



news release

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CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION COMES INTO FORCE

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Minister of Justice, announced that the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction will come into force December 1, 1983, for Canada, France and Portugal. It will also come into force for Switzerland on January 1, 1984.

The Convention, which provides a formal procedure for the prompt return of children abducted from their country of residence, had to be ratified by at least three countries before coming into force. While only four countries have ratified it to date, Belgium, Greece and the United States have signed the Convention and are expected to ratify it in the near future.

The Convention will only affect children who have been abducted from, and taken to, countries that have ratified the Convention, and it will only apply to abductions that occur after the date of coming into force.

Within Canada, the Convention will now apply to international cases involving New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, which have adopted the legislation required to give the Convention the force of law. The other provinces have expressed their support for the principles of the Convention and have indicated their intention to enact the necessary legislation in the near future. Once they have done so, the Convention will be extended to them as well. The Attorneys General of the participating provinces will have the main responsibility

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for enforcing the Convention in Canada. The Government of Canada will do everything in its power to assist the provinces in child abduction cases.

"While there still remains a lot to be done in resolving the social and legal problems caused by international child abduction, this Convention represents a major first step in the right direction," said Mr. MacGuigan.

Mr. MacEachen stressed the importance of cooperation among nations in dealing with this serious problem and expressed the hope that other countries would join in this effort to combat international child abduction.