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The Secretary General

Donna Goddard
Executive Director
International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
2 Yew Tree Close
Hatfield Peverel
Chelmsford
Essex CM3 2SG
England

THE HAGUE, 12 March 2010

Your ref.:

Our ref.: 48294(10)VL/JEN/SH

Dear Ms Goddard,

I have the honour of inviting the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers to send a representative to participate as an observer in the Third meeting of the Special Commission to review the practical operation of the *Hague Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*, to take place from

Thursday 17 June (9.30 a.m.) to Friday 25 June 2010 (1.00 p.m.).
Please note that there will be a morning session taking place on Saturday 19 June 2010.

The venue for the meeting is the Academy Building in the grounds of the Peace Palace, Carnegieplein, The Hague. Registration of participants will begin at 8.30 a.m. on Thursday 17 June.

The meeting will address the following broad themes; a full agenda for the meeting will be available on the website of the Hague Conference (< www.hcch.net >) at a later date:

- Discussion on the abduction, sale and traffic in children in the context of adoption (1 day)
- Review of the Guide to Good Practice on Accreditation (1.5 days);
- Review of the operation and implementation of the 1993 Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention (4.5 days);

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In relation to the discussion day on the abduction, sale and traffic in children in the context of adoption, the Permanent Bureau would like to thank the Government of Australia for its suggestion and generous contribution of funds to hold this special day.

The first Preliminary Document relating to the Special Commission is the Questionnaire on Accreditation which was sent out to the Contracting States in August 2009. The very helpful responses to this Questionnaire have assisted the Permanent Bureau in the preparation of the draft Guide on Accreditation. The responses received are available on the website of the Hague Conference at <www.hcch.net> under "Intercountry Adoption Section" then "Special Commissions" and "Questionnaires and responses". This Draft Guide on Accreditation will be the second Preliminary Document, which will be distributed in early May.

During the meeting of the Special Commission, interpretation will not only be available in English and French, as is the normal practice, but also in Spanish, thanks to the generous contribution of the Spanish Government. The Permanent Bureau will continue to make available the Preliminary Documents in English and French. It would like to make available all documents in Spanish. However, there is a very limited budget for this, and contributions for translations of Preliminary Documents in Spanish are needed (financial contributions or in kind).

In addition to all Members of the Hague Conference (as of today 69), I will also, in accordance with the established practice, invite the non-Member States which (1) participated in the Seventeenth Session and either have signed or ratified, or have the right to sign and ratify, the Convention, or (2) have acceded to the Convention, or (3) have attended part of the negotiations on the Convention during the years 1990-1993 or (4) do not fall into the previous categories but have been admitted to the Conference (Zambia) or which have shown a serious interest in the Convention.

As in the past, a special fund has been established to provide assistance for the travel and *per diem* costs of experts of some non-Member States.¹ The Permanent Bureau expects that these States (and possibly many of the other invited non-Member States), although very interested in the topic of intercountry adoption, will only be able to send an expert if some financial assistance is provided. At the moment, the Permanent Bureau is in a position to offer financial assistance to six of these non-Member States. The Permanent Bureau would like to assist as many of these States as possible and it would be grateful if your organisation would consider contributing to the special fund. You may designate a particular State you wish to assist.

With a view to the practical organisation of the meeting, I would appreciate it if you would inform us, before **30 April 2010**, whether your Organisation intends to be represented at this meeting and, if so, of the name, e-mail address and title of the designated expert.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, Madam, assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.



Hans van Loon

¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belize, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Senegal, Thailand, Togo, and Viet Nam.