

International Organizations

Anne Burnett



his electronic resource guide, often called the ERG, has been published online by the American Society of International Law (ASIL) since 1997. Since then it has been systematically updated and continuously expanded. The chapter format of the ERG is designed to be used by students, teachers, practitioners and researchers as a self-guided tour of relevant, quality, up-to-date online resources covering important areas of international law. The ERG also serves as a ready-made teaching tool at graduate and undergraduate levels.

The narrative format of the ERG is complemented and augmented by EISIL (Electronic Information System for International Law), a free online database that organizes and provides links to, and useful information on, web resources from the full spectrum of international law. EISIL's subject-organized format and expert-provided content also enhances its potential as teaching tool.

- I. Scope of This Chapter
- II. Preliminary Definitions
- III. Research Basics
- IV. Representative IGOs Online
- V. Representative NGOs Online

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://asil.org/sites/default/files/ERG_UN.pdf) 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 <u>Universal Postal Union</u> (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 <u>United Nations General Assembly</u> (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 <u>International Court of Justice</u> (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 <u>UN Secretariat</u> (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 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/).

III. Research Basics

a. Online Library Catalogs

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.

Try utilizing the online catalog's KEYWORD search function for the most flexible searching options.

In addition to searching your local law library's online catalog, you can search for materials in other

libraries by using WorldCat, a merged electronic catalog of thousands of libraries from around the world. WorldCat (http://www.oclc.org/us/en/worldcat/default.htm) contains over a billion records. In addition to providing bibliographic information, WorldCat lists the libraries holding the item.

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 <u>Google Advanced Search mode</u> (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), and limiting the domain may result in the unintentional exclusion of these important entities from the search results.

Intergovernmental Organization Search Engine

(http://www.google.com/coop/cse?cx=006748068166572874491%3A55ez0c3j3ey) This customized search engine within Google searches across hundreds of IGO Web sites simultaneously. It is a project of the International Documents Taskforce of the American Library Association's Government Documents Roundtable (ALA GODORT).

Non-governmental Organizations Search

(http://www.google.com/cse/home?cx=012681683249965267634%3Aq4g16p05-ao). Also a project of the ALA GODORT International Documents Taskforce, this Google-driven search engine searches across selected NGO Web sites.

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 index periodicals containing articles about international organizations. In addition, selected full-text periodicals are now available on the Web.

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

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 1947 (volume 1) to present. Full-text access is provided to subscribers, while non-subscribers can purchase access on a per-article 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 beginning in 2000 (JIAF database).

International Legal Materials (http://www.asil.org/resources/international-legal-materials) 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. Selected coverage in Westlaw begins 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). View the tables of contents for all back issues and purchase individual articles at JSTOR (http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=amerjintelaw).

d. Periodical Indexes

Index to Legal Periodicals & Books (http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/index-to-legal-periodicals-and-books-full-text) The Index to Legal Periodicals & Books (ILP) (H.W. Wilson Co.) is a subscription index providing citations to articles in legal periodicals covering all areas of jurisprudence, including international law. ILP includes records for periodicals back to 1982 plus the full text of over 325 periodicals dating back to 1994. Subscribers to the ILP Retrospective have access to records from 1908 to 1981.

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 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. Published in print since 1960, the IFLP is available from 1985 online through Hein Online.

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

<u>LegalTrac/LRI</u> (http://titlelist.galegroup.com/titlelist/LT/pdf)

LegalTrac/Legal Resource Index (LRI) (Gale Group) indexes over 800 English language legal periodicals with coverage back to the late 1970s. 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.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/pais-set-c.shtml)

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 ProQuest (http://www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/pais-set-c.shtml). 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

<u>Electronic Information System for International Law (EISIL)</u> (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.

International Organizations Links (http://www.usip.org/publications/international-organizations)

This United States Institute of Peace site provides an alphabetical list of links to international organizations.

<u>Comprehensive List of IGOs</u> (http://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/evanston-campus/government-information/international-documents/list-igos)

This Northwestern University resource provides an extensive list of links to all IGO Web sites that the staff can find.

Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) Research Guide

(http://guides.library.duke.edu/igo guide)

This guide includes links to IGO-related statistics, documents, a select bibliography and a customized IGO search engine.

NGO Links (http://www.ngo.org/links/)

Organized alphabetically and by broad subject.

Non-governmental Organizations Research Guide

(http://library.duke.edu/research/subject/guides/ngo_guide/)

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. Also find a customized search engine for searching selected NGO

sites.

The Yearbook of International Organizations Online (http://www.uia.be/node/52)

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 <u>Union of International Associations</u> (http://www.uia.be/), provides limited free access to some of the databases and also provides a free <u>IGO Search Engine</u> (http://www.uia.org/igosearch) facilitating access to the sites of over 3000 IGOs.

f. Additional Resources

ASIL International Organizations Interest Group (http://www.asil.org/community/international-organizations)

This Interest Group strives to create a strong and mutually supportive group of scholars and practitioners who seek common understanding of the evolving multilateral order.

The <u>International Law in Brief blog</u> (http://www.asil.org/blogs/ilib) from the American Society of International Law provides analytical abstracts of significant documents reflective of the broad, contemporary nature of international law, including many relevant to the work and study of international organizations.

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

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://www.ala.org/ala/godort/taskforces/internationaldocuments/intldoc.htm.

IV. 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 access to additional IGO sites, please see the Union of International Associations' IGO Search Engine (http://www.uia.be/s/or/en/igo).

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 47 countries (including all European Union countries), the CoE produces a wide variety of documents, many of which are available electronically.

The database of <u>European treaties</u> 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.

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

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

<u>Human Rights Documentation database</u> (HUDOC) at http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/ provides access to the case law of the ECHR, the former European Commission of Human Rights, and the Committee of Ministers.)

<u>Commissioner for Human Rights</u> at http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/home provides text of reports, opinions, recommendations, and other documents (speeches, addresses)

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

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities texts at

http://www.coe.int/t/congress/texts/adoptedTexts_en.asp provides access to adopted texts, including draft conventions, recommendations, resolutions, opinions, and final declarations

The <u>site of the Secretary General</u> at http://www.coe.int/T/SECRETARYGENERAL/SG/includes speeches, press releases, and reports

b. <u>International Atomic Energy Agency</u> (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 <u>Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency</u> (http://www.iaea.org/About/statute.html), the IAEA now has over 160 Member States. The IAEA official Website provides the texts of the following materials:

General Conference - the highest policy-making body of the IAEA

International Conventions and Agreements

(http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Conventions/)

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

Reports and Reviews (http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Reports/)

<u>Periodicals</u> (http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Magazines/) - includes (IAEA Bulletin, IAEA Factsheets, ITER Newsletter, Nuclear Fusion Journal

<u>Press Materials</u> (http://www.iaea.org/newscenter) -including Director General statements, press releases, daily news review, newsbriefs

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/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm). NATO military personnel come from all member countries. The NATO site includes:

<u>Official Texts</u> (http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts.htm) - formal agreements, ministerial communiques, key policy documents

Press Releases and other news at (http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news room.htm)

d. United Nations (http://www.un.org/)

Because of its importance and size, this Guide devotes a separate chapter to the United Nations (UN). The <u>United Nations chapter</u> (http://www.asil.org/sites/default/files/ERG_UN.pdf) 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.

e. 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.

<u>Documents Online</u> at https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE_Search/FE_S_S005.aspx provides a searchable and browsable database of the official documentation of the WTO from 1995 to present along with selected material from 1986-1994. Documents are available in both PDF and Word. The Documents Online database includes a descriptive bibliographic 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

V. 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). The NGO Global Network provides a <u>list of NGOs associated with the United Nations</u> at http://www.ngo.org/links/.

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. Their 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 site provides access to Annual Reports, News Releases, and research documents searchable by content type, topic, region/country, or resource type.

b. CARE (http://www.care.org)

Created in 1945 to provide emergency assistance in Europe, CARE International delivers relief assistance and works to end global poverty through sustainable development. The CARE Newsroom (http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/) serves as a central site for access to a variety of publications, including:

Current Press Releases linked from http://www.care.org/newsroom/index.asp?

Annual Reports

(http://www.care.org/newsroom/publications/annualreports/index.asp)

http://www.care.org/newsroom/publications

(http://www.care.org/features/specialreports.asp)

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 and cluster munitions worldwide. The organization works toward universal adoption of both the Mine Ban Treaty and the Clusters Munition Convention. In addition, the ICBL advocates for increased resources for victim assistance and demining operations. The ICBL provides excellent access to ICBL publications as well as the text or citation information for many documents on landmines:

The <u>Treaties page</u> (http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Treaties) provides access to the full text of both international agreements in multiple languages. Records of the <u>Meetings of the States</u>

<u>Parties</u> to the Mine Ban Treaty are available at http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/the-treaty/treaty-meetings/meetings-of-states-parties.aspx. The <u>Signatories</u> to the Cluster Munitions Convention are listed at http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/the-treaty/treaty-status.aspx.

The <u>Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor</u> (http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php) produces several research products including the annual Landmine Monitor and Cluster Munition reports, as well as factsheets and maps.

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 <u>War and Law pages</u> (https://www.icrc.org/en/war-and-law) discuss international humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC.

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

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

<u>International Review of the Red Cross</u> (http://www.icrc.org/eng/review) quarterly journal on international humanitarian law and policy.

e. 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:

<u>Publications & Resource Materials</u> (reports, studies, status updates) at http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/

News (news stories, press releases, features) at http://www.panda.org/wwf news/

She earned a B.A. degree from the University of Nevada, a J.D. degree from the University of Georgia School of Law, and an M.L.I.S. degree from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to returning to the University of Georgia, she was a reference librarian at the University of Arkansas Law Library, deputy legislative counsel for the Nevada legislature, and a judicial law clerk in Reno, Nevada. While a law student, she served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Georgia Journal of International & Comparative Law*. She is admitted to the state bars of California and Nevada, and she is a member of the American Association of Law Libraries, the American Bar Association, and the American Society of International Law.

^{*}Anne Burnett is the Foreign & International Law Librarian at the University of Georgia School of Law and teaches courses in International Legal Research and Advanced Legal Research.