

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Dr. Christophe Bernasconi
Secretary General
Hague Conference on Private International Law
Churchillplein 6b
2517 JW THE HAGUE
The Netherlands

Dear Dr. Bernasconi:

I am writing to mark the 50th anniversary of the United States joining the Hague Conference on Private International Law and express U.S. appreciation and continued support for the work of the Hague Conference.

For almost 120 years, the Member States and Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law have worked for the progressive harmonization of private international law. The Hague Conference has made important contributions towards the welfare of families across international boundaries, including the protection of children in intercountry adoption and international abduction cases. It also has made significant contributions to cross-border cooperation in legal procedures and litigation. The Hague Conference's work contributes to the spread of the rule of law by developing instruments that span different legal systems and encouraging the resolution of disputes through reliable legal frameworks rather than informal means.

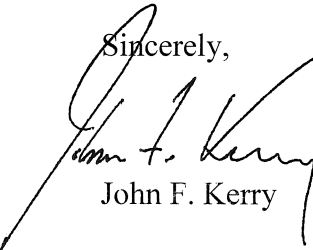
Today, the United States is a party to five Hague Conventions and a signatory to five conventions not yet in force for the United States. The United States holds in high esteem the work of the Hague Conference in drafting, negotiating, and implementing these conventions, including the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, the 1993 Intercountry Adoption Convention, the 1996 Child Protection Convention, the 2005 Choice of Courts Convention, and the 2007 Child Support Convention. The Child Abduction Convention and the Intercountry Adoption Convention have had direct and positive effects on the welfare of children in hazardous situations globally.

The United States believes in the importance of playing an active role in implementing the Hague Conventions after they are in force. We have been pleased to show our support through our voluntary contributions over the past years to the Supplemental Budget. Our contributions to date now total above \$1 million both in funding and in-kind expert assistance on issues ranging from issuance of good practice guides, the Hague Judicial Network, and other technical matters allied with the accession to and implementation of various Hague Conventions. In this regard, the United States continues to champion the vital importance of technical assistance to ensure effective global implementation of the conventions. The United States also has been pleased to support the work of the Latin American Regional Office in promoting accession to and

implementation of Hague Conventions. The beneficial impacts of Hague Conventions are not limited to countries in a particular region. They serve as a sound basis for international cooperation around the world.

The Hague Conventions are shining examples of international cooperation in the field of private international law. On this 50th anniversary of U.S. membership in the Conference, I wish to recognize and commend the work of the Hague Conference and the Permanent Bureau as beacons of international legal and judicial cooperation, that provide tangible protections and benefits for our citizens, businesses, families, and, most importantly, the children of our next generation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Kerry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

John F. Kerry