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**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND IMMIGRATION
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS**

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Hans van Loon
Secretary General
Hague Conference on
Private International Law
Permanent Bureau
6, Scheveningseweg 2517 KT
The Hague
THE NETHERLANDS

**Re: Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign
Public Documents 1951**

Further to the questionnaire circulated by the Permanent Bureau relating to "Diplomas and other education documents within the framework of the Apostille Convention", our response is as follows.

1. To date, the competent authority for issuing Apostilles – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration – has not issued any Apostilles for diplomas and any other education documents.
2. The Government of the Cook Islands has not yet adopted any special rules, procedures or policies for the issuing of Apostilles in relation to diplomas. The current practice is for those persons authorised to attest to the authenticity of documents to certify such documents as "Certified True And Correct Copy" of the original copy. Persons who regularly require this service are those applying for academic scholarships as it is a requirement of the government agency responsible for human resources development in the Cook Islands that all copies of academic transcripts, diplomas, certificates etc., be certified, as the originals are retained by the applicant. It would be expected that a notary public, Justice of the Peace, or Registrar or Deputy Registrar of the High Court would certify the diploma before an Apostille is issued for the certificate.

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Please address all correspondence to *The Secretary*

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3. There is only one competent authority to issue Apostilles in the Cook Islands - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration.
4. The competent authority would issue Apostilles on a certified copy of a document.
5. As yet, there are no institutions or organizations based or registered in the Cook Islands offering on-line diplomas and therefore no policies or procedures have been put in place to address this matter.
6. Prior to acceding to the Apostille Convention, all stakeholders were invited to comment on the possible treaty action. Given that the Convention has only just entered into force for the Cook Islands, there is still some confusion as to the purpose of the Apostille, particularly on the part of tourist-based companies who sell wedding packages to visitors.
7. Our practices will be guided by the experiences of other State Parties to the Convention.

Given our limited capacity we apologize for not meeting the deadline as requested by the Bureau.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Government of the Cook Islands avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary General of the Hague Conference on Private International Law the assurances of its highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Myra Moeka'a
For Secretary

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