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Regional Offices: Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) (1 January – 31 December 2025)

I. Introduction and strategic objectives

- 1 The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) is one of the three current Regional Offices (ROs) of the Permanent Bureau (PB) of the HCCH.¹ ROs are established to strengthen the HCCH's universality and inclusiveness and to increase the HCCH's visibility, capability, and relevance within a region.² In addition to its broad-spectrum work in Latin America and the Caribbean,³ ROLAC provides substantive support to the International Family and Child Protection Law Division.
- 2 ROLAC's work programme is tailored to contribute to the strategic objectives of the HCCH by:
 - a. promoting the universality of the Organisation by increasing awareness of the HCCH, the HCCH instruments and their benefits, as well as of private international law (PIL), among States and other stakeholders in the region;
 - b. promoting the inclusiveness of the HCCH by supporting the active involvement of States and other stakeholders in the region in its normative, post-Convention, and governance work;
 - c. assisting States in the region in the proper implementation and operation of HCCH instruments, including through the delivery of efficient, tailored post-Convention services and assistance.
- 3 ROLAC is headed by a Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, who is supported by a part-time Legal and Office Coordinator. Mr Ignacio Goicoechea has served as Representative of ROLAC since its establishment. Ms Florencia Castro is ROLAC's Legal and Office Coordinator and supports the Representative by performing legal and administrative tasks. In 2025, ROLAC welcomed two international relations interns and two legal interns.
- 4 The Government of Argentina continues to finance the rental and operational costs for ROLAC, while the annual travel budget for the office is covered by a voluntary contribution from the Government of the United States of America. The salaries of ROLAC's two staff members are fully covered by the budget of the HCCH.⁴

¹ For information on the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), please consult the “Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) (1 January – 31 December 2025)”, Prel. Doc. No 17B for CGAP 2026. For information on the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), please consult the “Report on the activities of the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF) in 2025”, Prel. Doc. No 17C for CGAP 2026. Both are available on the website of the HCCH (www.hcch.net) under “Governance” => “Council on General Affairs and Policy”.

² See the HCCH's [Rules for the Establishment of Regional Offices](#) (“Rules”), adopted in 2020. The Rules “do not apply retrospectively to already existing Regional Offices” (see para. 2) and so do not apply to ROAP, established in 2012, or ROLAC, established in 2005. However, para. 3(a) of the Rules provides a list of characteristic objectives and outcomes of future ROs, which is inspired by, and is reflective of, the work currently being undertaken by ROAP and ROLAC.

³ For more information on the specific objectives assigned to ROLAC upon its establishment, please consult the [Host Country Agreement Between the Argentine Republic and the HCCH](#).

⁴ Financing of ROLAC differs from that of ROAP, see Prel. Doc. No 17B for CGAP 2026. From a good governance perspective, the PB considers this to be inadequate and hopes that the matter will be addressed in the near future.

II. Work and progress in achieving the strategic objectives

A. Promoting the universality of the HCCH by increasing awareness of the HCCH, the HCCH instruments and their benefits, among States and other stakeholders in the region

5 In 2025, three States from Latin America and the Caribbean became new Contracting Parties to an HCCH Convention: Argentina ratified the 1996 Child Protection Convention, Colombia signed and ratified the 2007 Child Support Convention, and El Salvador acceded to the 2007 Child Support Convention. In addition, Costa Rica signed the 2005 Choice of Court Convention. Throughout the year, ROLAC engaged in dialogue with multiple States on the process of assessment for joining HCCH Conventions, including Argentina,⁵ Barbados,⁶ Chile,⁷ Colombia,⁸ Costa Rica,⁹ Ecuador,¹⁰ Guatemala,¹¹ Honduras,¹² Panama,¹³ Trinidad and Tobago,¹⁴ Venezuela,¹⁵ Saint Lucia,¹⁶ and Uruguay.¹⁷ As part of this engagement, ROLAC provided different forms of support depending on the specific needs and the level of maturity of the process: assistance with prioritisation of instruments for consideration, meeting with key stakeholders (ministries, judiciaries, parliamentarians, etc.) to explain the function and potential benefits of specific instruments, organising meetings with Contracting Parties to facilitate the exchange of information, and / or offering tailored guidance on the steps required to join and thereafter implement the specific instrument(s).

6 In parallel to this work, ROLAC continued to encourage States from the region to become Members of the HCCH, as well as to provide support to States in the process of becoming Members. Among other activities, ROLAC met with senior representatives of the Governments of Colombia, Guatemala, and Trinidad and Tobago to discuss their respective membership processes, including the ongoing efforts of Colombia to adopt legislation approving the deposit of an instrument of acceptance of the Statute of the HCCH, which constitutes the final step required for it to become a Member.

7 ROLAC's outreach efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean are strengthened by its close ties with intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations active in the region and beyond. In 2025, ROLAC further developed these important relationships by meeting with new and existing partners to explore potential synergies and new areas for cooperation, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the *Asociación Internacional de Juristas de Derecho de Familia* (AIJUDEFA), the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) Academy for Law, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO). Throughout 2025, as in previous years, ROLAC participated in conferences, meetings, and other events

⁵ 1993 Adoption, 1996 Child Protection and 2007 Child Support Conventions

⁶ 1993 Adoption and 2007 Child Support Conventions

⁷ 1996 Child Protection and 2007 Child Support Conventions

⁸ 1996 Child Protection, 2005 Choice of Court, 2007 Child Support, and 2019 Judgments Conventions

⁹ 2005 Choice of Court and 2007 Child Support Conventions

¹⁰ 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, 2005 Choice of Court and 2019 Judgments Conventions

¹¹ 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, 1996 Child Protection, and 2007 Child Support Conventions

¹² 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 2019 Judgments Conventions

¹³ 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, 1996 Child Protection, and 2007 Child Support Conventions

¹⁴ 1993 Adoption, 1996 Child Protection, and 2007 Child Support Conventions

¹⁵ 1996 Child Protection and 2007 Child Support Conventions

¹⁶ 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, 1980 Child Abduction, 1993 Adoption, 1996 Child Protection, 2007 Child Support, 2005 Choice of Court, and 2019 Judgments Conventions

¹⁷ 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, 1980 Child Abduction, 2000 Protection of Adults, and 2007 Child Support Conventions

organised by its partners, leveraging these opportunities to engage with their networks and connect with new stakeholders. For example, at the XVIII Conference of the American Association of Private International Law (ASADIP), among other activities ROLAC's Representative participated as speaker in a panel discussion on carbon markets, where he shared the status of the work being developed at the HCCH. Similarly, ROLAC delivered presentations on the 1996 Child Protection Convention at the VI International Congress of AIJUDEFA. ROLAC also participated in events organised by the Ibero-American Network of International Legal Cooperation, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, and the CCJ Academy for Law, as well as in the meetings of the newly established Specialised Working Group on Transnational Access to Justice of the *Consejo Judicial Centroamericano y del Caribe* (CJCC), in which the Representative takes part as a member on behalf of the HCCH. The Working Group will focus on reducing barriers in judicial proceedings involving multiple jurisdictions by, among other measures, analysing multilateral instruments and training legal professionals in their application, thereby making its work highly relevant to the wider adoption and improved operation of the HCCH Conventions.

- 8 ROLAC continues to work closely with universities and other academic institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, which play an essential role in promoting the further development and increased awareness of PIL in the region. In 2025, ROLAC was invited to give presentations on the HCCH and its instruments for students and staff at different universities, including the *Universidad de Concepción del Uruguay* and *Universidad Siglo 21* (Argentina), *Universidad Francisco Marroquín* (Guatemala), *Universidad del Rosario* (Colombia), and *Universidad San Francisco* (Ecuador), as well as for members of the Lomas de Zamora Bar Association (Argentina). ROLAC also engaged with wider audiences through participation in a PIL academic event co-organised by the Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Uruguayan Institute of Private International Law, and the Organization of American States (OAS), as well as in a PIL course co-organised by the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* and the Spanish Association of Family Lawyers. Both activities highlighted the important role of the HCCH in the unification and development of PIL.
- 9 Finally, in 2025 ROLAC continued to work on the development of a judicial training on transnational access to justice to be offered through the Network of Judicial Schools of the Central American and Caribbean Judicial Council, collaborating in this project with the Supreme Court of Costa Rica, ASADIP, the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom), the University of Antioquia (Colombia), and the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas* (Mexico).

B. Promoting the inclusiveness of the HCCH by supporting the active involvement of States and other stakeholders in the region in its normative, post-Convention and governance work

- 10 Supporting Latin America and the Caribbean's active involvement in the HCCH's ongoing normative, post-Convention, and governance work continues to be a priority for ROLAC. An essential component of this task is the follow-up work conducted to identify and update contact information of relevant actors in each jurisdiction; facilitate responses to questionnaires and invitations to meetings; and disseminate information among States that are assessing, implementing, or operating HCCH instruments, among others. A considerable part of this task is carried out through the valuable support provided by interns from the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina.
- 11 In terms of normative work, in 2025 ROLAC continued to engage in discussions with governments and other stakeholders in the region on the HCCH's various normative projects, providing information on the most recent developments and inviting their feedback to ensure these projects reflect regional perspectives. For example, ROLAC exchanged views on the HCCH's Parentage / Surrogacy Project with representatives of the Governments of Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Panama, as well as with UNICEF LACRO. It also organised a preparatory meeting for

Latin American States ahead of the second meeting of the Experts' Group on Carbon Markets held in October 2025.

12 In terms of post-Convention work, ROLAC supported the participation of government representatives and other experts from the region in various initiatives. These included, among others, the online brainstorming session related to the electronic Apostille Programme (e-APP) held in May 2025, ahead of which ROLAC facilitated the exchange of views among States from the region by organising a preparatory meeting, and the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ), for which ROLAC organised three separate "immersion sessions" to onboard newly appointed members. As in previous years, ROLAC continued to encourage States from the region to participate in Experts' and Working Groups conducting post-Convention work and provided assistance with the designation of experts for these groups.

13 Finally, in terms of governance work, ROLAC continued to assist States from the region in ensuring the proper functioning of their National Organs through providing advice, trainings, and the facilitation of meetings with other National Organs. As in previous years, in early 2025 ROLAC organised a meeting of Latin American National Organs and a meeting of Latin American PIL associations to exchange views in preparation for the 2025 meeting of the Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP). This practice has proven beneficial to strengthening the region's contributions to CGAP's discussions. Likewise, ROLAC has continued to promote coordinated efforts between National Organs and the academic sector in the region and has encouraged the establishment of academic associations for PIL in States which do not yet have them. Additionally, it has fostered collaboration among existing associations across the region. This coordinated work model has proven to be valuable for the National Organs of States that have already taken part in it, as it allows them to benefit from the informed and qualified opinions of experts on various matters of interest to both the HCCH and other international organisations.

14 ROLAC continues to support the process of implementation of the use of Spanish, which became an official language of the HCCH on 1 July 2024. As part of this work, ROLAC has been involved in the translation of key publications and documents produced by the HCCH and has continued to disseminate HCCH documents in Spanish among stakeholders in the region.

C. Assisting States in the region in the proper implementation and operation of HCCH instruments, including through the delivery of efficient, tailored post-Convention services and assistance

15 Throughout 2025, ROLAC continued to provide a wide range of post-Convention services and assistance to States in Latin America and the Caribbean.

16 As part of this work, ROLAC was in regular contact with States from across the region and beyond to discuss the implementation and operation of the HCCH Conventions and instruments. This included day-to-day exchanges with Central Authorities, judges, and other stakeholders via e-mail and videoconference calls, as well as in-person meetings with various government representatives held during missions to the relevant States. For example, ROLAC engaged in discussions with governmental stakeholders on the operation of the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions (in Colombia); the 1980 Child Abduction Convention (in Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay); the 1993 Adoption Convention (in Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Uruguay); the 1996 Child Protection Convention (in Argentina, Ecuador, and Honduras); and the 2007 Child Support Convention (in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Uruguay).

17 ROLAC also supported States in the development of draft legislation, regulations, procedures, and tools to facilitate the effective implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions. For instance, ROLAC supported the Government of Honduras in the development of a Draft Procedural

Regulation for the implementation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention. This included support with drafting and revision, participation in several online meetings and an in-person meeting organised by the Supreme Court to discuss the draft with relevant institutions, and consultations with other stakeholders to promote its approval. In parallel, ROLAC assisted the Central Authority in the development of internal guidelines, including providing support with drafting and revision. ROLAC also assisted the Public Defender's Office of Ecuador in the development of guidelines to address cases arising under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, and supported IHNJ members from Ecuador in the development of general guidelines for the Convention's application.

18 Another important facet of ROLAC's post-Convention assistance has been facilitating communication and cooperation between the Central Authorities of different States. In 2025, ROLAC organised three separate meetings aimed at facilitating the exchange of best practices: a meeting on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention for Central Authorities of Caribbean States; a meeting on the 1996 Child Protection Convention for Central Authorities of Latin American States; and a meeting on the e-APP for Caribbean States. ROLAC also facilitated a meeting between Ecuador and Argentina on the subject of free legal assistance for left-behind parents in cases of child abduction, as well as meetings between Costa Rica and Brazil and between Costa Rica and Nicaragua to assist Costa Rican authorities in the assessment of the 2007 Child Support Convention.

19 As in previous years, ROLAC contributed to the organisation of trainings for government officials, judges, lawyers, and other stakeholders on the implementation and operation of the HCCH Conventions and instruments. These included two trainings in Argentina on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, one of which also covered the 1996 Child Protection Convention; a training in El Salvador on the 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 2007 Child Support Conventions; a training in Barbados on the HCCH Children's Conventions; a training in Chile for public defenders on the 1996 Child Protection and 2007 Child Support Conventions; a judicial training in Ecuador on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, including references to the 1996 Child Protection Convention; and participation in a training organised by the Dominican Republic's Central Authority for the 2007 Child Support Convention, which also benefited from the support of the Central Authority of Nicaragua. ROLAC also co-organised, together with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), an online training on the HCCH Children's Conventions for Caribbean officers and participated in various events organised to discuss the operation of HCCH Conventions.

20 Finally, ROLAC continued overseeing the expansion of the International Child Abduction Database (INCADAT)'s library of Spanish-language cases and case summaries, in coordination with IHNJ members and Central Authorities. As of June 2025, this effort was further strengthened through the engagement of a consultant, who dedicated 16 hours per month to collecting and summarising cases in Spanish for INCADAT, resulting in 16 new cases from Latin America uploaded to the database. INCADAT has been an essential tool for increasing the visibility of case law from Latin American and Caribbean States, allowing judges to enhance the quality of their decisions and legal professionals to better represent and advise their clients.

III. Key upcoming projects and initiatives

21 In addition to its regular support of the work of the PB across all its divisions, ROLAC intends to undertake the following specific activities in the region in 2026:

- Assist States with the implementation and operation of the HCCH Conventions in the area of family law and child protection, as well as in transnational litigation;
- Organise an in-person Regional Meeting on the 1980 Child Abduction and 1996 Child Protection Conventions to address implementation challenges and follow up on the

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Eighth Meeting of the Special Commission held in October 2023;¹⁸

- c. Continue to assist Caribbean jurisdictions in improving the operation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, including, where appropriate, by supporting the possible development of procedural or case management guidelines for child abduction cases;
- d. Promote the 2005 Choice of Court and 2019 Judgments Conventions, including through targeted outreach activities, with a view to encouraging their wider adoption and implementation;
- e. Participate in the Specialised Working Group on Transnational Access to Justice of the CJCC, through which the Representative will have the opportunity to promote the HCCH Conventions in the areas of child protection and transnational litigation among non-Contracting Parties, as well as to support efforts to ensure their proper and effective implementation and operation among Contracting Parties;
- f. Participate in and support the organisation of ASADIP's annual meeting, to be held in El Salvador in October 2026. This will be the first time that a National Organ and a Supreme Court of a country host ASADIP's annual meeting and it will provide an excellent opportunity to promote: i) the development of PIL and the work of the HCCH in the region (in particular in Central America); and ii) the importance of effective cooperation between National Organs, judiciaries, academics, and professionals for the development of PIL;
- g. Develop closer working relationships with other international organisations, such as the CCJ Academy for Law, the Ibero-American Conference of Ministers of Justice, AIJUDEFA and the IPU;
- h. Launch the Virtual Course on Transnational Access to Justice, involving several core HCCH Conventions, developed in cooperation with the Supreme Court of Costa Rica, ASADIP, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Antioquia, and the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas*;
- i. Assess the development of an online training for judges on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention, based on the training developed and delivered for the *Red Iberoamericana de Escuelas Judiciales* (RIA Ej) in 2020;
- j. Organise regional online meetings of National Organs and of Central Authorities under the 1980 Child Abduction, 1996 Child Protection, 2007 Child Support, 1965 Service, 1970 Evidence, and 1980 Access to Justice Conventions.

IV. Proposal for CGAP

22 The PB proposes the following Conclusions and Decision, covering all three ROs, for CGAP's consideration:

CGAP welcomed the reports of the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF), the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), and recognised the services they provide to HCCH Members. CGAP further:

- a. encouraged Members to offer concrete support towards the implementation of the activities and objectives of the ROs, including in the form of voluntary contributions, secondments, information, translations, and networking;

¹⁸ Available on the HCCH website (www.hcch.net) under the "Child Abduction Section" => "Special Commission meetings".

- b. invited States from the relevant regions that are currently considering the possibility of joining one or more HCCH Conventions, or of becoming HCCH Members, to contact their respective RO;
- c. invited National Organs, Central Authorities, and Competent Authorities to contact their relevant RO, where experience sharing with authorities of other Contracting Parties, or the academic sector, would be helpful to the effective implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions;
- d. invited States to facilitate, to the extent possible, the participation of their representatives to meetings and events organised by the ROs.