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International Organizations

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I. Scope

This Collections Policy Statement pertains to intergovernmental organizations (IGO's), which are international, regional, or multinational in scope. For purposes of this statement, intergovernmental organizations are those organizations to which governments belong and send official representatives. As a rule, governments join an intergovernmental organization by agreement or treaty. Further distinctions between intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) may be found in the *Yearbook of International Organizations*, published by K.G. Saur, Munich, latest year 2008.

For related collections policies, consult the Collections Policy Statements on Societies and Associations, Developing Countries, Government Publications-Foreign, and Law.

Publications of intergovernmental organizations are collected in all formats, and may cover all subjects. Therefore, they may be found throughout the Library's general and special collections.

II. Research Strengths

The scope, size, and historical depth of the collections of intergovernmental organizations at the Library of Congress constitute a major research strength. Coupled with the strong United States and foreign collections of government documents and the wealth of secondary research materials, the publications of international organizations offer a strong basis for the study of international relations, international law, and the history and development of organizations of this sort. The Law Library also has large collections of judicial materials published by intergovernmental bodies, such as the International Court of Justice. As international organizations may publish on any topic, the collections facilitate many types of comparative or multinational studies.

Supplementing the print collections are subscribed electronic indexing and fulltext sources, such as AccessUN and Source OECD. Many organizations, such as the United Nations, Organization of American States, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, offer freely available indexes and full text documents on their world wide web pages. The United Nations now makes

available free of charge some former subscription databases, such as the Official Documents of the United Nations (ODS), with full text of documents as far back as 1993 in UN official languages. The European Union is very generous in its offering of free databases and text. These resources enhance access to the print collections.

III. General Collecting Policy

The Library of Congress attempts to acquire publications of intergovernmental agencies at least at the research level if the United States is a member state. In some cases, collection is comprehensive. If the United States is not a member, the Library collects at the instructional level or higher. For example, the United States is not a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), but the importance of world oil supplies would suggest that the Library make an effort to collect all substantial OPEC publications.

Types of materials acquired to document the history and the work of the organization itself include charters and founding documents, rules of procedure, annual reports of the organization and its important sub-bodies, summary or complete records of proceedings of meetings, resolutions and decisions, official records, bibliographies, and histories. In addition substantive publications are acquired that provide legal, regulatory, standard-setting, statistical, economic, and scientific information. If the organization distributes its working documentation, the Library attempts to collect this documentation if it is heavily cited in scholarly or legal literature, as is that of the United Nations. In such cases, the Library may keep the documentation in a collected numerical set, as recommended by the organization, with collection level cataloging. Additional examples of document sets at the Library include those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the Organization of American States.

The Library does not collect publications covering clinical medicine or technical agriculture in accordance with the Collections Policy Statements on Medicine and Agriculture. In general, the Library does not collect documentation intended solely for internal use, ephemeral literature, such as informational brochures, and press releases. This does not preclude collection of such publications when properly recommended to meet the needs of Congress or the Library's other user communities, or for temporary use. If the Library acquires materials solely for temporary use and does not intend to add them to the permanent collections, strong consideration will be given to acquiring available online (intangible) electronic editions.

This Collections Policy Statement pertains primarily to currently received materials, but also can include retrospective sets, which become available to the Library in any format.

Specific collecting policies are identified below for a few representative intergovernmental organizations of universal membership, as well as for two regional organizations of special importance to the United States.

Best edition. In acquiring publications of intergovernmental organizations, the Library follows the criteria for each format as published in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Appendix B to Part 202: "Best Edition of Published Copyrighted Works for the Collections of the Library of Congress." The publications of most intergovernmental organizations are not subject to United States copyright deposit requirements.

IV. Specific Collecting Policy

United Nations (UN)

The Library of Congress collects United Nations materials at a comprehensive level. The Library acquires for its permanent collections all substantive publications, monographic or serial, issued in the English language, issued in multi-lingual form, or issued only in a language other than English.

United Nations *Official Records* of various bodies, such as those of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, and Disarmament Commission, are retained in print format and added to the permanent collections. Masthead documents are acquired in print or online electronic form for temporary service use, but are added to the permanent collections in microform.

Publications of the Economic Commission for Latin America are acquired in Spanish, and also in English as available. Publications of the Economic Commission for Africa are acquired in French or English as available.

United Nations specialized agencies and related bodies

The following United Nations specialized agencies are related to the U.N. by special agreement, but have their own membership, governing bodies, and publications and documents: International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank Group, International Monetary Fund, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Telecommunication Union, Universal Postal Union, World Meteorological Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and World Tourism Organization.

In general, the Library of Congress collects the publications of these specialized agencies comprehensively in all appropriate formats. Publications dealing with technical agricultural and clinical medicine are not collected, as provided in the Collections Policy Statements on Agriculture and Medicine. Integrating resources from the organizations are collected only if a reading room agrees to take custodial responsibility for them and keep them up to date. Successive basic editions of important manuals and handbooks are kept. Materials acquired include those issued in English, issued in multi-lingual form, or issued only in a language other than English. As new specialized agencies and related bodies are created, they shall be automatically collected at the same level under these policies.

European Union (EU)

The Library collects comprehensively from the European Union in all appropriate formats, including materials issued by the European Parliament, Council of the European Union, Commission of the Union, the Court of Justice, and the many sub-organs, institutions, and decentralized agencies which are part of the EU. The Library acquired publications of the various European economic communities, which preceded the European Union, and may acquire retrospective materials from these bodies if they fill a significant research gap in the collections. The Library collects in English or multilingual form if available, otherwise in another EU official language.

Publications of the Organization of American States (OAS)

The Library of Congress acquires for its permanent collections at least one copy of substantive publications of the Organization of American States issued in English, issued in multi-lingual form, or issued in Spanish.

Substantive monographs and serials, such as annual reports, legal, regulatory, and statistical material, are acquired and retained in the original format and added to the permanent collections. Symbol documents of the Organization of American States are added to the permanent collections in microform.

Publications of other intergovernmental regional and special interest organizations, including regional development banks

The Library collects publications and documents from regional and special interest intergovernmental organizations, including development banks. Examples of such organizations are: the African Union, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Development Bank, Caribbean Community, Council of Europe, Inter-Parliamentary Union, International Migration Organization (IOM), Nordic Council, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Organization of the Islamic Conference, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and Pacific Community. This list is meant to be illustrative and not comprehensive.

If the United States is a member of the organization, the Library collects at the comprehensive or research level, based on recommendation. Collection levels from organizations to which the United States does not belong are based on the needs of Congress and the Library's other user communities and may change with world events.

The Library acquires and retains in the permanent collections substantive monographic and serial titles, such as annual reports, yearbooks, legal, regulatory, and statistical materials. It collects in English if available, in multi-lingual form, or in an official language of the organization if English is not available.

V. Acquisition Sources: Present and Future

The Library acquires the publications of most international organizations through exchange, gift, or depository arrangements. Under a depository arrangement, a designated library receives publications regularly without charge, usually in return for making them available to the public. The organizations with which the Library has depository agreements include: the United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Maritime Organization, International Labour Organization, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Organization of American States, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, and World Trade Organization (formerly GATT Secretariat).

United States based organizations, such as the World Bank, may submit their publications for registration with the United States Copyright Office or use special Library services for publishers, such as Cataloging in Publication or issuance of an international standard serial number (ISSN), which result in receipts to the Library. If exchange, gift, depository arrangement, or other non-cost methods of acquisition are not available, the Library purchases materials. The Library acquires the publications of

many intergovernmental organizations, particularly those headquartered in developing countries, through its Overseas Offices. Often these publications have very limited distribution outside the area.

Most international organizations now have their own internet world wide web sites and publish a good deal of materials electronically. Sometimes, information is only distributed electronically due to budgetary constraints. In the future, the Library will have to consider harvesting and otherwise collecting remote electronic resources from intergovernmental organizations. The process will involve infrastructure, policy, and copyright negotiations, as well as cooperation with other institutions to share collecting responsibilities, and will involve costs of capture, storage, and access. In the meantime, if publications are kept only for temporary service use and not added to the permanent collections, the substitution of access to online electronic resources for the temporary paper receipts should be strongly considered.

VI. Collecting Levels

Organization	Comments	Collecting Level	RLG Conspectus Number
United Nations, European Union		Comprehensive	5
United Nations Specialized Agencies		Comprehensive	5
Other organizations of which the United States is a member		Comprehensive or research, as recommended	5, 4
Regional and other organizations of which the United States is not a member	Selectively. Collect from organizations to meet needs of Congress and other Library constituencies	Research or instructional	4 or 3

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