Meeting Minutes
Steering Group Conference Call
September 25, 2007

1) Follow up: German-US relations: how to improve information sharing and cooperation between U.S. and German lawyers

a. Judge Carl proposed to me the following suggestions that he hopes we would consider:
   i. Judge Carl and Christoph could provide us with written information that we could circulate to our members on the process of German family lawyers and how German judges conduct proceedings
   ii. Foreign parents need financial help in obtaining a lawyer in the U.S., and have found U.S. legal fees to be upwards of four times higher than in Germany/Sweden/Netherlands; Judge Carl proposed increased interest in providing pro bono services; NCMEC currently maintains a list, therefore, it seems logical to work with NCMEC to help improve and expand their list
   iii. Judge Carl indicated that it is difficult to find names of lawyers in the U.S. who are willing to help in these type of cases; like Christoph, he asked if there is a list of U.S. lawyers that foreign lawyers can access to find help
   iv. Judge Carl suggested that an international lawyers meeting in the future, we organize a meeting between German and U.S. attorneys to exchange experiences and look for fruitful cooperation

   Larry and Marion are interested in working on this topic

   Jessica spoke about legal aid in Sweden. In the Midwest, it is difficult to find an attorney who will handle a Hague case. In rural areas in the U.S. it is also difficult to find an attorney.

   Melissa will contact Susan to see if NCMEC needs aid on any particular projects and bring that to the committee.

2) Update on CLE Proposals: Maggie, Brad, Marion

Maggie sent an email to the Steering Group; everyone will review and comment by listserv

Melissa will find out the deadline for the NYC 2008 August meeting

3) Update on State Department “happenings”
NCCUSL study group on the 1996 Convention
Two most common used provisions: recognition of US custody and access orders abroad; guardianship

State Department asked NCCUSL and will ask the ABA to consider endorsing the convention (NCCUSL performs a study group and then a drafting group to amend the various uniform acts to amend)

December 7, 2007: State Department meeting (approximately 10 am to 4 pm) on the 1996 Convention; Mary Helen will ensure that our committee receives an invitation (at Georgetown University Law Center)

Mary Helen wants the ABA International Law Section Joint Editorial Board to participate

The last negotiating session, after five years, of the new Hague Child Support Convention will take place in November 2007. The US hopes to go with the authority to sign the convention. NCCUSL has already begun to draft the amendments.

Mary Helen invites the ABA to look at the Child Support Convention. Gloria has been representing the ABA.

4) Report: Increase in Steering Group Membership: welcome to new members!

5) Further Discussion: Creating a list/database of international family lawyers

Why re-invent the wheel? The ICAAN list at NCMEC started at the ABA, and is now housed at NCMEC. NCMEC has full time staff to handle it.

Perhaps we can publicize our committee abroad. If a foreign lawyer needs help, they can contact us, as a committee, and we can seek to find a referral or provide references.

6) Discussion: Survey to obtain feedback for NCCUSL Study Committee on the 1996 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children

Who are we asking whether it is a good idea to have the 1996 Convention? Whose opinion matters? The ILS, Family Law Committee and the entire FLS, International Law Committee would be the place to begin, the IAML, etc. would be interested. Is there another group? ICAAN attorneys should be interested in the 1996 Convention. When would we need the results if we do a survey? 2 to 6 months. The Support Act and the Child Support Convention is State’s first priority. A survey about 1996 Convention would simply help
NCCUSL whether they should form a drafting group. The State Department would like NCCUSL to form a drafting group in the next six months.

We would have an idea after the December 7, 2007 if there is support.

Anyone attending the December 7, 2007 meeting should report to our group, and our committee will know how to proceed.

If we want to endorse a convention, it is a long process. We could see if the Family Law Section would like to start the process if it is less laborious in that section.

7) E-newsletter deadlines

Send comments to Jeremy TODAY (September 25, 2007); Jeremy will send it out tomorrow morning.

8) Next Conference Call Date & Time

Meeting in London: Remember that on Thursday, after the CLE, meet in the lobby (at approximately 6 pm) to go to the hotel restaurant for the committee dinner

Tuesday, **October 30, 2007** at 12 noon, Eastern Time