

Title	Report on the activities of the Regional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) and for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) (1 January – 31 December 2021)
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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
	Annex I	3
	The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)	3
I.	Background	3
I.	Staff	3
II.	Projects & Activities.....	3
	A. Supporting the Operation of HCCH Conventions	3
	B. Promotional Activities	5
	1. Supporting the development of PIL and the work of National Organs	5
	2. UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 & PIL.....	6
	C. Participation in International Meetings and Events	7
III.	Challenges & Future Work	7
	Annex II	9
	The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)	9
I.	Background	9
II.	Staff	9
III.	Projects & Activities.....	9
	D. Supporting the Operation of HCCH Conventions	9
	E. Promotional Activities	10
	F. Participation in International Meetings & Events	10
IV.	Challenges & Future Work.....	12

Report on the activities of the Regional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) and for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) (1 January – 31 December 2021)

I. Introduction

- 1 This Report chronicles the major activities and achievements of the Regional Offices (ROs) of the Permanent Bureau (PB).
- 2 ROs are essential to the HCCH's pursuit of universality and inclusiveness. Their contribution to the expansion of the HCCH's membership, to the attraction of new Contracting Parties to HCCH Conventions, and to engagement with existing Contracting Parties with a view to monitoring and improving the practical operation of the Conventions, demonstrates the importance and benefits of a strong regional presence for the Organisation.
- 3 Throughout 2021, both ROs organised and participated in a variety of international meetings and events, actively engaging with government officials, judiciaries, legal practitioners, academics, and other international organisations. These comprehensive regional networks have proven to be an invaluable tool for encouraging the active participation of States in the work of the Organisation and for promoting broader use of the HCCH Conventions and instruments.
- 4 The reports of the ROs are provided as Annex I (ROLAC) and Annex II (ROAP).

II. Proposal for CGAP

- 5 The PB invites CGAP to take note of the reports of the ROs, which detail the work and achievements of each of the ROs in the course of 2021.

ANNEXES

Annex I

The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)

I. Background

- 1 In 2005, the PB established a Special Programme for Latin American States in response to requests for expansion of the work of the HCCH in Latin America. Due to the Special Programme's success, and with the generous support of the Argentinian Government, a Regional Office (RO) of the PB for Latin America was later established in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A decade later, in late 2015, the RO moved into its own offices. This was made possible with generous support from the Argentinian Government, which financed the renovations of the premises and assumed responsibility for rental and operational costs. Prior to 2017, one salary for ROLAC was covered by the Budget of the HCCH. Since January 2017, two salaries for ROLAC staff have been covered by the Budget of the HCCH (since January 2017 these salaries are established by applying a Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) system). The new offices enabled the RO to expand its services in 2016, including with the support of interns to conduct research, follow up, and translation work. In 2017, the Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP) approved the extension of the RO's geographical reach to include the Caribbean and, in doing so, approved the RO's corresponding name change. In 2021, the premises of the RO were relocated to a new building, again with the support of the Argentinian Government.

II. Staff

- 2 ROLAC is headed by a Representative, 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 the RO's Legal and Office Coordinator and supports the Representative by performing legal and administrative tasks. In 2021, ROLAC also welcomed seven translation interns and two international relations interns.

III. Projects & Activities

A. Supporting the Operation of HCCH Conventions

- 3 In 2021, ROLAC continued to field requests and enquiries from officials, judges, and academics relating to HCCH Conventions and instruments, and to engage with regional actors, with a view to facilitating their understanding, implementation, and operation throughout the region. ROLAC also continued its task of monitoring the practical operation of HCCH instruments in the region, identifying good practices as well as challenges that may require action.
- 4 Strengthening the operation of the HCCH Children's Conventions continues to be an important part of ROLAC's work. ROLAC was consulted regularly by Central Authorities and members of the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ). ROLAC also facilitated communications among Central Authorities and participated in a series of trainings, seminars and academic events on international child abduction, protection of children, international adoption, and child support in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama and Paraguay. ROLAC also conducted meetings with the Central Authorities of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, France, Panama, and the United States of America, as well as with representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and judiciaries of Argentina, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Jamaica, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, and CARICOM.
- 5 Moreover, ROLAC contributed to the addition of cases and jurisprudence from the Latin American region to the International Child Abduction Database (INCADAT), identifying cases and coordinating

with editors and translators. During 2021, a team of private international law (PIL) teachers, young lawyers, and law students, coordinated by Professor Nieve Rubaja, was set up to prepare summaries of child abduction decisions from the region.¹ The team held monthly meetings (sometimes with the participation of invited experts from the region) to discuss case law and specific topics of interpretation and application of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention.

6 In relation to the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in particular, ROLAC took part in a number of targeted activities, namely:

- On 9 August, a webinar entitled “The Safeguards of Children and Adolescents’ Rights in International Child Abduction cases” was co-organised by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the HCCH. Among the more than 300 participants who attended the webinar were representatives of Central Authorities, judges (including some members of the IHNJ), academics, and other stakeholders interested in the subject. Panellists representing the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Children’s Institute (IIN) and the HCCH addressed topics of crucial importance for the implementation of the Convention. The webinar was focused on the compatibility and interrelation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention and the *Inter-American Convention on the International Return of Children* with the UNCRC and the *American Convention on Human Rights*. Topics addressed included the best interests of the child and hearing the child’s views in international child abduction proceedings, delays in child abduction proceedings and the effective implementation of the various Conventions, domestic and gender-based violence, and the recently-published Guide to Good Practice on Article 13(1)(b).²
- Taking advantage of the experience gained through the development of a Pilot Project for the application of mediation to cases originated under the 1980 Child Abduction Convention in Argentina, ROLAC provided assistance to Panamanian authorities with the development of a mediation scheme adapted to their needs. The assistance included the coordination of the participation of Panamanian mediators in a special training developed by Argentine experts for Argentine mediators designated to deal with child abduction cases.

7 With regard to the operation of the 1993 Adoption Convention, on June 24 ROLAC organised a virtual meeting of Latin American Central Authorities to discuss and exchange experiences on the operation of the Convention, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8 With regard to the operation of the 1996 Children Protection Convention, on 28 October ROLAC organised a virtual meeting of Central Authorities for the Convention in the region. This virtual meeting formed part of the HCCH|Approach Initiative, which commemorated the 25th anniversary of the 1996 Child Protection Convention.³ The event was attended by officials from Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua and Uruguay. Officials from Argentina also participated, since the ratification process in Argentina is in advanced stages. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange ideas and experiences regarding the application of the Convention and to identify best practices and challenges for its implementation and operation. Participants agreed

¹ The HCCH thanks Professor Nieve Rubaja (Director of the INCADAT Latam Summaries Team), Emilia Gortari (Assistant) and all the members of the team (Sofia Aldana Ansalone; Jean Marco Lopez, Mariano Miranda da Cruz; Romina Martín; Josefina Ordenavia, Natalia Belen Petz, Antonela Rojas, Martina Traverso, Daniela Agustina Vuchich and Ana Belen Zacur) for their strong and sustained work during this year.

² *Guide to Good Practice under the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, Part VI – Article 13(1)(b)*, The Hague, 2019, available on the HCCH website at www.hcch.net under “Child Abduction”.

³ For more information on the HCCH|Approach Initiative, see the HCCH website at www.hcch.net under “Protection of Children” then “25th Anniversary of the 1996 Child Protection Convention”.

on the need for the continued promotion of the Convention in the region in order to increase the number of State Parties, as well as trainings for Central Authority officers, judges and other actors.

- 9 Throughout 2021, ROLAC continued supporting the Latin American IHNJ members and held online meetings with them to share experiences and analyse some specific aspects of implementation and operation of the Convention which IHNJ members had identified in advance. As a means of facilitating communication and strengthening the relationship between Latin American members of the IHNJ, ROLAC established a voluntary WhatsApp group, which has proven to be very effective and appreciated by judges. ROLAC also had meetings with newly designated members of the IHNJ from Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Peru, to discuss their role and the available tools and challenges in the respective jurisdictions.
- 10 In relation to the 1961 Apostille Convention, on 7 May, together with the Government of El Salvador, ROLAC organised a seminar to assist officials in the implementation of the electronic Apostille Programme (e-APP). Likewise, ROLAC was highly involved in the organisation of the 12th International Forum on the e-APP⁴ and assisted with the organisation of the October 2021 Special Commission meeting on the practical operation of the Convention.
- 11 With regard to the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions, on 27 October ROLAC provided training to Nicaraguan judges in an event held jointly with the Supreme Court of Nicaragua. In addition, ROLAC held the “First meeting of Central Authorities of Latin America for the HCCH 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions” on 9 December. Officials from the Central Authorities of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Uruguay participated in the meeting and shared their experiences and challenges in the implementation of both Conventions. Participants also discussed possible topics to be addressed at the next Special Commission meeting on the operation of these Conventions.
- 12 In relation to the 2005 Choice of Court Convention, ROLAC was highly involved in the organisation of the 2021 edition of HCCH a|Bridged, held on 1 December, which was focused on the Latin American and Caribbean region.
- 13 Several States in the region provided support for the organisation of capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening the operation of HCCH Conventions in other States of the region, including Argentina (mediation in child abduction), Chile (Apostille), Brazil (Service and Evidence), and the Dominican Republic (Apostille).

B. Promotional Activities

1. Supporting the development of PIL and the work of National Organs

- 14 ROLAC supported Honduras and El Salvador in the process of joining the HCCH, including providing advice on the composition of their respective National Organs. ROLAC also provided advice to other States that are considering membership, including Bolivia, Guatemala, Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago.
- 15 On 16 September, ROLAC and the International Law Department of the Organization of American States (OAS) organised a Joint Meeting with Legal Advisors on PIL from OAS Member States. The meeting was attended by representatives of 26 OAS Member States. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity to hear issues and concerns from Legal Advisors responsible for PIL and for judicial cooperation in civil or commercial matters, and to serve as a forum for discussion and feedback on ongoing work in this field by the Inter-American Juridical Committee (CJI) and the

⁴ For more information on the 12th International Forum on the electronic Apostille Programme, see the HCCH website at www.hcch.net under “Apostille” then “e-APP Forum”.

HCCH. Presentations focused on relevant HCCH and OAS instruments linked to two topics currently under consideration by the CJJ, namely: 1) the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments; and 2) technology and cross-border cooperation. The meeting proved to be very effective,⁵ with participants recommending that these meetings be conducted on an annual basis and that the importance of these meetings be conveyed to OAS Member States that did not participate.

- 16 Cooperation between the HCCH and the OAS has been progressively strengthened over the last few years, a trend that is set to continue as a result of the recent omnibus resolution on International Law (AG/doc.5730/21),⁶ adopted on 5 November 2021 by the OAS General Assembly. This was the first time that such a resolution contained a dedicated section on PIL (Section ii). The Resolution instructed the Department of International Law of the OAS to continue working in cooperation with other international organisations such as the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the HCCH and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), in order to generate common proposals to reactivate activities related to the study and development of PIL and to promote, within those organisations, the work that has been carried out in the inter-American system. At the regional level, the resolution also instructed the Department of International Law to continue to work closely with the regional offices of those forums (expressly including ROLAC), in order to jointly address the issues currently being discussed within the expert groups of these forums.
- 17 In December, ROLAC participated in the 14th ASADIP Conference – Online “Private International Law and Modern Technologies”, co-organised with the Department of Private International Law of the OAS. The HCCH/ROLAC was represented on a special panel on international organisations, together with representatives from OAS, UNIDROIT and UNCITRAL.

2. UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 & PIL

- 18 Info. Doc. No 3 of January 2020⁷ mentioned that the United Nations 2030 Agenda underscores that rule of law and access to justice are essential building blocks of sustainable development. This is made explicit in SDG 16, which seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. In this regard, and in connection to the new indicator 16.3.3⁸ that measures “access to civil justice”, ROLAC has been exploring various means by which to include the “international access to justice” dimension to the discussion, including assessing how people can resolve conflicts with international components, the extent to which the necessary legal infrastructure has been implemented, and the efficacy of existing legal infrastructure in fulfilling its purposes.
- 19 Of particular note is the work of the Supreme Court of Costa Rica, which in the last five years has been assessing the implementation of the SDGs at the judicial level. ROLAC has supported this work, and as a result, their fifth annual report on the progressive implementation of the SDGs produced in 2021⁹ expressly incorporated indicators relating to transnational access to justice. The Supreme Court has identified data related to judicial cooperation requests and exequaturs that

⁵ An edited version of the recording of the event (presentations only, without comments by Legal Advisors) is available via the following link: http://www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/OAS-HCCH_Joint_Meeting_of_the_Legal_Advisors_on_Private_International_Law_of_OAS_Member_States_Sept-16-2021_video.asp.

⁶ Available on the OAS website at: http://www.oas.org/es/sla/ddi/docs/AG-doc_5730-21_ESP.pdf.

⁷ Available on the HCCH website at www.hcch.net under “Governance” then “Council on General Affairs and Policy” and “Archive (2000-2021)”.

⁸ Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism.

⁹ Available on website of the Supreme Court at: <https://ocri.poder-judicial.go.cr/documentos-de-interes/publicaciones>.

were listed in the HCCH's questionnaire on parallel proceedings,¹⁰ and provided information on its ongoing cooperation with the HCCH/ROLAC. Moreover, the Supreme Court expressed its intention to maintain the ongoing dialogue with ROLAC so as to further develop these aspects.

- 20 In addition, ROLAC is engaged in ongoing discussions with: i) Paraguayan authorities, which have shown an interest in incorporating the "transnational access to justice" dimension to their current work in the implementation of SDGs; and ii) United Nations Development Programme Argentina, in order to generate instances of discussion with relevant stakeholders with a view to raising awareness and improving transnational access to justice.

C. Participation in International Meetings and Events

- 21 ROLAC participated remotely in several international meetings and events during 2021, in addition to those mentioned above. Among other events, the Representative delivered presentations at the 95th Regular Meeting of the IIN's Directing Council (on the HCCH Children's Conventions), at a meeting of the CARICOM Legal Affairs Committee (on the HCCH Children's Conventions), at MERCOSUR's Meeting of Public Defenders (on the 1980 Access to Justice Convention), at a conference organised by the World Jurist Association (on child abduction and human rights), and at the inaugural event of the Nigeria Group on Private International Law (on the theme "Perspectives from a Regional Office of the HCCH: Lessons Learned from ROLAC"). These activities contributed to raising the profile of the HCCH and strengthening its relationship with other international organisations.

IV. Challenges & Future Work

- 22 In 2018, a meeting held in Buenos Aires on the implementation and operation of HCCH Conventions resulted in the identification of several challenges which have informed much of ROLAC's work throughout 2019, 2020, and 2021. ROLAC will continue working to address them in 2022 and beyond. Some of the planned activities are listed below, categorised in accordance with their broader goals.
- a. *Emphasising the role of PIL in reinforcing human rights and enabling access to justice, to secure political support for PIL and its development*
 - Continue working together with the Department of International Law of the OAS, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, and other relevant stakeholders.
 - Leverage the promotion of HCCH instruments with the implementation of Target 16.3 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.
 - Organise, in partnership with the Department of International Law of the OAS, the annual meeting of Legal Advisors of the Americas.
 - b. *Improving coordination among government agencies and domestic stakeholders, to facilitate the incorporation and implementation of HCCH Conventions*
 - Continue promoting interinstitutional meetings to assess and implement HCCH instruments.
 - Support the work of National Organs.
 - c. *Addressing the lack of awareness of, and expertise in relation to, PIL*
 - Continue strengthening cooperation between the public and academic sectors.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 109, point 6.

- Continue seeking opportunities to engage the private sector in the promotion and development of the HCCH's work (e.g., with lawyers, other professional associations, and non-governmental organisations).
 - Support the work of the American Association of Private International Law (ASADIP) and national PIL associations, and promote networking in the field.
- d. *Ensuring effective implementation and operation of the HCCH Conventions*
- Continue assisting relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Conventions, in partnership with other Members and institutions such as UNICEF, the IIN, the Conference of Ministers of Justice of the Ibero-American Countries (Conferencia de Ministros de Justicia de los Países Iberoamericanos – COMJIB), the Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur – MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System (Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana – SICA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and other relevant regional organisations.
 - Explore opportunities for online trainings.
 - Continue supporting the development of the INCADAT database in Spanish and the inclusion of decisions from the region.
 - Facilitate the participation of States in the region in the Special Commission meetings on the 2007 Child Support and 1993 Adoption Conventions.
- e. *Overcoming the language barrier*
- Continue translating key documents into Spanish in cooperation with students from Belgrano University and Catholic University of Argentina.
- f. *Increasing engagement with Caribbean States*
- Assist Caribbean States with the implementation of HCCH instruments.
 - Explore possible joint activities with the Caribbean Court of Justice.
 - Explore possible joint initiatives with CARICOM.

Annex II

The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

I. Background

- 1 In 2012, CGAP endorsed the establishment of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. ROAP officially opened in December 2012, with the generous support of the Government of the People's Republic of China. In October 2020, ROAP relocated to new premises in the former French Mission Building, located in the Central District of Hong Kong. The new office was generously provided by the Government of the Hong Kong SAR. Together with other legal organisations and the Department of Justice, the new office forms part of an international legal hub in Hong Kong's central business district.

II. Staff

- 2 ROAP is headed by the Representative for Asia and the Pacific, who is supported by a Legal Officer and an Office Manager. On 1 August 2020, Professor Yun Zhao became the fourth ROAP Representative. Ms Alix Ng has held the position of Office Manager since ROAP's establishment. Mr Levi Gao joined ROAP in August 2020 as Legal Officer seconded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. In 2021, ROAP welcomed two legal interns. Human resources costs for ROAP are covered exclusively through the support provided by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

III. Projects & Activities

- 3 Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ROAP made every effort to ensure that its important work continues as efficiently and smoothly as possible.
- 4 Although some meetings have had to be postponed, the increased use of information technology has led to some positive developments. Technology has greatly promoted judicial and administrative cooperation and access to justice, and has also enriched ROAP's working methods, for example, through videoconferences, webinars, and online internships. As a result, the number of government officials, judges and scholars from the region participating in HCCH activities increased significantly in 2021.

A. Supporting the Operation of HCCH Conventions

- 5 On 28 September, as part of the HCCH|Approach Initiative, ROAP hosted a virtual event on the theme "Twenty-Five Years of the HCCH 1996 Child Protection Convention in the Asia and Pacific Region: Present, Development and Future". The event, which featured a welcome address delivered by the HCCH Secretary General, brought together experts and scholars to explore the historical evolution and future development of the 1996 Child Protection Convention in the Asia and Pacific Region. The event featured a lively discussion as experts and scholars discussed the necessity, feasibility, and challenges of implementing the Child Protection Convention in Asia and the Pacific. The event was attended by over 40 participants, representing 15 Member States, two Observers and members of the PB.
- 6 On 10 September, the Secretary General and the Representative of ROAP attended a Launch Ceremony following on the signature, in December 2020, of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the secondment of legal professionals to various international legal organisations, including the HCCH. The Launch Event was organised by the Department of Justice of the Hong

Kong SAR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. The MoU was implemented through significant involvement of ROAP, with the Representative personally involved in the selection process. ROAP also conducted many exchanges with the selected secondees, and promoted and participated in the Launch Ceremony organised by the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Launch Ceremony featured a speech by Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor.

- 7 On 4 October, the PB hosted the 12th meeting of the International Forum on the electronic Apostille Programme (e-APP). ROAP actively participated in the event, with its Representative delivering Opening Remarks and its Legal Officer moderating Session 1's Panel Discussion.

B. Promotional Activities

- 8 Throughout 2021, ROAP cooperated with other international, regional, and national organisations in the region to promote the work of the HCCH and its Conventions. This included cooperation with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia Academy of International Law (AAIL), and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). ROAP has also cooperated with various universities in the region, for example with Shanghai University of Political Science and Law (China), in its promotional activities.
- 9 ROAP continued to actively promote the expansion of the HCCH's membership in the region. In 2021, ROAP designed and produced a new Leaflet and Newsletter. The Leaflet provides a brief introduction to the HCCH, its Conventions, and ROAP, and the Newsletter recaps recent activities and achievements at ROAP, so as to promote a greater understanding of the HCCH and its Conventions in the region. A first issue of the Newsletter was published in October 2021 and distributed among government officials, judges, lawyers, scholars and stakeholders in the region, with particular focus on the Consulates-General in the Hong Kong SAR, from which particularly positive feedback was received. The Newsletter will be issued twice a year, in both electronic and print formats.

C. Participation in International Meetings & Events

- 10 On 29 January, the Representative participated in a panel discussion entitled "Healing a Conflicted Humanity", organised as part of the Global Speaker Series of the University of Hong Kong's LLM Programme in Arbitration and Dispute Resolution. The Legal Officer also participated in this event.
- 11 On 19 February, the Representative participated in the 19th Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot on the topic "Online Dispute Resolution: Theory and New Practice".
- 12 On 4 and 5 March, ROAP participated remotely in the APEC Policy Dialogue on Implementing the Collaborative Framework.
- 13 On 18 March, ROAP supported the organisation of an online seminar on the 1980 Child Abduction Convention co-hosted by the HCCH and the MFA of Japan, featuring an exchange of experiences and challenges in the implementation of the Convention in the Asia Pacific region.
- 14 On 25 March, ROAP joined the Cross-Border Legal Issues Dialogue Seminar Series, held by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, at which the Representative delivered a presentation on the HCCH's latest developments.
- 15 On 1 June, ROAP and other members of the PB participated remotely in the HCCH-ABLI Webinar, "HCCH 1970 Evidence Convention and Remote Taking of Evidence by Video-link", co-hosted by the Asian Business Law Institute.
- 16 On 5 July, ROAP attended the National Security Law Legal Forum, organised by the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong SAR.

- 17 On 8 and 9 July, the Representative delivered a presentation at the APEC's Workshop on Implementing the APEC ODR Collaborative Framework.
- 18 On 31 July, the Representative participated in the Ampower Talent Institute's Master Classes and Mentorship Programme.
- 19 On 24 August, ROAP attended the online seminar "Private International Law in Islamic Countries: Development & Challenges", at which the Representative delivered a keynote speech on the Malta Process, the 1996 Child Protection Convention, and developments in relation to the HCCH Conventions in Islamic countries.
- 20 From August to October, ROAP attended a series of APEC webinars, at which the Representative delivered a presentation on latest developments in relation to the HCCH Conventions.
- 21 On 27 September, ROAP joined the World Internet Conference remotely, with the Representative delivering a Keynote speech on the Internet and Private International Law.
- 22 On 21 October, ROAP attended the event, "The Development of Choice of Law and Forum from a Private International Law Perspective", held by Universitas Padjadjaran (Indonesia), at which the Representative delivered a speech on the HCCH Principles on Choice of Law in International Commercial Contracts.
- 23 On 26 and 27 October, ROAP attended the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM), focused on the HCCH, the 1965 Service and 1970 Evidence Conventions, and cooperation in the region.
- 24 From 1 to 5 November, ROAP participated in the Hong Kong Legal Week 2021, during which the Representative delivered presentations at multiple events, including:
- UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Judicial Summit 2021;
 - Workshop on ODR on the theme, "An Efficient and Cost-Effective Dispute Resolution Mechanism for Cross-Border Disputes for ASEAN Trade", held by the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong SAR;
 - The Law Society of Hong Kong's 4th Belt and Road Conference: Global Recovery and Harmony through the Belt and Road Initiative.
- 25 On 11 November, ROAP joined the webinar "Trends in Commercial Arbitration and Private International Law", hosted by the Asian Academy of International Law.
- 26 On 19 November, ROAP participated in the 2021 Colloquium on International Law, co-hosted by the Asian Academy of International Law and the Chinese Society of International Law, in order to exchange with the participants on the development of private international law (PIL) and promote the HCCH and its Conventions.
- 27 From 29 November to 1 December, ROAP attended the 59th Annual Session of the AALCO in Hong Kong SAR in person. The Representative delivered a statement on the latest developments in relation to the work of the HCCH, and engaged with the participants on promoting the HCCH and its Conventions.
- 28 In December, ROAP attended a series of events organised on the occasion of the UNCITRAL Asia-Pacific Day. Held online by the University of Hong Kong, Wuhan University and Macau University, the Representative delivered presentations at each of these events, focusing on the international regulations of commercial contracts and the complementary roles of the HCCH, UNCITRAL, and UNIDROIT.

IV. Challenges & Future Work

- 29 ROAP's efforts in the promotion of HCCH Conventions and instruments take special consideration of the diversity of traditions in the Asia Pacific region. The variety and complexity of domestic PIL developments throughout the region require detailed research, including into the processes of adoption and implementation of HCCH Conventions, with ROAP often providing assistance and advice. Finally, to maintain close and continuing contact with the region's various States in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic remains a challenge. ROAP continues to strive to overcome these challenges, but the development of more ambitious long-term plans and strategies is constrained by the resources available.
- 30 Throughout 2022, ROAP will continue to promote the HCCH and its Conventions, developing strategies for strengthening the network of National Organs as well as Central and Competent Authorities in the region, and enhancing the provision of post-Convention services. In early March 2022, ROAP will attend the APEC workshop on facilitating cross-border dispute resolution for businesses, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). From March to April 2022, ROAP will participate remotely in the APEC Serial Activities on the promotion and capacity building of the APEC Collaborative Framework on Online Dispute Resolution. In early April 2022, ROAP will attend the HCCH-ABLI Webinar. In Q1 2022, ROAP will attend the FutureGen Girls Leadership Summit, to be held in person in the Hong Kong SAR. In July 2022, ROAP will join the 8th Family Law & Children's Rights Conference, organised by the World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights, delivering a presentation on the HCCH Conventions in the area of international family and child protection law. In December 2022, ROAP will support the organisation of the Hague Academy of International Law's Advanced Courses on International Law.
- 31 It is particularly worth mentioning that ROAP and its Representative intend a series of visits and consultations with the Consulates-General in Hong Kong of countries in the Asia Pacific region in the first half of 2022, with the aim of exchanging views on the HCCH and its Conventions with their respective Consuls General. This is intended as a first step in an outreach initiative to create more traction for the HCCH in Asia and the Pacific.
- 32 As mentioned, the human resources costs of ROAP are not covered by the HCCH's Budget, but rather by generous Voluntary Contributions from the Government of the People's Republic of China. The comments accompanying the Budget of the HCCH stress that the funding of ROAP will need to be considered by CGAP and CDR in the future, and this consideration may include, without prejudice, arguments about equal treatment of the two existing regional offices.