

PRESS RELEASE



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

“Each Convention is unique, but I think this Child Support Convention will be particularly successful.”

“This Convention is a win-win agreement for everyone.”

**SIGNING OF THE FINAL ACT FOR THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD SUPPORT
BY 68 STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**

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**SIGNING OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD SUPPORT
BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

“This Convention establishes a comprehensive system of cooperation among child support authorities, which we believe will result in more children receiving more support more quickly.” (USA delegation)

23 NOVEMBER 2007

1. The new global Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and other Forms of Family Maintenance has just been finalised. The Convention aims to resolve the problems of unpaid or uncollectible child support.
2. Unpaid child support – as well as support of other dependant family members – amounts to billions of Euros worldwide. When the person liable for support lives abroad, the difficulties of recovery are often insurmountable. Until now, international procedures were typically slow, complicated, costly, and under-utilized. They were simply not serving the needs of children and other family dependants who, in a mobile world in which multinational families are no longer exceptional, are increasing in number exponentially.
3. Some examples: Case I - 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. Case II - 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 and Aminata's daily life stories are typical. The new Hague Convention deals with their unfortunate situations. Both Helga and Aminata, and other families and children will 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 dependants, but also taxpayers, whose burden increases when private obligations are not fulfilled.
5. Delegates from 68 States, the European Community, and other organizations represented by, in total, 268 experts, attended the Diplomatic Session on the International Recovery of Child Support & other Forms of Family Maintenance from 5 November – 23 November 2007. 68 States and the European Community signed the Final Act of the Session in the presence of representatives from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors of Member States and other Diplomatic Representatives.
6. This was followed by the signing of the Convention by the United States of America. The example set by the USA is expected to be followed soon. The United States delegation stated the following:

The United States is delighted to sign the new Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support, which we believe represents a major step forward in the development of a global system for enforcement of child support obligations in transnational cases. Every child deserves the support of both the child's parents. And yet recovering child support when the child and one parent are in one country and the other parent is in another is difficult and often impossible. The legal and practical obstacles often mean that little or no support ever reaches the parent and child. Given the importance of this topic to U.S. families, and because the number of transnational cases will continue to increase, the United States has been an active participant in this negotiation. This new convention is necessary to modernize and improve the existing international system, which is outdated and does not meet the needs of an increasingly global world.

SIGNING OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE NEW CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD SUPPORT

As stated in the Preamble of the new Convention, what is needed is a system which produces results, and is accessible, prompt, efficient, cost-effective, responsive and fair. The Convention is designed to achieve those goals. In particular, the Convention establishes a comprehensive system of cooperation among child support authorities, which we believe will result in more children receiving more support more quickly.

We are pleased to have signed the Convention, and we hope that other States, from every region of the world, will quickly join us. We look forward to working with other States and the Hague Conference on the important work of implementing this Convention in the United States and all around the world.

7. Together with the existing Hague Children's Conventions, like International Child Abduction (1980), Inter-Country Adoption (1993), and International Child Protection (1996). The new Convention will now form part of the formidable arsenal of international instruments designed by the Hague Conference to give practical effect to the Rights of the Child.

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The Hague Conference the world organisation for cross-border co-operation in civil and commercial matters. It has 68 Members located on every continent. Furthermore, more than 125 States are Parties to one or more Hague Conventions.

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 security of private persons – an essential role in an age of globalisation in which rules and guidelines are needed.

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