

Commonwealth, member countries have undertaken to examine on a priority basis, the possibility of greater co-operation in family law matters and the enforcement of custody matters. Secondly, Canada represented by officials of both federal and provincial governments, participated in the fourteenth session of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the course of which the Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction was signed, on October 25, 1980, by four countries, including Canada.

The system proposed in the Hague Convention is simple. Where a child is wrongfully removed or retained, that is where there is a breach of custody rights under the law of the state in which the child is habitually resident, the person whose rights of custody have been breached may apply to a "Central Authority" of the State where the child is, with a view to obtaining the return of the child, voluntarily if possible, or otherwise by means of a judicial decision. The judicial or administrative authority will study the documentation provided and if justified will order the immediate return of the child to the country of habitual residence. The treaty is open for accession by any country, whether a member of the Hague Conference or not. Before Canada may become party to the agreement, it will be necessary for the provinces to adopt legislation giving effect to its provisions, and discussions are taking place. In summary, this Hague Convention holds the promise of bringing order into the current chaos of international child abduction. It is hoped that the treaty will soon be in force among as many countries as possible.

In recent years, Canada has entered into Treaties on the Execution of Penal Sentences (Transfer of Offenders treaties) with the United States, Mexico and Peru. Under these treaties, a Canadian citizen convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in these countries may apply to serve the sentence in a Canadian penal institution, subject to the approval of the states concerned. To date, 87 inmates in Canadian institutions were returned to the United States, and 67 Canadian prisoners in U.S. institutions plus nine Canadian prisoners in Mexican institutions were returned to Canada. Two more Canadian citizens recently convicted in Peruvian courts will be transferred to Canada in the near future. To date, 163 persons have been transferred to or from Canada. Similar treaties have been signed with France and Bolivia but have not yet