (Buenos Aires, Argentina) (April 2013 – April 2014)

Background

On 23 August 2013, the Host Country Agreement regarding the establishment of the Hague Conference's Regional Office for Latin America in Buenos Aires entered into force. This agreement establishes the legal personality of the office, outlines the privileges and immunities afforded to it and its office personnel; defines the Office's relationship with the Permanent Bureau's headquarters in The Hague; and provides a framework to receive support from interns and officials on secondment.

The entry into force of the Host Country Agreement was followed by a meeting in Buenos Aires of the Secretary General and the Representative of the Latin America Regional Office with diplomats from 15 Latin American States (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) to discuss the work of the Regional Office and ways in which States in the region could further benefit from and engage in the Office's efforts and activities. The meeting, which was organised by the National Organ of Argentina, increased the visibility of the Office and provided delegates with information regarding the goals and initiatives of the Permanent in the region. The meeting resulted in support for furthering an idea to develop an informal platform to exchange information between the *Corps Diplomatique* throughout Latin America and the Regional Office.

Summary report on the work of the Latin America Regional Office

Organisation

The Regional Office in Buenos Aires is headed by the Representative of the Hague Conference for Latin America. He is assisted by a part-time Legal and Administrative Assistant.²

Activities

At the global level, two meetings were organised by the Hague Conference in which the Regional Office played a key role. These events had a significant impact on the Latin American region:

1. 15th anniversary of the International Hague Network of Judges

The Conference celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the International Hague Network of Judges took place in Windsor Park, England from 17 to 19 July 2013. This anniversary event is particularly meaningful for Latin America, as it is the first region to have a Hague Network Judge representing every Contracting State of the *Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* ("Child Abduction Convention") (a total of 17). The Latin American Office was heavily involved in the organisation and preparation of the meeting, and provided considerable assistance to secure the attendance of Latin American judges, who participated actively in the event.

2. 8th International Forum on the e-APP

The 8th International Forum on the e-APP (17-18 October 2013, Montevideo, Uruguay) was the first time this International Forum took place in Latin America. This was very well-timed, considering a great number of Latin American States have recently acceded to or are in the process of implementing the *Hague Convention of*

² The costs linked to the services provided by a part-time legal assistant, as well as the travel expenditures of the Representative to carry out his duties, are borne by the Organisation's Supplementary Budget.

5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents ("Apostille Convention").

The Forum succeeded in bringing together experts from almost all Latin American States that are either Contracting States to the Apostille Convention or are actively considering accession to it. Latin American States have shown great interest in the application of the e-APP, and Colombia has already implemented both components (e-Apostille and the e-Register). Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay have implemented the e-Register; Brazil, Chile, Cuba and Guatemala are considering the implementation of one or both of the e-APP components while either exploring whether to accede to the Convention or engaging in the process of doing so.

At the regional level, the Latin American Office was instrumental in organising three significant events for advancing the work of the Hague Conference:

1. *Latin American Meeting on the International Protection of Children and the Recovery of Maintenance Abroad ("Santiago Meeting")*

The Hague Conference, through its Latin American Office and in partnership with the Heidelberg Institute for Latin America, organised the first regional meeting focused collectively on the *Hague Convention of 19 October 1996 on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children* ("Child Protection Convention") and the *Hague Convention of 23 November 2007 on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance* ("Child Support Convention"). This "Santiago Meeting" took place from 4 to 6 December 2013 in Santiago, Chile. Sixteen States were represented with a total of approximately 50 participants.

The main objectives of the Santiago Meeting were to:

1. Consider the benefits resulting from the implementation of the Child Protection and Child Support Conventions, and to facilitate their study by relevant national authorities and other actors in the region;
2. Discuss the potential impact of the entry into force of both Conventions with relevant national authorities and other stakeholders and to respond to questions from these experts related to the practical implementation and operation of both Conventions;
3. Circulate to other stakeholders throughout the region information describing the event and its significant outcomes.

The Santiago Meeting included officials from National Organs, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Justice, States Attorneys, representatives of the judiciary, members of the International Hague Network of Judges, Central Authorities, social service organisations, and academics from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain and Uruguay.

In advance of the meeting, the Permanent Bureau drafted and distributed short questionnaires which were tailored to the specific competencies of each group of participating experts, providing the opportunity for participants to exchange experiences and opinions via conference call, and preparing presentations for the meeting.

The preparatory efforts facilitated in-depth and detailed discussions during the meeting and allowed for precise discussions on the legal and practical effects of incorporating both Conventions into the different Latin American legal systems

which were represented at the event. Participants were encouraged to play a large role in analysing each of the Conventions and determining effective strategies in their subsequent implementation and operation.

The outcome of the meeting included the development of two documents: a draft "Explanatory Note on Specific Matters concerning the Child Protection Convention" and a draft "Study of Legal and Practical Impacts of the Child Support Convention in Latin American States". Together, they are intended to assist the relevant officials with preparing a legal analysis of the Conventions for their respective States (e.g., promoting the benefits of each Convention, addressing possible legal obstacles, and identifying good practices for their implementation and operation). The Permanent Bureau is in the process of revising both documents to reflect the suggestions made at the meeting, and will circulate amended versions to participants for approval before they are finalised and published.

2. Working Group on Judicial Co-operation organised by the Ibero-American Judicial Summit

The Ibero-American Judicial Summit organised a Working Group on Judicial Co-operation with the purpose of improving and developing judicial co-operation in the Latin American Region. As a member of the Working Group, the Hague Conference Representative for Latin America participated in the two meetings which took place from 26 February to 1 March in Guatemala, and 4 to 6 September in Colombia. The Working Group developed a final draft of the "Ibero-American Protocol on Judicial Co-operation" which is expected to be endorsed at the Judicial Summit in April 2014. The Protocol is expected to reinforce Hague Conference interests and activities in the context of judicial co-operation. It expressly incorporates the "Emerging Guidance and General Principles for Judicial Communications" developed by the Hague Conference and gives greater visibility to the International Hague Network of Judges and the role of Hague Network Judges.

3. 49th Conference of the Inter-American Bar Association (IABA)

During its 49th Conference in Asunción, Paraguay in June 2013, the Inter-American Bar Association (IABA) issued a declaration which included a recommendation that States consider joining certain Hague legal co-operation and litigation Conventions, including the Apostille, Service, Evidence, Access to Justice, and the Choice of Court Conventions.³ The Conference focussed on many of the challenges stemming from cross-border litigation. It featured a panel organised by the Permanent Bureau which highlighted Hague Conference work in the areas of legal co-operation and litigation, which partly contributed to the inclusion of the recommendation to join Hague instruments in the IABA Declaration.

4. Annual Conference of the Mexican Association on Private International and Comparative Law

The annual conference of the Mexican Association on Private International Law and Comparative Law (AMEDIP) took place in Guadalajara, Mexico from 24 to 27 September 2013. The conference devoted the major part of its programme to the Hague Conference's work, and honoured the Hague Conference's former Secretary General, Hans van Loon.

³ See sub-section 2, *supra*, for the formal title of the Apostille Convention. The other Conventions are formally referred to as follows: *Convention of 15 November 1965 on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters*, the *Convention of 18 March 1970 on the Taking of Evidence Abroad in Civil or Commercial Matters*, *Convention of 25 October 1980 on International Access to Justice*, the *Convention of 30 June 2005 on Choice of Court Agreements*, respectively.

Finally, in addition to global and regional programmes, the Latin America Regional Office engaged in several State-specific activities which are described briefly below.

a. Apostille Convention

Paraguay acceded to the Apostille Convention on 10 December 2013 (entry into force on 30 August 2014), and the Congresses of Chile and Guatemala are considering acceding to the Convention. The Convention is also being studied extensively by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and Cuba. The Permanent Bureau, to a considerable extent through its Latin American Regional Office, has been providing support and advice to these States on matters relating to implementation and legal analysis.

b. Child Abduction Convention

The Latin American Office co-organised or gave presentations as part of several training programmes on the Child Abduction Convention held in the following countries:

Guatemala (26 February 2013). As a result of technical assistance provided to Guatemala related to the Child Abduction Convention, the Supreme Court finally developed and passed, in January 2013, domestic regulations which define the authority and jurisdiction of courts with competence to hear civil child abduction matters (now being heard only by two Children Courts), and details the procedure that should be applied in those cases (*procedimiento incidental*). A judicial training seminar for a select group of judges and Central Authority officers was organised by the Children's Unit of the Supreme Court in collaboration with the Permanent Bureau and with the support of UNICEF and Minister Ricardo Perez Manrique (Supreme Court of Uruguay). The Hague Conference Representative for Latin America chaired the event.

Venezuela (26-28 June 2013). The Supreme Court of Venezuela organised its First Congress on International Child Abduction in Caracas. Approximately 800 people attended the Congress, including all judges that handle children's matters in Venezuela, public defenders, prosecutors, and other officials from institutions such as the Central Authority and UNICEF. The Representative for Latin America presented to the group and co-ordinated the presentations of Minister Perez Manrique (Supreme Court of Uruguay) and Judge Graciela Tagle (Hague Network Judge for Argentina) via videoconference during the Congress.

Argentina (22-23 August 2013). The Argentinean Supreme Court organised a judicial training seminar on civil child abduction for judges who are members of the National Judicial Network on International Child Protection; and mediators who are members of the National Network of Mediators and specialise in parental child abduction disputes.

Uruguay (13 to 14 September 2013). A judicial training programme on child abduction was organised by the Hague Network Judge from Uruguay with the support of the Supreme Court of Uruguay. The event was attended by judges from throughout the country who specialise in this area, as well as officials from the Central Authority. The Hague Conference Representative for Latin America presented a lecture at the event. As a result of activities such as this, Uruguay has developed one of the most sophisticated and effective models of implementation in relation to the Child Abduction Convention, and cases are often decided in six weeks or less.

Paraguay (30 October 2013). A judicial training seminar on civil child abduction was organised by the Supreme Court of Paraguay with the active involvement of its two

Hague Network Judges and the Hague Conference Representative for Latin America. Approximately 100 judges attended from throughout the country.

c. Intercountry Adoption Convention

El Salvador (3-15 May 2013). El Salvador does not have a special law on adoption, but provisions on adoption are included in the Civil Code and the Family Procedure Code. Its current adoption system does not fully comply with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* nor with the *Hague Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*, which has been in force in El Salvador since 1999. The Children's Commission Congress has decided to regulate adoptions and has initiated efforts to develop a new law which would comply with El Salvador's obligations as a Contracting State to the Intercountry Adoption Convention. As part of these efforts, the Congress organised the International Forum on Adoptions at which the Representative for the Regional Office in Latin America presented alongside experts from Costa Rica and Panama.

The Forum was attended by approximately 100 people and notably included representatives from all sectors and stakeholders operating in connection with the child protection system. It was clear, however, that participants held very different views in relation to several delicate matters. The President of the Children's Commission, Deputy Rodolfo Parker, closed the event by announcing the creation of an inter-institutional commission to develop a new law on adoption.

Colombia (29-30 May 2013). The Central Authority of Colombia organised a meeting of Central Authorities from receiving States. The Permanent Bureau has been providing technical assistance to Colombia periodically over the past several years to help improve the country's laws and practices related to the operation of the Adoption Convention. Principal Legal Officer Laura Martínez-Mora attended the meeting on behalf of the Permanent Bureau. She presented at the event and held working meetings with the Colombian Central Authority.

Miscellaneous

An important technical development in the work of the Regional Office is the increasing use of videoconference technology to communicate with stakeholders throughout Latin America. This helpful tool is now commonly used to actively participate in internal Permanent Bureau meetings conducted from The Hague, as well as external meetings with different authorities in the region (*e.g.*, to provide technical assistance, plan future activities, or discuss specific topics), and to give lectures remotely rather than travel to attend various national and regional events.

Conclusion

The Latin American Regional Office continued responding to the numerous consultations that are regularly received from public officers, judges, academics and professionals on different matters related to the work of the Hague Conference and its Conventions throughout the past year.

Brief Report on the Asia Pacific Regional Office (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China)
(April 2013 – April 2014)

Background

In April 2012, the Council on General Affairs and Policy endorsed the establishment of the Hague Conference's Asia Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong.⁴ Following this endorsement, preparatory work to establish the new regional office progressed between May and November 2012. Justice Michael Hartmann, a Non-Permanent Judge of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal, was appointed as the Regional Office's first Representative. Office premises were leased at 1410 Hong Kong Plaza, 188 Connaught Road West. Ms Alix Ng Tak Fong was recruited as Office Manager to furnish the office and deal with all necessary administrative matters. Finally, on 13 December 2012, a Host Country Agreement and Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements were signed in Hong Kong, marking the official opening of the Hague Conference's new Asia Pacific Regional Office. Like the Regional Office in Buenos Aires, the Regional Office in Hong Kong is an extension of the Permanent Bureau.

Professor Anselmo Reyes assumed the role of Representative of the Office and succeeded Justice Hartmann⁵ shortly after the official opening of the new Office. In February 2013, he signed the first Memorandum of Understanding on Academic Co-operation (MOU) with Kyushu University (Japan). This MOU included provisions for a graduate student from the University to work as an intern in the Regional Office for five months, *i.e.*, from November 2013 to March 2014.

Other MOUs have since been concluded with other universities and institutions, including Gujarat National Law University (India), the College of Law of De La Salle University (Philippines), the Law School at Melbourne University (Australia), and Hughes Hall (Cambridge). Together with Lipman Karas (an Australian law firm with offices in Hong Kong and London), the Regional Office is working with Cambridge University to set up a Centre for Private International Law modelled after the Lauterpacht Centre for Public International Law.

Summary report on the work of the Asia Pacific Regional Office

Organisation

The Representative of the Asia Pacific Office is assisted by a Legal Officer and an Office Manager. In May 2013, Mr Daniel Zhu Yong was seconded from the People's Republic of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to act as a Legal Officer for an initial period of two years.⁶

Activities

Under the new Representative, the Regional Office has engaged in several activities over the course of the past year. Among those activities were two important regional conferences:

1. APEC Workshop on the Apostille Convention

An Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Workshop on a Simplified Authentication Process for Production of Public Documents Abroad through the Use of the Hague Apostille Convention was held from 28 to 29 June 2013 in Medan (Indonesia). APEC's Economic Committee formally endorsed the proposal for the

⁴ The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is referred to here in its shorthand name, *i.e.*, "Hong Kong" in the interest of brevity.

⁵ Justice Hartmann continues his relationship with the Regional Office as a consultant.

⁶ Unlike the Regional Office for Latin America (which depends on a combination of sources, including, in part, the Regular Budget of the Organisation for its operational expenses) the Asia Pacific Regional Office is wholly funded by voluntary contributions from States and other stakeholders from the Region.

Workshop on 2 February 2013, following suggestions from the Regional Office to organise the event.

Both the current Secretary General and the Representative attended the event, which provided the opportunity to address the 21 member economies of APEC and provide comprehensive information on the Apostille Convention. The role of the Apostille Convention to facilitate foreign direct investment (as confirmed by the World Bank and the International Chamber of Commerce) was widely recognised and accepted by the participants. Based in part on the interest and support expressed at this Workshop, APEC and the Regional Office are exploring the possibility of organising a similar APEC Workshop on the Hague Service and Evidence Conventions during the second half of 2014.

The APEC Workshop was itself the highlight of a week-long mission in June 2013 where the current Secretary General and the Representative met with government, judicial and business representatives (including the Director-General of APEC) in Jakarta (Indonesia) and Singapore.

2. Conference on International Litigation

The Conference on International Litigation in the Asia Pacific Region took place in Wuhan (PRC) from 23 to 24 September 2013. The Conference was co-organised by the Hague Conference and Wuhan University. Over 40 participants, including government officials, judges, academics and invited experts from almost all Asia Pacific states (Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Laos (People's Democratic Republic), Myanmar, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam) attended. The keynote speaker was the Commonwealth Solicitor General of Australia. Several Hague Conference officials provided both administrative and substantive contributions to the event, including Ms Marta Pertegas, Ms Cara North, and Ms Alix Ng Tak Fong.

The Conference was devoted to promotion of the *Hague Convention of 30 June 2005 on Choice of Court Agreements* and the Hague Conference's Judgments Project. The conclusion of the Conference featured the adoption of a statement supporting the Choice of Court Convention and the continuation of the Judgments Project. The Regional Office played a key role in the administrative and logistical arrangements for this event and obtained additional financial support from the law firm Lipman Karas necessary to fund the Conference.

Other key activities included the following:

1. Lecture Series on Private International Law

On 5, 12 and 19 July 2013 the Representative delivered three public lectures under the general title "An Introduction to Private International Law: Commercial Transactions" in Hong Kong. The purpose of these lectures was to promote greater knowledge of the Hague Conference and the Hague Conventions as well as to raise additional funds to help ensure the sustainability of the Office's long-term operations. More than 100 people attended the lecture series. A second series of five public lectures, covering the recently reformed company and insolvency regimes in Hong Kong and the private international law implications of the new legislation, is planned for May and June 2014.

2. Anticipated launch of a charitable entity

In December 2013, the Representative of the Regional Office applied to the Hong Kong Government for permission to establish a non-profit charitable entity to be known as "The Friends of the Hong Kong Regional Office of the Asia Pacific Ltd". The main purpose of this entity is to provide an avenue whereby persons in the Asia

Pacific Region and elsewhere who are interested in private international law may take part in and support Office initiatives and activities upon payment of an annual fee.

If successful, the entity will be used to sponsor lectures, dinners and lunches where private international law topics can be discussed. The Friends will also set up a website which will include a calendar of private international law-related events in the Asia Pacific Region and a database of Asia Pacific private international law cases. In connection with the database, interns working at the Regional Office have begun preparing short, one-page analyses in English of private international law cases heard by Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian, Indonesian and Philippine courts. Other case notes will follow, depending on the linguistic capabilities of interns. Such cases are usually overlooked by standard legal databases, not least because the cases are difficult to find and are in Asian languages (as opposed to English). The Friends' database aspires to put a greater worldwide focus on Asia Pacific private international law jurisprudence, so that it will become better known and understood.

At the same time, the Regional Office, including the Representative, has participated in numerous seminars, missions, lectures, technical assistance and other outreach activities throughout the Asia Pacific Region. Some noteworthy activities are presented according to their themes below:

a. Mutual Legal Co-operation

The Representative attended the International Conference on Mutual Legal Cooperation in the Macao Special Administrative Region of the PRC from 28 to 29 May 2013. He delivered a speech titled, "The Hague Conference: Promoting Co-operation in Civil and Commercial Law Matters in the Asia Pacific Region".

b. Apostille Convention

In May 2013 the Representative met officials representing the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines to encourage accession to the Hague Apostille, Service and Evidence Conventions.

The Representative, along with Professor Peter Zablud of Victoria University in Melbourne (Australia), conducted a Workshop on the Apostille Convention for the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) at the College of Law of De La Salle University in Manila (Philippines). The Supreme Court of the Philippines, in conjunction with PHILJA was instrumental in making the workshop possible. The Chief Justice delivered concluding remarks at the end of the Workshop.

The Representative also attended a Workshop on the Apostille Convention in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) from 6 to 7 March 2014. The event was similar to the one that took place in Hanoi (Vietnam) in December 2013 at which the Secretary General spoke.

c. Child Abduction Convention

The Representative also gave a presentation on the Child Abduction Convention to the Chiefs of Staff of the Philippine Senate on 17 October 2013, in anticipation of the President's approval of legislation enabling the Philippines' accession to the Child Abduction Convention in the near future. The President's endorsement of the accession must still be confirmed by the Senate under Philippine law. The presentation was therefore intended to inform the Senate of the salient points of the Convention in order to expedite confirmation.

At the end of 2013, the Philippines appointed three judges to the International Hague Network of Judges. Discussions are currently underway regarding the possibility of also appointing Sri Lankan and Cambodian judges to the Network.

d. Inter-Country Adoption Convention

The Representative and Ms Laura Martínez-Mora both attended the 12th Global Consultation on Child Welfare Services in Manila (Philippines) from 14 to 16 August 2013. Together, they conducted a judicial training programme in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) from 3 to 6 December 2013.

e. Choice of Court Convention

The Representative gave a talk titled "The 2005 Choice of Court Agreement Convention and the Asia Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong" at the Australian National University (ANU) on 20 August 2013. The event was arranged through ANU and the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC) in Canberra.

In the course of his visit to Australia in August 2013, the Representative took the opportunity to meet government officials, academics, and judges in Brisbane, Canberra, and Sydney to discuss the work of the Hague Conference in the Asia Pacific. It was also possible for the Representative to speak to New Zealand government officials about the Hague Conventions relating to the welfare of the child through a video link set up by the AGC.

On 29 October 2013, the Representative spoke to Chief Justices of the Asia Pacific Region about the Convention at a conference organised by the Singapore Judiciary.

f. Miscellaneous

From 7 to 11 October 2013, the Secretary General and the Representative engaged in presenting information to government, judicial and academic organisations in Fukuoka, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Shizuoka. The Secretary General focused on the Hague Conference and the Child Abduction Convention in his presentations, while the Representative spoke about the new Regional Office's activities and the founding of jurisdiction in common law countries.

On 16 October 2013, the Representative gave a presentation on eight Hague Conventions (including the Child Abduction and Child Support Conventions⁷) to the justices of the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

The Representative attended a Conference on the Integration of the Association of Southeast Asia States (ASEAN) at the College of Law of De La Salle University on 13 February 2014. He spoke on "The Resolution of Commercial Disputes in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)" and referred to the advantages of ASEAN adopting six Hague Conventions on Civil Procedure and Applicable Law (namely, the Apostille, Service, Evidence, Choice of Court, Recognition of Trusts and Securities Conventions) as part of its preparations for an AEC. This talk was based on a paper titled "ASEAN and the Hague Conventions" (to be published in the *Asia Pacific Law Review*) which the Representative presented on 17 September 2013 at the "5th International Conference on New Haven and other Jurisprudential Perspectives on Conflict Resolution and Current Legal Problems," an event jointly sponsored by Yale University and the City University of Hong Kong.

The Representative spoke on the Hague Conference, the activities and initiatives offered by the Asia Pacific Regional Office, and promoted the benefits linked to being

⁷ *Hague Convention of 23 November 2007 on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance.*

a Party to one or more specific Hague Conventions to professors and students of Beijing University during a visit to the Faculty of Law at Hong Kong University on 19 July 2013. The Representative gave a similar presentation to students at Wuhan University in December 2013. The Representative plans to give additional talks of a similar nature to students at Renmin Law School and Tsinghua University in April 2014.

The Regional Office welcomed Mr Hans van Loon, former Secretary General of the Hague Conference, in Hong Kong from 5 to 6 September 2013. Mr van Loon delivered two lectures during his visit: (1) "Globalisation, Regional Integration and Co-operation and Hague Conference" at the Centre for Comparative and Public Law at Hong Kong University; and (2) a "Judicial Communications" lecture delivered to members of the Hong Kong Judiciary.

Similar to recent developments in Latin America, an important technical improvement recently implemented in the Asia Pacific Regional Office has been the use of videoconferencing equipment, which was generously provided by the Australian Government and is now routinely being used for meetings of the Permanent Bureau in The Hague with its staff in the Regional Offices. Thought is being given on how use of the videoconferencing technology can be expanded and exploited to improve communication among Asia Pacific countries in relation to Hague Conference work

Conclusion

Looking forward, the Asia Pacific Regional Office plans to identify ways (1) to strengthen the existing Asia Pacific network of National Organs (including Central and Competent Authorities); (2) to provide appropriate technical assistance to Member States in the Region; and (3) to enhance contacts with government officials, professional bodies and academic institutions and strengthen the Organisation's network throughout the Asia Pacific.

ANNEX 1
 Overview
 Financial Expenditures
 Regional Offices
 Reporting Period:
 1 Jan 2013 to 31 Dec 2013

ASIA PACIFIC OFFICE	
Furnished office accommodations	€ 39,053.55
Salaries and related staff costs, including honorariums and consultant fees	€ 75,571.97
Organisational and administrative costs for seminars and training programmes	€ 66,494.94
Publication and translation expenses	€ 3,263.13
Travelling expenses and overseas subsistence allowance	€ 11,953.88
Contingency and sundry expenses	€ 1,607.98
Total expenditures borne by voluntary contributions to the Supplementary Budget / Hong Kong Account	€ 197,945.45
LATIN AMERICAN OFFICE	
Furnished office accommodations	In-kind by Host State
<i>Salaries and related staff costs, including honorariums and consultant fees</i>	
Salary of the Representative	Regular Operating Budget
Consultant fees	€ 11,000.00
Organisational and administrative costs for seminars and	Regular Operating Budget
Publication and translation expenses	€ 11,057.00
Travelling expenses and overseas subsistence allowance	€ 16,504.43
Contingency and sundry expenses	In-kind by Host State
Total expenditures borne by voluntary contributions to the Supplementary Budget	€ 38,561.43