Meeting Minutes
Steering Group Conference Call
March 18, 2008
12:00 p.m. Eastern Time

1) World Congress Meeting –

Lise will be sending out a link to the 2009 World Congress to see if our committee is interested in this meeting; if you are interested in receiving information, contact mkucinski@dberlin.org

2) Advocacy Letter re. 1996 Convention –

Brad is still trying to reach Gloria; Mary Helen will provide us with an updated email address for Gloria

3) Miami Mediation Training –

Larry was involved in the training; he said he received responses stating that the training was well received; he thought it went really well

Covered: law, judges’ viewpoint, immigration issues, etc.

There is talk about taking the training elsewhere, specifically Latin America (Jeremy noted that there is an IBA program in Buenos Aires coming up)

Brad would like to see mediation training on the West Coast; there are no mediation resources on the West Coast for Hague cases

Kathy would like to build a network and establish a model that is used so that parties will not abuse the process and cause delay

4) Membership Task Force Update

Brad and Maggie are currently concentrating on Japanese membership; Jeremy reminds us to not get bogged down with Japan and be aware that we should be recruiting members from all different jurisdictions and countries

Jeremy and Melissa suggested that we should expand our membership base and then the membership would dictate which time a conference call is most convenient for the bulk of members in the future
Maggie is working to set up a time to have a conference call/meeting with the task force and Lisa, chair of the section’s membership committee

5) Japanese – U.S. dialogue

A Japanese law professor participating on the call stated that she would be willing to organize a meeting on the Japanese side.

Maggie suggested that Brad work out an agenda with the Professor about what a meeting would look like, discuss it with the Task Force, and then present it to the Steering Group.

Brad indicated that when he traveled in Japan in 2006, he spoke to many family lawyers. He believes that any change would be a legislative change.

Brad spoke about his discussions with Collin. Collin suggests focusing on the laws.

Jeremy had a discussion yesterday that there needs to be a change in domestic relations law, specifically with regard to joint custody, and Japanese practitioners might be interested in learning how U.S. family lawyers do things domestically. This individual suggested that we do a presentation on what works in the U.S. in child custody cases. This may help Japanese practitioners to bring some influence on the political powers that be in Japan.

Maggie would be interested in learning more about what the Japanese do to enforce a U.S. judgment (or a judgment from other nations).

Kathy agrees that it is best that the discussions not be directly U.S.-Japan, and that we involve others, such as when Canada initiated a conference about Japan joining the Hague Convention. Kathy said that the U.S. is going forward with a government to government push, and it is starting to work. Senators Feinstein and Boxer are pushing. Kathy stated that this should be a multilateral effort.

Kathy thinks that a bar association to bar association effort would be helpful at this point. Kathy suggests this will help the momentum.

Jeremy got a request from an active member of the Japanese Federation of Bar Associations.

Phil suggested that the Hague conference might be trying to make headway with the Japanese representative. Kathy confirmed that they are.
The Professor suggested a seminar with the bar association in Japan and this might be possible to give a lecture to the representatives in Japan. There are many possibilities.

Brad questioned about the Canadian Embassy conference. Kathy does not believe there was a recording, if it was recorded. There was a bit of news coverage and a press conference after the morning presentations. There were not a lot of handouts. Professor Duncan shared a power point presentation and Kathy will try to obtain that to share with the Steering Group.

Lise suggested that Canada would be interested in having this be broader than just the U.S. Committee members agree.

6) Idea of creating a Pacific task group and an Atlantic task group to deal with more region-specific issues and projects

There seemed to be consensus that this is a slightly premature suggestion, and that when we have a lot of projects going at once, it would be a more appropriate time to address this suggestion.

7) Roster of Current Steering Group Members

Brad is currently keeping a roster, and his legal assistant would be willing to do the legwork. Melissa is having the section staff email Brad with the current Steering Group roster.

8) NYC: Committee activities

a. Friday, April 4, 2008: Breakfast Meeting
b. Friday, April 4, 2008: CLE at 10:30 am
c. Friday, April 4, 2008: Committee Lunch – informal for anyone who wants to attend
d. Friday, April 4, 2008: Committee Dinner – informal for anyone who wants to attend; will leave a note at the section check-in table for those who are not at the committee meeting

9) Child Support Convention –

The U.S. has made it a priority to transmit this convention to the senate this summer 2008. State is working closely with NCCUSL who will approve amendments to UIFSA.

Melissa will contact the proper International Law Section people to see what might be able to be done for July 2008. Larry has volunteered to boilerplate language to try to push through something for both sections.
10) Adoption Initiative within the ABA – Melissa will update when she has more information from Howard with the ABA Center on Children and the Law

11) Remember now that State is handling all incoming Hague cases

12) Newsletter – send Jeremy an article by next Tuesday! jmorley@international-divorce.com

13) Next Conference Call Date & Time: April 15, 2008 at 12 noon eastern time; email the Steering Group with your agenda items!