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ASIL Guide to Electronic Resources for International Law: International Organizations

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International Organizations
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I. Scope of This Chapter

This chapter of the ASIL ERG provides:

- a brief introduction to the concepts of "intergovernmental organizations" and "non-governmental organizations"
- discussion of electronic resources helpful in researching international organizations
- links to the Websites of representative intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations providing electronic access to their documents and other publications

Although no guide to researching international organizations would be complete without reference to the United Nations (UN), researchers are directed to **the chapter in the ASIL ERG devoted to the UN** (http://www.asil.org/resource/un1.htm) for a thorough discussion of researching the UN and its specialized agencies.

II. Preliminary Definitions

a. Intergovernmental Organization (IGO)
An "association of States established by and based upon a treaty, which pursues common aims and which has its own special organs to fulfil particular functions within the organization." - from *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*. The **Universal Postal Union** (http://www.upu.int/), established in 1874 by the Treaty of Bern, is one of the oldest IGOs. As a legal entity with international legal status, an IGO can enter into agreements with other IGOs or nation states. The most well known IGO is the **United Nations** (http://www.un.org/).

Most IGOs have a legislative body, creating legal acts such as resolutions and directives that bind the IGO under international law. An example is the **United Nations General Assembly** (http://www.un.org/ga/), which serves as the major deliberative body of the UN.

IGOs may include a dispute resolution mechanism to resolve conflicts between Member States. The **International Court of Justice** (http://www.icj-cij.org/) serves this role for the UN.

In addition, many IGOs have an executive body (often called a secretariat) to facilitate the IGO's operations. For example, the **UN's Secretariat** (http://www.un.org/documents/st.htm) carries out the day-to-day operations of the UN.

b. Non-governmental Organization (NGO)
An international organization consisting of non-governmental representatives and individuals, a characteristic which distinguishes it from intergovernmental organizations (IGO) which consist primarily or wholly of governmental representatives. NGOs have no international legal status and therefore do not enter into treaties or other international agreements, although they may promote such agreements. The United Nations Charter provides for the UN's Economic & Social Council to arrange for consultations with NGOs, and some NGOs

exercise considerable influence, e.g., the **International Committee of the Red Cross** (http://www.icrc.org/), **Amnesty International** (http://www.amnesty.org/), **Greenpeace** (http://www.greenpeace.org/) and **Oxfam** (http://www.oxfam.org/).

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III. Research Basics

a. Subject Headings

When searching online library catalogs for materials on international organizations, try the following Library of Congress subject headings: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONALISM (INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION), or search by individual organization name: ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE or WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION.

b. Web Searching

Many international organizations produce a variety of documents, ranging from treaties facilitated by IGOs to reports issued by NGOs. The Web is proving to be a rich source for these documents, although access and coverage vary widely from one organization to the next. See Representative IGOs, **infra**, and Representative NGOs, **infra**, for examples of international organizations providing access to documents via the Web.

When searching the Web for the sites of international organizations, utilize the advanced features on search engines to limit your results to sites ending in the domain name **.int** which is reserved for organizations established by international treaties between or among national governments. For example, in **Altavista's Advanced Search mode** (linked from http://www.altavista.com) and in **Google's Advanced Search mode** (http://www.google.com/advanced_search), enter **.int** in the domain box to limit your results. Keep in mind, however, that some international organizations have eschewed the **.int** domain (e.g., **http://www.un.org** and **http://europa.eu**).

c. Periodicals

Periodical articles are particularly useful in researching current issues regarding international organizations. In addition, articles can provide useful overviews of the subject as well as citations to relevant primary and secondary sources. Numerous tools exist which index periodicals containing articles about international organizations. In addition, selected full-text periodicals are now available on the Web.

Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations (linked from http://www.acuns.org) provides a forum for practitioners and academics to discuss the impact of international organizations and multilateral processes. This journal began in 1995 and is a project of the Academic Council on the United Nations System and the United Nations University. It is published four times per year.

International Organization (http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=INO) Currently published by the Cambridge University Press on behalf of the International Organization Foundation. The site provides tables of contents and abstracts for issues from 1998 to present. Individual articles can be purchased on a pay-per-view basis. In addition, the site allows readers to register for free email delivery of the tables of contents. Additional full-text articles are available on Westlaw from 1983 (INOG database).

Journal of International Affairs (http://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/) Published by the School of International & Public Affairs at Columbia University. Selected articles are available in full text on the JIA site. Full-text articles are available on Westlaw from 1995 through 1998 (JIAF database).

International Legal Materials (http://www.asil.org/resources/ilm.html) Along with the full texts of important treaties and agreements, judicial and arbitral decisions, and national legislation, *International Legal Materials* (ILM) provides the text of selected international organizations' resolutions and other documents. Available on Lexis beginning with volume 1 (1962) in the INTLAW/ILM file. Available on Westlaw beginning with volume 19 (1980) in the ILM database. Westlaw also provides indexing of ILM from 1962 to present in the International Legal Materials Cumulative Index (ILM-INDX database). Tables of contents beginning with volume 38 (1999) are available at the American Society of International Law Website (**http://www.asil.org/ilm/ilmindx.htm**). The **ASILEX database** (http://www.asil.org/system/asilex.htm) contains bibliographic information for ILM from 1990 to present.

d. Periodical Indexes

Index to Legal Periodicals & Books (http://www.hwwilson.com/databases/legal.cfm) The Index to Legal Periodicals & Books (ILP) (H. W. Wilson Co.) is a subscription index providing citations to articles in over 800 legal periodicals covering all areas of jurisprudence, including international law. ILP now includes the full text of over 260 periodicals dating back to 1994.

Relevant subject headings in ILP include: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS and individual agency name, e.g. UNITED NATIONS or WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION.

Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (http://www.law.berkeley.edu/library/iflp/) The Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (IFLP) (University of California Press for the American Association of Law Libraries), indexes close to 520 legal periodicals, covering international law (public and private), comparative law, and municipal law of countries other than the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Online subscription access from 1985 is provided by **Ovid**.

Relevant subject headings in IFLP include INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, and individual agency name, e.g., ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY or UNITED NATIONS.

LegalTrac/LRI (http://www.galegroup.com/tlist/sb5088.html)
Legal Trac/Legal Resources Index (LRI) (Gale Group) indexes over 800 English language legal periodicals with coverage back to the early 1980s. Although this subscription service mostly provides bibliographic information and some abstracts, the database also includes selected full-text articles. It is available in CD-ROM and on the Web under the title LegalTrac. Online, LRI can be found on LEXIS (LAWREV/LGLIND) and WESTLAW (LRI) if the subscriber also subscribes to the CD-ROM or Web version.

Relevant subject headings in LegalTrac/LRI include: INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, INTERNATIONAL OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, and UNITED NATIONS.

PAIS International (http://www.csa.com/factsheets/pais-set-c.php)
The Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS) International (CSA) indexes public policy literature, including periodicals, books, government documents and reports, international agency publications, and internet material in six languages. The references are in English, and many entries include brief contents notes. *PAIS International* is available via subscription on **CSA Illumina** (http://www.csa.com/factsheets/pais-set-c.php). The Archives database indexes materials dating back to 1915.

Relevant subject headings in PAIS International include INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, and individual agency name, e.g., INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION or ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS.

e. Directories and Research Guides

Electronic Information System for International Law (EISIL) (the International Organizations section is linked from http://www.eisil.org/)
EISIL links to primary documents, such as treaties and other international instruments. Additional information is provided on each instrument, including print citations and relevant dates. EISIL will also guide users to the "best sites" for certain topical areas or kinds of research: Websites that have been examined by experts and measured against certain standards, such as currency, stability, authenticity, and comprehensiveness. EISIL additionally provides links to recommended research guides that assist researchers in exploring their topics of interest more widely. The database is browseable through a broad framework of subject areas as well as searchable using a targeted search engine.

Intergovernmental Organizations Websites by Subject (http://docs.lib.duke.edu/igo/subject.html)
Organizes links to numerous IGOs by broad subject categories (e.g., health, education, environment).

NGO Links (http://www.ngo.org/links/)
Organized alphabetically and by broad subject.

Non-governmental Organizations Research Guide (http://docs.lib.duke.edu/igo/guides/ngo/index.htm)
This guide provides tips on searching for NGO publications as well as a selective list of some of the larger and more influential NGOs focusing on either sustainable development, human rights, or women in development.

The Yearbook of International Organizations Online (http://www.uia.org/organizations/ybonline.php)
In addition to providing directory information for thousands of international organizations, this subscription database profiles each organization, including its purpose, history, publications, personnel, technical and regional commissions, and consultative and working relationships with other organizations (including hyperlinks to the entries for the other organizations). Its publisher, the non-profit **Union of International Associations** (http://www.uia.org/), provides limited free access to some of the databases.

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IV. Online Discussion Lists

INTL-DOC is an e-mail listserv designed to facilitate the exchange of information concerning the publication and information dissemination policies of IGOs. Commercial and IGO publishers as well as IGO depository liaisons all participate on INTL-DOC making it a valuable resource for international document researchers and librarians. Currently, over 400 participants from five continents participate in the INTL-DOC listserv. More information available at **http://gateway.library.uiuc.edu/doc/idtf/intl-doc.htm**.

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V. Representative IGOs Online

Note: the IGOs listed here were selected as representative of different types of IGOs (regional, topical, UN-related) and because they provide electronic access to their documents and other publications; for a comprehensive list of IGO sites, please see the Union of International Associations Index of International Organization Websites at **http://www.uia.org/website.htm**.

a. **Council of Europe** (http://www.coe.int/)

The Council of Europe (CoE) was established in 1949 by the Statute of the Council of Europe . Although its aims cover a broad array of European affairs, major areas of focus include the protection of human rights and democracy, adherence to the rule of law, promotion of a European identity, and development of solutions to societal problems. With current membership numbering 46 countries (including all European Union countries), the CoE produces a wide variety of documents, many of which are available electronically.

The database of **European treaties** at http://conventions.coe.int provides a complete list of treaties and a list of treaties by subject matter as well as allowing for searching by key word, subject matter, date, or *European Treaty Series* number.

Committee of Ministers documents (treaties, decisions, declarations, resolutions, recommendations, reports, speeches) at http://www.coe.int/T/CM/documentIndex_en.asp

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) materials (text of the European Convention on Human Rights, rules of court, pending cases, list of recent judgments) at http://www.echr.coe.int/

Human Rights Documentation database (HUDOC) at http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/default.htm provides access to the case law of the ECHR, the former European Commission of Human Rights, and the Committee of Ministers. The site also includes **a useful manual** in PDF (http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/hudoc-en/Help/ECHR_Portal_User_Manual.pdf)

Commissioner for Human Rights at http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/default_EN.asp provides text of reports, opinions, recommendations, and other documents (speeches, addresses)

Parliamentary Assembly provides documents sitting documents, reports of debates, adopted texts, agendas

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities texts at http://www.coe.int/T/Congress/4-Texts/adoptedTexts_en.asp provides access to adopted texts, drafts, and reports

The **site of the Secretary General** at http://www.coe.int/T/e/sg/ includes speeches, press releases, and reports

b. **International Atomic Energy Agency** (http://www.iaea.org/)

A specialized agency within the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) serves as an intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field. Established in 1957 by the **Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency** (http://www.iaea.org/About/statute.html), the IAEA now has 142 Member States. WorldAtom, the IAEA official Website, provides the texts of the following materials:

General Conference Archives (reports and resolutions) at http://www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC50/Documents/index.html

Legal Agreements (international conventions and status) at http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Conventions/

Information Circulars at http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/

Reports and Reviews at http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Reports/

Periodicals (*IAEA Bulletin*, *IAEA Factsheets*, *ITER Newsletter*, *Nuclear Fusion Journal*) at http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Magazines/

Press Materials (including Director General statements, press releases, daily news review, newsbriefs) at http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/

c. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (http://www.nato.int/)
The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is an alliance of Member States working collectively to ensure joint security through political and military cooperation. The founding agreement is the **North Atlantic Treaty** (http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/treaty.htm). NATO military personnel come from all member countries. NATO's site includes:

Basic Texts (formal agreements, key policy documents) at http://www.nato.int/docu/basics.htm

Fact Sheets at http://www.nato.int/docu/facts.htm

Press Releases at http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/index.html

Ministerial Communiques at http://www.nato.int/docu/comm.htm

Standardization Agreements at http://www.nato.int/docu/standard.htm

Other Publications (including the *NATO Handbook*, *NATO Update* and various booklets and visual presentations) at http://www.hq.nato.int/docu/home.htm

d. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (http://www.oecd.org)
Established in 1960 by the **Convention on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** (linked from http://www.oecd.org/), the OECD's 30 member countries share a commitment to democratic government and a market economy. Major areas of focus include trade, education, development, and science and innovation. The OECD Website makes available many of the large number of publications produced each year. These publications, all linked from http://www.oecd.org, include:

Legal Instruments and Related Documents (Conventions, Decisions, Declarations, Recommendations, Other Instruments in Force)

Working Papers (the working papers are listed chronologically but can be sorted by topic)

Other OECD Documents (wide variety of documents, including reports, forms, presentations, and more)

e. United Nations (http://www.un.org/)
Because of its importance and size, this Guide devotes a separate chapter to the United Nations (UN). The **United Nations chapter** (http://www.asil.org/resource/un1.htm) provides access points to the expansive UN system but also discusses specific areas such as international law and treaties. The chapter pinpoints Web resources developed by various UN organs such as UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, the chapter provides links to research guides developed at Yale, Stanford, Harvard and other institutions. Finally, the chapter identifies various commercial online or CD-ROM sources for UN materials.

f. World Trade Organization (http://www.wto.org/)
The World Trade Organization (WTO) deals with the global rules of trade between nations. Created in 1995 by **the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization** (http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/final_e.htm), the WTO is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and supports the multilateral trading system established under the GATT. The WTO Website provides extensive coverage of its documentation at the following access points:

Official Documents at http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/docs_e.htm including the Agreement Establishing the WTO and over 100,000 other official documents.

Documents Online at http://docsonline.wto.org/ provides a searchable and browsable database of the official documentation of the

WTO from 1995-. Documents posted before June 2, 1998 are available in WordPerfect 5.2; documents posted thereafter are available in Word 97. The Documents Online database includes a descriptive catalog record for every document.

Panel and Appellate Body Reports are downloadable in PDF or Word at
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/distab_e.htm

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VI. Representative NGOs Online
Note: the NGOs listed here were selected as representative of the many NGOs existing (addressing issues such as health, environment, humanitarian aid, poverty, and human rights) and because they provide good electronic access to their documents and other publications (e.g., treaties on a specific topic); for a comprehensive list of NGO sites, please see the Union of International Associations Index of International Organization Websites at **http://www.uia.org/website.htm**.

a. Amnesty International (http://www.amnesty.org/)
Amnesty International (AI) works to promote **human rights** as set forth in **the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and other international human rights documents. AI's work focuses on freeing prisoners of conscience, abolishing the death penalty and torture, ensuring fair and prompt trials for political prisoners, and "disappearances" and political executions. The **Amnesty International Library** at http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/ provides access to Annual Reports, News Releases, and documents searchable by country, region, sub-region or theme.

b. CARE (http://www.care.org)
Created in 1945 to provide emergency assistance in Europe, CARE International is a confederation of ten NGOs delivering **relief assistance** and working to end global **poverty** through sustainable development. CARE's **Newsroom** (http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/) serves as a central site for access to a variety of publications, including:

Current Press Releases at (http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/pressreleases/) along with news archives

Special Reports at http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/specialreports/

CARE Publications (Annual Reports, World Reports, Technical Reports, *AIDSfocus Newsletter*) at http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/publications/

c. International Campaign to Ban Landmines (http://www.icbl.org/)
Winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) works toward a ban on the use of antipersonnel landmines worldwide, passage of the Mine Ban Treaty, increased resources for victim assistance, and increased resources for demining operations. The ICBL provides excellent access to ICBL publications as well as the text or citation information for many documents on landmines:

Text of the Mine Ban Treaty at http://www.icbl.org/treaty/text.php3 in a number of languages and formats for downloading (the **Treaty Update** page at http://www.icbl.org/treaty/ contains additional information regarding signatories, intersessional reports, monitor fact sheets, and more)

Index on Landmines (http://www.icbl.org/index/) includes a Text Database, list of relevant Websites, and Audio-Visual Database

d. International Committee of the Red Cross (http://www.icrc.org/)
Established in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) serves a **humanitarian** mission to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. Although listed here as an NGO, the ICRC has entered into agreements with more than 50 nations recognizing the ICRC as an international legal entity and granting it the privileges and immunities normally enjoyed by IGOs.

The **International Humanitarian Law pages** (http://www.icrc.org/eng/ihl) discuss international humanitarian law and provide a useful guide to the Basic Rules of the Geneva Conventions and Their Additional Protocols.

IHL Database (http://www.icrc.org/ihl) provides access to the text of treaties and documents as well as information regarding signatories and parties.

National Implementation Database at http://www.icrc.org/ihl-nat includes data on the implementation of humanitarian law at the national level.

International Review of the Red Cross at http://www.icrc.org/eng/review

e. Population Council (http://www.popcouncil.org)
Since 1952, the Population Council has sought to improve the well being and reproductive **health** of current and future generations around the world and to help achieve a humane, equitable, and sustainable balance between people and resources. The Population Council publishes and disseminates a wide variety of publications:

Policy Research Division Working Papers at http://www.popcouncil.org/publications/wp/prd/rdwplist.html

Population Briefs at http://www.popcouncil.org/publications/popbriefs/default.htm

SEEDS booklet series at http://www.popcouncil.org/publications/seeds/seeds.html provides information about innovative and practical program ideas developed to address the economic roles and needs of low income women

f. World Wildlife Federation (http://www.panda.org)
Founded in 1961, the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) works to halt the degradation of the **environment** by conserving biodiversity, ensuring the use of renewable and sustainable natural resources, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. WWF's Website provides access to a variety of materials, including:

Publications (reports, studies, status updates) at http://www.panda.org/news_facts/publications

Newsroom (news stories, press releases, features) at http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/index.cfm

VII. Related Links

The American Society of International Law's current awareness publication **International Law In Brief** (http://www.asil.org/ilib/ilibarch.htm) is a free, bi-monthly email service. It carries "analytical abstracts of significant documents reflective of the broad, contemporary nature of international law".

ASIL Insights Online is also available both on the ASIL Web site (www.asil.org/insights.htm) and as a free email service (about once a month). Concise, unbiased essays outline the international law issues behind current events.

Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO) (http://ciaonet.org/) A subscription database, CIAO provides the full text of many international affairs publications, including an occasional papers series from NGOs.

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