



news release

Date JUNE 6, 1983

For release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

72/83

CANADA RATIFIES CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Minister of Justice, today announced that Canada has ratified the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. This Convention provides a formal procedure for the prompt return of children who have been abducted from the country where they reside.

In making the announcement, Dr. MacGuigan pointed out that the Convention is of special significance to Canada because it is based on a Canadian proposal which led to the adoption of the Convention at the 14th session of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in October 1980.

"By ratifying the Convention, Canada has taken a major step toward responding to the legal and social problems caused by international child abduction", said Dr. MacGuigan.

Since child custody matters are within provincial jurisdiction and because of a federal state clause in the Convention, at least one province had to enact legislation to implement the Convention before Canada could ratify it. This ratification extends the Convention to Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and British Columbia, which have adopted the required legislation. All the other provinces have expressed their support for the principles of the Convention and have indicated their intention of enacting the necessary legislation, at which time the Convention will also be extended to them.

The Convention must be ratified by at least three countries before coming into force. While France and Canada are the only countries to have ratified it so far, several others, including Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States have signed the Convention and are expected to ratify it in the near future.

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