

# INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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This is a highly selective guide to a few of the most important intergovernmental organizations that have environmental programs or a tribunal that has ruled on environmental cases. It lists the main organs, the subsidiary agencies with environmental programs, and databases of documents.

### A. The United Nations (UN)

#### 1. The main organs of the UN with links to their website are the following:

- General Assembly, <http://www.un.org/en/ga> (last visited Dec. 20, 2010),
- Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/> (last visited Dec. 20, 2010),
- Economic and Social, <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc> (last visited Dec. 20, 2010),
- Trusteeship Council, <http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/trusteeship> (last visited Dec. 20, 2010),
- Secretariat, <http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/secretariat/index.shtml> (last visited Dec. 20, 2010), and
- International Court of Justice, <http://www.icj-cij.org> (last visited Dec. 20, 2010).

#### 2. General Sources of Information

##### a. Structure & Organization, <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/index.shtml> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

This page provides a visual presentation of the over-all structure of the organization with links to all units listed. It's an excellent place to start when you're looking for a division of the UN and you do not have the URL for its site. It has a link that opens a graphic organizational chart in Adobe Acrobat and a link to the UN System Locator, which has an alphabetical index, a thematic index, a UN system chart, UN system libraries, and DEPOLIB (directory of UN depository libraries).

- The most detailed guide to the organization of the UN in any format is New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *United Nations Handbook* (1973- ). The Law Library has 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 in the stacks and 2009-2010 in Reference under the call number JZ4970 .U65.

##### b. Documents, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/index.shtml> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

This page is a gateway to the most important online databases of UN documents, which are:

- Official Document System (ODS), <http://documents.un.org/welcome.asp?language=E> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

"ODS covers all types of official United Nations documentation, beginning in 1993. Older UN documents are, however, added to the system on a daily basis. ODS also provides access to the resolutions of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council from

1946 onwards.... The ODS is a multilingual system. Therefore, it requires UNICODE-based Internet browsers, such as MS Internet Explorer 5.5, Netscape 6.21 or higher versions." Introduction

- UNBISnet (<http://unbisnet.un.org/>) (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

UNBISnet is the bibliographic information system of the Dag Hammarskjold Library. It includes the catalog of the collections of both the Dag Hammarskjold Library and the Library of the UN Office at Geneva, voting records for all resolutions, and an index to speeches. Although the catalog currently covers 1979 to the present, earlier records are continually added to it. The voting records of the General Assembly and the Security Council begin with 1946. The speeches of the General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council begin with 1983.

- UN-I-QUE (<http://lib-unique.un.org/lib/unique.nsf>) (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

A database of bibliographic records for documents of a recurrent nature, such as annual and irregular reports, conference reports, etc. Its records include a list of all issues of each series. [It] "is designed to provide quick access to document symbols/sales numbers for UN materials (1946 onwards)."

- United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database (UNTERM), <http://unterm.un.org> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

"UNTERM is a multilingual terminology database which provides United Nations nomenclature, technical or specialized terms and common phrases in all six official UN languages - English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. The database is mainly intended for use by the language staff of the United Nations to ensure accurate and consistent usage in documents published by the Organization." About UNTERM, <http://unterm.un.org/dgaacs/unterm.nsf/AboutUnterm?OpenPage>

- United Nations Documentation: Research Guide <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

An explanation of the organization, bibliographic access, and types of UN documents. It includes links to the most important documents, lists, and databases.

- c. The Dag Hammarskjold Library, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

### 3. Specialized UN bodies

- a. United Nations Environment Programme, <http://www.unep.org> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

- Thesaurus of Environmental Terms, <http://www.nyo.unep.org/action/ap1.htm>
- Pollution Glossary, <http://pops.gpa.unep.org/gloss.htm>

- b. United Nations Conference on Trade & Development, <http://www.unctad.org> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

- c. United Nations Development Programme, <http://www.undp.org> (last visited Dec. 22, 2010)

- d. United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/index.shtml?utm\\_source=OldRedirect&utm\\_medium=redirect&utm\\_content=dsd&utm\\_campaign=OldRedirect](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/index.shtml?utm_source=OldRedirect&utm_medium=redirect&utm_content=dsd&utm_campaign=OldRedirect)

This organization will put on the Rio+20 Conference, <http://www.uncsd2012.org>, in 2012

e. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, <http://www.ipcc.ch> (last visited Jan. 20, 2011)

This organization was

...established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).... It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.”  
(<http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization.shtml>)

f. Food and Agriculture Organization, <http://www.fao.org> (last visited Jan. 20, 2011)

g. United Nations Population Fund, <http://www.unfpa.org/public> (last visited Jan. 20, 2011)

h. World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/en/> (last visited Jan. 20, 2011)

i. World Meteorological Organization, <http://www.wmo.int> (last visited Jan. 20, 2011)

j. International Maritime Organization, <http://www.imo.org> (last visited Jan. 20, 2011)

#### 4. Microforms

The UC Law Library receives the Law Library Collection of UN documents from Readex on microfiche. This collection includes “...official records and working documents from five of the six principal organs (Secretariat publications not included).” In addition the collection includes three optional segments: human rights, trade and development, and disarmament. Although the subscription to this collection began in 1981, the human rights segment goes back to 1946. The collection includes the complete UN Treaty Series, the documents of the International Court of Justice, and the Official Records of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. It is often the most convenient way of locating documents that are older than 1993.

#### B. The World Bank, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

The World Bank’s website says that it “...is like a cooperative, where its 187 member countries are shareholders.” ( <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0..contentMDK:20040580~menuPK:1696997~pagePK:51123644~piPK:329829~theSitePK:29708,00.html> ) It is governed at the highest level by a Board of Governors that meets once a year. The day-to-day work of the Bank is managed by a President and 25 Executive Directors who are elected by the member countries and make up the Boards of Directors. The President chairs the semiweekly meetings of the Boards. The Bank consists of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Agency (IDA). The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) are closely associated with it. All five of them together are called the World Bank Group and there is a board for each agency. The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and the Inspection Panel (<http://web.worldbank.org>

[org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTINSPECTIONPANEL/0,,menuPK:64132057~pagePK:64130364~piPK:64132056~theSitePK:380794,00.html](http://org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTINSPECTIONPANEL/0,,menuPK:64132057~pagePK:64130364~piPK:64132056~theSitePK:380794,00.html)) report directly to the Board of the Executive Directors. The IEG is something like a police internal affairs department. "The goals of evaluation are to provide an objective assessment of the results of the Bank Group's work and to identify and disseminate lessons learned from experience." (<http://web.worldbank.org/external/default/main?theSitePK=1324361&pagePK=64253958&contentMDK=20999016&menuPK=64253130&piPK=64252979>) The Inspection Panel's purpose is to give the people who may be or have been affected by the Bank's projects recourse to complain about problems, suffering or damage including environmental degradation that the projects may or have caused. The Panel lets the people who will be affected by a project know how to contact it.

### C. The European Union (EU)

The EU has been called a supra-national organization because it resembles both an international organization and a nation. It exercises some of the powers of sovereignty that have been voluntarily relinquished to it by its members. The Council of the European Union consists of the representatives of the governments of the member nations. The Parliament consists of representatives directly elected by the people of all the EU nations. The Parliament and the Council share the responsibility for passing legislation. The laws are implemented by the European Commission and applied by the Court of Justice. The EU has an excellent website named Europa (<http://europa.eu> (last visited Feb. 14, 2011)). Europa has sections for each of the major bodies of the EU. The most important follow:

- The European Parliament ([http://www.europarl.eu.int/news/public/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/news/public/default_en.htm) (last visited June 26, 2006))
- The Council of the European Union (<http://ue.eu.int/showPage.ASP?lang=en> (last visited June 26, 2006))
- The European Commission ([http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm) (last visited June 26, 2006))
- The Court of Justice (<http://curia.eu.int/en/index.htm> (last visited June 26, 2006))

The European Court of Justice will be described in more detail below.

The UC Libraries do not collect EU paper documents systematically, but both the Law and Langsam Libraries have some of their documents in their paper collections. Use UCLID to find out what is available and where. Search for European Union as an author.

### D. Council of Europe (COE) Documents

The Council of Europe was established in the wake of WWII in reaction to German aggression and the Soviet take-over of Eastern Europe. It has four primary agencies: the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Committee of Ministers consists of the foreign ministers of the member states, is the decision-making body, and enforces the decisions of the ECtHR. The Parliamentary Assembly consists of representatives of member states' legislatures and is an advisory body. The ECtHR

adjudicates conflicts under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities gives representation from cities and regions of the member states. The UC Libraries do not collect COE documents systematically, but both the Law and Langsam Libraries have some of their documents in their paper collections. Use UCLID to find out what is available and where. Search for Council of Europe as an author. The Council has a web site (<http://www.coe.int> (last visited on Feb. 11, 2011)). The site's left-hand column provides links to the COE's major bodies and activities. You can find all of the COE's treaties under link labeled Treaty Office, International Law & Terrorism.

#### E. The Organization of American States (OAS)

The role of the OAS in the Western Hemisphere is not comparable to the role the EU plays in Europe or even the role the UN plays in the world. Its main organs are the General Assembly, a Permanent Council, and a Secretary General. The General Assembly is "the supreme organ" of the OAS; all member nations are represented in the General Assembly. A second organ, the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, appears to function partially as an organ and partially as an event. Its purpose is "to consider problems of an urgent nature and of common interest to the American States, and to serve as the Organ of Consultation." The Permanent Council consists of ambassadors of the member states and reports to the General Assembly. It has the responsibility to keep peace among the members, carry out the decisions of the General Assembly, to oversee the standards of the work of the General Secretariat, to draft treaties, and to submit recommendations to the General Assembly. Like the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development consists of representatives of the member states and reports to the General Assembly. Its function is "to promote cooperation...for the purpose of...helping to eliminate extreme poverty...especially...with respect to the economic, social, educational, cultural, scientific, and technological fields." The General Secretariat is the executive organ of the OAS; it carries out the decisions of the General Assembly and the other organs.

The OAS's website (<http://www.oas.org/main/english> (last visited June 26, 2006)) is not as extensive as that of the UN or the EU, but is attractive, functional, and well organized. It provides both retrospective and current OAS publications and documents. It includes treaties, for example, from 1948 to 2002. The homepage provides links to an explanation of the structure of the organization (<http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=E&sLink=http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/structure.asp> (last visited June 26, 2006)) and OAS documents (<http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=E&sLink=http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/documents.asp> (last visited June 26, 2006)). The OAS has one court, the Court of Human Rights, which has a website (<http://www.oas.org/main/main.asp?sLang=E&sLink=http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/structure.asp> follow "Inter-American Court of Human Rights" link (last visited June 26, 2006)) that is described below.

#### F. African Union (AU) and Organization of African Unity (OAU) Documents

The African Union is the successor to the Organization of African Unity, which dissolved itself on July 9, 2002. The UC Libraries have no documents from the AU and very few from

the OAU. Those that we do have are in the Law and Langsam Libraries' paper collections. Use UCLID to find out what is available and where. Search for Organization of African Unity as an author.

The African Union has an inchoate web site (<http://www.au.int> (last visited Feb. 11, 2011)). Although the web site has little on it now, the fact that the organization started the site at its birth gives it the potential to collect all the organization's documents in one universally available place.

#### G. The World Trade Organization (WTO), [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)

The WTO was created in 1995 to provide a forum for the negotiation of agreements to regulate trade, to resolve disputes among members, and to impose sanctions. Its highest authority is the Ministerial Conference, which must meet at least once every two years. The Ministerial Conference can make decisions on any topic that the WTO may address. Below it is the General Council, which "acts on behalf of the Ministerial Conference on all WTO affairs." It meets as itself, as the Dispute Settlement Body, and as the Trade Policy Review Body "to oversee procedures for settling disputes between members and to analyse members' trade policies."

##### 1. Online

The WTO has a good website (<http://www.wto.org/index.htm> (last visited June 26, 2006)). The Documents Gateway ([http://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/docs\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/docs_e.htm) (last visited June 26, 2006)) provides direct access to existing agreements, the Documents Online ([http://docsonline.wto.org/gen\\_home.asp?language=1&\\_1](http://docsonline.wto.org/gen_home.asp?language=1&_1) (last visited June 26, 2006)) menu for accessing all other types of documents, and the GATT archive at Stanford (<http://gatt.stanford.edu/page/home> (last visited June 26, 2006)). "Documents Online ([http://docsonline.wto.org/gen\\_home.asp?language=1&\\_1](http://docsonline.wto.org/gen_home.asp?language=1&_1)) is a separate facility from the main [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org) website, so runs in its own browser window and has its own search engine." Documents Online is the place to begin a search for any WTO document.

WTO Legal Texts ([http://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/legal\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/legal_e.htm) (last visited June 26, 2006)).

- Dispute Settlement documents can be found at ([http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dispu\\_e/dispu\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_e.htm) (last visited June 26, 2006))

##### 2. Paper

To locate WTO documents at UC do an author search in UCLID on World Trade Organization. Although we have only a handful of them, they are well selected. Among them are the following: World Trade Organization. A Handbook on the WTO Dispute Settlement System. (2004). K4610.W67 2004 World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Decisions: Bernan's Annotated Reporter. (1998- ). K4600.W67

World Trade Review. (2002- ). <http://journals.ohiolink.edu/cgi-bin/sciserv.pl?collection=journals&journal=14747456>