PRESS RELEASE – THE HAGUE, November 2005

INTRODUCTION OF MORE EFFICIENT SYSTEMS FOR DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Launch of iChild *pilot, the*
Electronic Case Management System for the 1980 International Child Abduction Convention
by the Hague Conference and WorldReach

The Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law and WorldReach Software Corporation officially launched the *iChild* pilot project for a duration of one year, with the participation of Central Authorities from Argentina, Australia, Canada (Ontario and Quebec), The Netherlands, New Zealand and Panama.

iChild is a software developed by WorldReach as an electronic case management tool, which may eventually be used on a day-to-day basis by Central Authorities, the key national bodies that ensure cooperation between States, in very many of the 75 States Party to the *Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* around the world. Available in English, French and Spanish, this tool is designed to store and keep track of all essential information concerning a child abduction case. This system will help to improve both collection of data and standards of case management to lead the way towards paperless child abduction case management. The system will help to improve communication between Central Authorities; it will lead to greater consistency in practice in the different States and consequently add to the continued success of the effects of this Convention.

Since it came into force more than two decades ago, the 1980 Hague Convention on International Abduction has become one of the most successful international treaties drawn up by the Hague Conference on Private International Law, with currently 75 Contracting States representing all continents and many different cultures and legal systems. It has greatly improved the protection of children internationally from the harmful effects of their wrongful removal or retention, as well as to secure protection for rights of access, and has contributed to international cooperation.

WorldReach generously offered *iChild* to State Parties to the *Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*, at no cost, in order to test its effectiveness and fine tune the specialized features associated with child abductions case management during the pilot.

Background

The Hague Conference on Private International Law is the leading Inter-Governmental Organisation based in the Netherlands working for the harmonisation of rules of private international law and global co-operation in civil and commercial law matters. It has 65 Member States around the world; 60 additional States are Parties to one or more Hague Conventions.

In recent years, the Conference has increasingly become a centre for international judicial and administrative co-operation in the area of private law,

with a focus on family law, civil procedure, commercial and financial law. To date, 36 Hague Conventions have been negotiated and adopted in the framework of the Hague Conference.

In essence, the purpose of the Organisation is to build bridges between various legal systems, while respecting their diversity. In doing so it reinforces the legal certainty of private persons – an essential role in an age of globalisation in which rules and guidelines are needed.

Contact:
Permanent Bureau
Hague Conference on Private International Law
6, Scheveningseweg
2517 KT The Hague
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (70) 363 3303
Fax: +31 (70) 360 4867
E-mail: ichild@hcch.nl
Website: www.hcch.net

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WorldReach Software Corporation is the leading provider of consular case management and consular crisis management software. During both normal day-to-day operations and large-scale crises, WorldReach offers an integrated set of tools to help fulfil a government's mandate to deliver assistance to citizens abroad.

For over 12 years WorldReach Software has been used to deliver assistance to millions of people worldwide involved in all types of routine consular assistance cases as well as natural disasters and terrorist attacks (Asian Tsunami, 9/11, Bali & Madrid bombings). Our products are licensed to over 500 sites in approximately 200 countries, including Canadian, British, New Zealand and Dutch embassies/consulates. WorldReach Software is a proven consular partner enhancing the delivery of assistance to citizens abroad.

Contact:
WorldReach Software Corporation
1420 Blair Place, Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1J 9L8

Toll Free: 1 800 566-8883 (In North America)
Tel: + 1 (613) 742 6482
Fax: + 1 (613) 742 8188
General Inquiries: marketing@worldreachsoftware.com
Website: www.worldreachsoftware.com