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REGISTRATION AND PUBLICATION OF TREATIES AND INTERNATIONAL  
AGREEMENTS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 102 OF THE CHARTER OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in resolution 34/149, of 17 December 1979, invited the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in order to eliminate, at the earliest opportunity, the current backlog in the registration and publication of treaties and international agreements; noted that, in order to achieve better co-ordination of international action in that matter and to prepare, if needed, new modifications of the General Assembly regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, 1/ the Secretariat, on 9 October 1979, had sent to Governments and certain intergovernmental organizations a questionnaire regarding activities in the matter of international agreements; and expressed the hope that by 31 March 1980, the date envisaged in the questionnaire, sufficient information would have reached the Secretariat to permit the preparation of a report.

2. This report is submitted in pursuance of the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution.

## II. ELIMINATION OF THE BACKLOG

### A. Resources used by the Secretariat

3. Bearing in mind the decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on the proposal of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/34/SR.84, paras. 69-81) and the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/35/7/Add.1), the Secretary-General decided to make available to the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs, for 1980, in the form of temporary assistance within the available budgetary appropriations, the necessary staff to keep the manning table of the Section at the 1979 level (A/34/466, paras. 7-9). Furthermore, on the same basis, the Secretary-General made two General Service posts available to the Treaty Section, from 1 July 1980 onwards, so that, while awaiting the final decision of the General Assembly, it would be possible to begin the first stage in the plan to eliminate the backlog in the publication of the United Nations Treaty Series which had been approved by the Advisory Committee (see para. 5 below).

### B. Current situation and forecasts

#### 1. Registration

4. The improvement noted in the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/34/466, paras. 11-13) has continued. On 31 August 1980 the Registration Group of the Treaty Section, which is responsible for purely administrative registration operations, was working on files received that same month: the 11-month backlog

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1/ Resolution 97 (I), as previously modified by resolutions 364 B (IV), 482 (V) and 33/141 A.

which had existed on 31 August 1979 had thus been entirely eliminated. The two Legal Officers responsible for final checking of the registration were sending out the files received in October 1979 (10 months' delay instead of 15 on 31 August 1979). As to the monthly statements of treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat, the last statement to appear was that of September 1977: in that respect, the delay should diminish after 1981 and should be totally eliminated by 1982, as envisaged in the previous report (A/34/466, para. 14).

## 2. Publication

5. The backlog in the publication of the Treaty Series amounted to 260 volumes on 31 August 1980 (as against 244 on 31 August 1979). It was in order to eliminate that backlog that, in 1979, the Secretary-General proposed a nine-year recovery plan. The General Assembly then decided, on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and of the Fifth Committee, to postpone a decision on the substance until its thirty-fifth session, while granting the Secretary-General, on a temporary basis, the appropriations for the implementation of the first phase of the plan in 1980. <sup>2/</sup> Subsequently, the Advisory Committee approved the Secretary-General's proposals (A/35/7/Add.1, paras. 8-12). If the plan is adopted, the backlog in publication should begin to diminish in 1981 and be eliminated in 1988. At all events, it will be possible to prepare 40 volumes of the Treaty Series in 1980 as planned.

### III. INFORMATION RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING ACTIVITIES IN THE MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

6. On 31 March 1980, the date envisaged in the letter of 9 October 1979 by which the questionnaire had been transmitted, the Secretary-General had received information from seven Governments and five intergovernmental organizations. Since then, 9 Governments and 11 more intergovernmental organizations have provided information.

7. Although some of the replies received were very substantial and detailed, the Secretary-General feels that at present he does not have a sufficiently broad range of information to be able to make a useful report to the General Assembly at its current session. It seems essential that, in a field as extensive as that covered by the questionnaire, and in particular in view of a possible modification of the General Assembly regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter, a much larger number of replies should be available. Accordingly, the Secretary-General plans to report on the matter to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session at the earliest, and he has sent a reminder to the Governments and intergovernmental organizations concerned.

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<sup>2/</sup> See the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/34/40 and Corr.1 and 2, paras. 19-28); and the oral recommendation of the Advisory Committee and the recommendation of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/34/SR.84, paras. 69-81).

#### IV. UNITED NATIONS TREATY INFORMATION SYSTEM

8. During the period covered by this report, the Secretariat continued to improve the system (SIONUT) by broadening existing programmes, and in particular the research programme, which is a primary function of SIONUT.

9. During the past year it was possible to (a) develop a new programme which, from next year onwards, will make it possible to provide lists of agreements by party which will be available to outside users; and (b) begin to computerize the data relating to agreements registered with the secretariat of the League of Nations.

10. SIONUT has been operational since 1978. At present, the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs is the only direct user, but it is hoped that it will be possible over the next two years, to make the system available to outside users.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

11. In general, the improvement achieved over the past year or so in respect of registration and publication continued in 1980. This improvement is mainly due to the strengthening of the resources used by the Secretariat, and, in respect of publication more particularly, to the decisions taken by the General Assembly (resolution 32/144, concerning the establishment of a priority publication system, and resolution 33/141 A, giving the Secretariat the option not to publish in extenso certain categories of bilateral international agreements).

12. With regard to the United Nations Treaty Series, the return to a normal situation (that is to say, a maximum delay of one year between registration and publication) is the subject of a proposal which was approved by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see para. 5 above).

13. The possibility of modifying the General Assembly regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter seems to be closely linked with an exact assessment of international practice and the needs of the international community in respect of treaties and the development of the SIONUT programmes. With regard to international practice, the Secretary-General expects to have received additional information by 31 March 1981 in response to his questionnaire regarding activities in the matter of international agreements.

ANNEX I

International agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat during the period from 23 February 1973 to 31 December 1976 which it is intended not to publish in extenso in the United Nations Treaty Series

1. The General Assembly, in resolution 33/141 A of 19 December 1978, modified article 12 of its regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter as follows:

"Article 12

"1. The Secretariat shall publish as soon as possible in a single series every treaty or international agreement which is registered or filed and recorded, in the original language or languages, followed by a translation in English and in French. The certified statements referred to in article 2 of these regulations shall be published in the same manner.

"2. The Secretariat will, however, have the option not to publish in extenso a bilateral treaty or international agreement belonging to one of the following categories:

"(a) Assistance and co-operation agreements of limited scope concerning financial, commercial, administrative or technical matters;

"(b) Agreements relating to the organization of conferences, seminars or meetings;

"(c) Agreements that are to be published otherwise than in the series mentioned in paragraph 1 of this article by the United Nations Secretariat or by a specialized or related agency.

"3. In deciding whether or not to publish in extenso a treaty or international agreement belonging to one of the categories mentioned in paragraph 2 of this article, the Secretariat shall duly take into account, inter alia, the practical value that might accrue from in extenso publication. Treaties and international agreements that the Secretariat intends not to publish in extenso shall be identified as such in the monthly statements of treaties and international agreements provided for in article 13 of these regulations, it being understood that a decision not to publish in extenso may be reversed at any time.

"4. Any State or intergovernmental organization may obtain from the Secretary-General a copy of the text of any treaty or international agreement which it has been decided, pursuant to paragraph 2 of this article, not to publish in extenso. The Secretariat shall likewise make a copy of any such treaty or agreement available to private persons against payment.

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"5. In respect of each treaty or international agreement registered or filed and recorded, the series referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall include at least the following information: the registration or recording number, the names of the parties, the title, the date and place of conclusion, the date and method of entry into force, the duration (where appropriate), the languages of conclusion, the name of the State or organization that has registered it or transmitted it for filing and recording, and, if appropriate, references to publications in which the complete text of the treaty or international agreement is reproduced."

2. The agreements of the type envisaged in article 12 of the modified regulations which were registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat after 1 January 1977 are identified in the monthly statements themselves (by an asterisk) in accordance with article 12 of the new regulations. The list provided in annex II shows the agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat before that date which could not be identified in the monthly statements because they had already been published or sent for printing.

ANNEX II

List of agreements

Monthly statement of treaties and  
international agreements registered  
or filed and recorded with the  
Secretariat

Number of registration or filing  
and of entry in the records

February 1973	I-12313 to 12316, II-686 to 688;
March 1973	I-12333 to 12340, II-689
April 1973	I-12447 to 12453;
May 1973	I-12457 to 12465, 12544 to 12549;
June 1973	I-12603, 12617 to 12620, II-693;
July 1973	I-12653, 12662 to 12668;
August 1973	I-12674, 12679, 12712 to 12723, II-696 to 697;
September 1973	I-12757, 12764 to 12770;
October 1973	I-12779, 12790;
November 1973	I-12843 to 12884, 12890, II-700 to 706;
December 1973	I-12917 to 12946, II-708;
January 1974	I-12949, 12963, 12984, 13008 to 13011, 13014 to 13038;
February 1974	I-13051, 13110 to 13123, II-710 to 712;
March 1974	I-13191 to 13210, II-713 to 715;
April 1974	I-13213, 13240 to 13264, II-717;
May 1974	I-13288 to 13294;
June 1974	I-13397, 13399, 13400;
July 1974	I-13438, 13439;

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Monthly statement of treaties and  
international agreements registered  
or filed and recorded with the  
Secretariat

Number of registration or filing  
and of entry in the records

August 1974	I-13459, 13472;
September 1974	I-13494, 13498 to 13542, II-725;
October 1974	I-13591;
November 1974	I-13641 to 13667;
December 1974	II-728;
January 1975	I-13749;
February 1975	I-13755, 13758 to 13782;
March 1975	I-13831 to 13873, II-731;
April 1975	I-13893 to 13896;
May 1975	I-13931, 13932, 13977 to 13992, 13994 to 14005;
June 1975	---
July 1975	---
August 1975	----
September 1975	I-14262 to 14286, 14307, II-733;
October 1975	I-14325, 14327, 14329, 14332, 14381 to 14389, II-736;
November 1975	I-14404;
December 1975	I-14493;
January 1976	I-14535, 14546, 14548, 14550, 14552, II-738;
February 1976	I-14585, 14587, 14588, 14590, 14600, 14601, 14603, 14605;



Monthly statement of treaties and  
international agreements registered  
or filed and recorded with the  
Secretariat

Number of registration or filing  
and of entry in the records

March 1976	I-14615, 14616, 14624, 14625, 14631, 14634, 14637 to 14639, 14643, 14645, 14646, 14648 to 14650, 14652 to 14655, 14686, 14687;
April 1976	I-14702, 14709, 14722, 14732, A-14709;
May 1976	I-14733, 14740, 14743, 14745, 14748, 14750, 14753 to 14755, 14761, 14765, 14768, 14779;
June 1976	I-14840, 14842;
July 1976	I-14852, 14876, 14908, 14909, 14911, 14925, 14926, 14928, 14931, 14943;
August 1976	I-14950, 14961, 14967, 14971 to 14973, 14975, 14978 to 14980, 14982 to 14984, 14990, 14991, 14994, 14996 to 14998;
September 1976	A-14908;
October 1976	I-15051, 15052, 15067, A-14687;
November 1976	I-15100, 15104, 15105, 15114, 15118, 15124, 15137;
December 1976	I-15148, 15149, 15155, 15166, 15167, 15172.

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