

United Nations  Nations Unies

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Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the Secretary-General's letter of invitation addressed to Heads of State and Government to participate in this year's treaty event entitled "2010 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation" which will be held from 21 to 23 and 27 to 28 September 2010 in the Treaty Signing area in the General Assembly Building in New York during the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The treaty event will highlight treaties deposited with the Secretary-General that cover areas of global reach including human rights, terrorism, penal matters, disarmament, climate change and the protection of United Nations personnel. In particular, this year will be highlighting a theme which celebrates and safeguards life on earth, biodiversity. The year 2010 marks the International Year of Biodiversity; it also marks the start of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, another global issue requiring a global response.

In addition, this year's event draws attention to the possibility of deposit of declarations recognizing as compulsory the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice under Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the Court.

States are encouraged to utilize the occasion of the 2010 Treaty Event to demonstrate their continuing commitment to the central role of the rule of law in international relations. It is emphasized that the event may be used to sign and ratify or accede to any treaty for which the Secretary-General acts as depositary.

It is noted that, consistent with the rules of international law and the practice of the Secretary-General as depositary of multilateral treaties, a Head of State or Government or a Foreign Minister does not require full powers to execute a treaty action in person. Furthermore, full powers are not required in cases where an instrument conferring general full powers has been issued to a designated person and has been deposited with the Secretary-General in advance.

However, where an action, such as a signature, relating to a treaty deposited with the Secretary-General is to be undertaken by a person other than the Head of State or Government or the Foreign Minister, duly executed full powers are necessary.



The Secretary-General's requirements for a valid instrument of full powers must include the following:

- Title of the treaty;
- Full name and title of the person duly authorized to sign the treaty concerned (in the case of signature) or the relevant instrument (in the case of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession);
- Date and place of signature; and
- Signature of the Head of State, Head of Government or Foreign Minister.

Instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession must also be issued and signed by one of the above three authorities, and should include all declarations and reservations related thereto. Full powers and instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession should be submitted for verification to the Treaty Section well in advance of the intended date of the relevant treaty action. Further information on full powers and instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession can be obtained from the *Treaty Handbook* and the *Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depositary of Multilateral Treaties* (ST/LEG/7/Rev.1). These documents are also available in the United Nations Treaty Collection at the website <http://treaties.un.org>.

Information on the status of treaties deposited with the Secretary-General may be obtained from the above-mentioned website.

Advice before **3 September 2010** on your Government's intention to sign, ratify or accede to any of the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General would assist us in making the necessary arrangements, including appropriate media coverage. I am attaching a list of all multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General to enable a more comprehensive review of your country's participation in these multilateral treaties. It is requested that appointments be made by contacting the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs (telephone: (1+212) 963-5047; fax: (1+212) 963-3693; or e-mail: depositaryCN@un.org).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia O'Brien', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patricia O'Brien
Under-Secretary-General
for Legal Affairs
The Legal Counsel