

USE OF THE TERM “BUREAU” OR “OFFICE” TO REFER TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The term “Bureau” or “Office” (both in French and English) was used commonly to refer to intergovernmental organizations in the early 20th Century. This note gives some examples.

1. Definition

According to the Dictionary of public international law by Jean Salmon¹, the term “Bureau” is used as the “name of international organizations with a limited perimeter, in particular technical and/or administrative (Intergovernmental Bureau for Informatics, Pan American Sanitary Bureau, International Bureau of Weights and Measures)”².

2. Examples of intergovernmental organizations named “Bureau” or “Office”

2.1 The International Office of Public Health (*Office internationale d'hygiène publique*)

The International Office of Public Health is the forerunner of the World Health Organization (WHO). It was an intergovernmental organization created by 13 States under the Arrangement signed in Rome on 9 December 1907. Its seat was in Paris and it was governed by the authority of the Permanent Committee composed of Delegates technically qualified in the field of health, designated by the Member States³. Its constitutive treaty, the Arrangement of 9 December 1907 and its annex, the Organic Statutes of the Office, contain provisions very similar to those of the Metre Convention and Annexed Regulations, as shown in table 1 below.

¹ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Salmon, 2001

² Our translation, see Annex 1 for the original in French

³ http://www.who.int/archives/fonds_collections/bytitle/fonds_1/en/

Table 1: Comparison of provisions of the Arrangement of 9 December 1907 and its annex, the Organic Statutes of the Office, with the Metre Convention and Annexed Regulations

IOPH: Arrangement and Organic Statutes ⁴	BIPM: Metre Convention and annexed Regulations
“The High Contracting Parties undertake to create and maintain an International Office of Public Health with its Seat in Paris”	“The High Contracting Parties undertake to create and maintain, at their common expense, a scientific and permanent International Bureau of Weights and Measures with its Seat in Paris.”
“The Office shall operate under the authority and control of a Committee consisting of the delegates of the contracting Governments.”	“The International Bureau shall operate under the exclusive direction and supervision of an <i>International Committee for Weights and Measures</i> , itself placed under the authority of a <i>General Conference on Weights and Measures</i> , consisting of the delegates of all the contracting Governments.”
“The composition and attributions of this Committee, as well as the organization and powers of the said Office, are determined by the Organic Statutes which are annexed to the present Arrangement and are considered an integral part of it.”	“The organization of the Bureau, as well as the composition and attributions of the International Committee and of the General Conference on Weights and Measures, are determined by the Regulations annexed to the present Convention.”
“The costs of the installation, as well as the annual expenses for the operation and maintenance of the Office shall be covered by the contributions of the contracting States established according to the conditions set by the Organic Statutes referred to in Article 2.”	“All the costs of the establishment and installation of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures, as well as the annual expenses for its maintenance and those of the Committee, shall be covered by the contributions of the contracting States established according to a scale based on their current population.”
“The sums representing the contributive parts of each of the contracting States shall be paid at the beginning of each year through the intermediary of the Foreign Ministry of France, to the <i>Caisse des dépôts et consignations</i> in Paris, from which they will be withdrawn, from time to time as required, on the orders of the Director of the Office.”	“The sums representing the contributive parts of each of the contracting States shall be paid at the beginning of each year through the intermediary of the Foreign Ministry of France, to the <i>Caisse des dépôts et consignations</i> in Paris, from which they will be withdrawn, from time to time as required, on the orders of the Director of the Bureau.”
“The High Contracting Parties reserve the right to make by common accord any changes to the present Arrangement that experience may show to be useful.”	“The High Contracting Parties reserve the right to make by common accord any changes to the Present Convention that experience may show to be useful.”
“The French Government, at the request of the International Committee referred to at article 6, will take the necessary steps to have the Office recognized as an <i>établissement d’utilité publique</i> .”	The French Government, at the request of the International Committee, will take the necessary steps to have the Bureau recognized as an “ <i>établissement d’utilité publique</i> ”.
“The operation of the Office is ensured by paid personnel”	The personnel of the Bureau shall be composed of a Directeur, two deputies and the necessary number of employees

⁴ Our translation, see Annex 2 for a comparative table of the original provisions (and reference to the articles) of both texts in French.

2.2 The International Wine Office (*Office International du Vin*), OIV

Through an International Agreement of 29 November 1924, the Governments of eight States created the International Wine Office. Following a decision of its Member States on 4 September 1958, the Office was renamed International Vine and Wine Office. On 3 April 2001, a Conference of Member States adopted an Agreement establishing the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (O.I.V.), which replaces and is the legal successor of the International Vine and Wine Office.

2.3 The International Office of Epizootics (*Office internationale des epizooties*), OIE

The International Office of Epizootics is the intergovernmental organization responsible for improving animal health worldwide. It was created by 28 States through the International Agreement signed on 25 January 1924. In May 2003, by Resolution of the OIE's governing body⁵, the Director General and the Departments of the OIE were authorized to use, in all circumstances, alongside the statutory name of the Office, the common name "World Organisation for Animal Health".

2.4 The International Exhibitions Bureau (*Bureau internationale des Expositions*), BIE

The International Exhibitions Bureau is the intergovernmental organisation in charge of overseeing and regulating all international exhibitions that last more than three weeks and are of non-commercial nature ("Expos"). 31 countries created the BIE by a Convention signed in Paris on 22 November 1928. Its headquarters are located in Paris.

2.5 The International Sanitary Bureau, ISB, and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, PASB

The International Sanitary Bureau was founded in Washington on 4 December 1902 by 11 nations in the Americas⁶.

In 1923, the organization changed its name to Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) to distinguish it from the work of other international health organizations (in particular the OIHP)⁷.

On 2 October 1947, the Pan American Sanitary Conference renamed the organization the "Pan American Sanitary Organization" (PASO). PASB became the name of the Secretariat of PASO.

An agreement was reached whereby PASO would serve as the World Health Organization's regional office in the Americas⁸. In October 1958, the 15th Pan American Sanitary Conference, renamed PASO the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)⁹.

⁵ Resolution XVI adopted by the International Committee on 23 May 2003

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447347/>

⁷ World Health Organization, Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly, document A55/4, 13 March 2002
http://apps.who.int/gb/archive/pdf_files/WHA55/ea554.pdf

⁸ Article 54 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization

⁹ Resolution CSP15.R26: http://www1.paho.org/english/gov/csp/ftcsp_15.htm#R26

2.6 The Intergovernmental Bureau for Informatics (*Bureau intergouvernemental pour l'informatique*), IBI

The International Computation Center was created by an international Convention signed on 6 December 1951 in Paris under the auspices of the United Nations and UNESCO. It was renamed the Intergovernmental Bureau of Informatics in 1973¹⁰. The IBI was dissolved in 1988 after 26 years.

3. The Covenant of the League of Nations

The Covenant of the League of Nations, signed on 28 June 1919, also illustrates this use of the term “Bureau” (both in French and English) to designate intergovernmental organizations as it mentions “international bureaux” in reference to intergovernmental organizations.

Article 24 of the Covenant reads as follows:

“There shall be placed under the direction of the League all **international bureaux already established by general treaties** if the parties to such treaties consent. All such international bureaux and all commissions for the regulation of matters of international interest hereafter constituted shall be placed under the direction of the League.

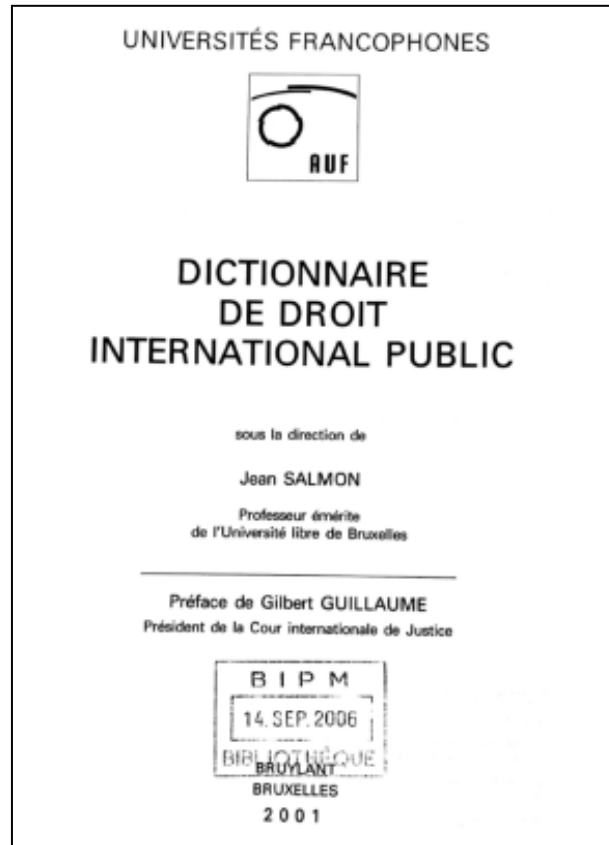
In all matters of international interest which are regulated by general conventions but which are not placed under the control of international bureaux or commissions, the Secretariat of the League shall, subject to the consent of the Council and if desired by the parties, collect and distribute all relevant information and shall render any other assistance which may be necessary or desirable.

The Council may include as part of the expenses of the Secretariat the expenses of any bureau or commission which is placed under the direction of the League.”

(emphasis added)

¹⁰ <https://atom.archives.unesco.org/29eme-session-du-conseil-dadministration>

Dictionnaire de droit international public, Jean Salmon, 2001



Bureau

A. Appellation de certaines organisations internationales à compétence limitée, notamment de nature technique et/ou administrative (Bureau intergouvernemental pour l'Informatique, Bureau sanitaire panaméricain, Bureau international des poids et des mesures).

Annex 2

Comparative table of the original provisions (French) of the International Office of Public Health Arrangement and Organic Statutes and of the Metre Convention and annexed Regulations

Arrangement et Statuts organiques de l’OIHP	Convention du Mètre et Règlement annexé
« Les hautes parties contractantes s'engagent à fonder et à entretenir un Office international d'hygiène publique dont le siège est à Paris. » ¹¹	« Les Hautes Parties contractantes s’engagent à fonder et entretenir, à frais communs, un <i>Bureau international des poids et mesures</i> , scientifique et permanent, dont le siège est à Paris. » ¹²
« L'Office fonctionne sous l'autorité et le contrôle d'un Comité formé de délégués des Gouvernements contractants. » ¹³	Le Bureau international fonctionnera sous la direction et la surveillance exclusives d'un <i>Comité international des poids et mesures</i> , placé lui-même sous l’autorité d’une <i>Conférence générale des poids et mesures</i> , formée de délégués de tous les Gouvernements contractants. ¹⁴
« La composition et les attributions de ce Comité, ainsi que l’organisation et les pouvoirs dudit Office, sont déterminés par les statuts organiques qui sont annexés au présent arrangement et sont considérés comme en faisant partie intégrante. » ¹⁵	« L’organisation du Bureau, ainsi que la composition et les attributions du Comité international et de la Conférence générale des poids et mesures, sont déterminées par le Règlement annexé à la présente Convention. » ¹⁶
« Les frais d'installation, ainsi que les dépenses annuelles de fonctionnement et d'entretien de l'Office, sont couverts par les contributions des États contractants établies dans les conditions prévues par les statuts organiques visés à l'article 2. » ¹⁷	« Tous les frais d’établissement et d’installation du Bureau international des poids et mesures, ainsi que les dépenses annuelles d’entretien et celles du Comité, seront couverts par des contributions des États contractants, établies d’après une échelle basée sur leur population actuelle. » ¹⁸
« Les sommes représentant la part contributive de chacun des États contractants sont versées par ces derniers au commencement de chaque année, par l'intermédiaire du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de la République française, à la Caisse des dépôts et consignations, à Paris, d'où elles seront retirées, au fur et à mesure des besoins, sur mandats du Directeur de l'Office. » ¹⁹	« Les sommes représentant la part contributive de chacun des États contractants seront versées, au commencement de chaque année, par l’intermédiaire du Ministère des Affaires étrangères de France, à la Caisse des dépôts et consignations à Paris, d’où elles seront retirées, au fur et à mesure des besoins, sur mandats du directeur du Bureau. » ²⁰

¹¹ Article premier de l’Arrangement

¹² Article premier (1875) de la Convention du Mètre

¹³ Article 2, 1e phrase, de l’Arrangement

¹⁴ Article 3 (1875) de la Convention du Mètre

¹⁵ Article 2, 2e phrase, de l’Arrangement

¹⁶ Article 5 (1875) de la Convention du Mètre

¹⁷ Article 3 de l’Arrangement

¹⁸ Article 9 (1875) de la Convention du Mètre

¹⁹ Article 4 de l’Arrangement

²⁰ Article 10 (1875) de la Convention du Mètre

Arrangement et Statuts organiques de l’OIHP	Convention du Mètre et Règlement annexé
« Les Hautes Parties contractantes se réservent la faculté d'apporter, d'un commun accord, au présent arrangement les modifications dont l'expérience démontrerait l'utilité. » ²¹	« Les Hautes Parties contractantes se réservent la faculté d’apporter d’un commun accord à la présente Convention toutes les modifications dont l’expérience démontrerait l’utilité. » ²²
« Le Gouvernement de la République Française prendra, sur la demande du Comité international visé à l'article 6, les dispositions nécessaires pour faire reconnaître l’Office comme établissement d'utilité publique. » ²³	« Le Gouvernement français prendra, sur la demande du Comité international, les dispositions nécessaires pour faire reconnaître le Bureau comme établissement d'utilité publique. » ²⁴
« Le fonctionnement de l’Office est assuré par un personnel rétribué » ²⁵	« Le personnel du Bureau se composera d’un directeur, de deux adjoints et du nombre d’employés nécessaire » ²⁶

²¹ Article 5 de l’Arrangement

²² Article 12 (1875) de la Convention du Mètre

²³ Article 3 des Statuts Organiques de l’OIHP annexés à l’Arrangement

²⁴ Article 3 (1875) du Règlement annexé la Convention du Mètre

²⁵ Article 8 des Statuts Organiques de l’OIHP annexés à l’Arrangement

²⁶ Article 7 (1875) du Règlement annexé la Convention du Mètre

Annex 3

Comparative table of the organizations listed in the present note

Name of the Organization	Date of constitutive treaty	Seat	Notes
ISB International Sanitary Bureau	Agreement of 4 December 1902	Paris	Renamed Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) in 1923 Renamed Pan American Sanitary Organization" (PASO) on 2 October 1947 Renamed Pan American Health Organization in October 1958
IOPH International Office of Public Health OIHP <i>Office internationale d'hygiène publique</i>	Arrangement of 9 December 1907	Paris	Dissolved in July 1946 under the Protocol provided for OIHP in the Arrangements creating the World Health Organization. Epidemiological service officially transferred to the Interim Commission of WHO in January 1947.
OIE International Office of Epizootics OIE <i>Office internationale des épizooties</i>	International Agreement of 25 January 1924	Paris	Use of common name "World Organisation for Animal Health" authorized alongside the statutory name of the Office (International Office of Epizootics) in May 2003
OIV International Wine Office OIV <i>Office internationale du vin</i>	International Agreement of 29 November 1924	Paris	Renamed "International Vine and Wine Office" in September 1958 Dissolved in April 2001 when a Conference of Member States adopted an Agreement establishing the International Organisation of Vine and Wine, the legal successor of the International Vine and Wine Office.
BIE International Exhibitions Bureau BIE <i>Bureau international des Expositions</i>	Convention of 22 November 1928	Paris	Still in existence, no modification
IBI Intergovernmental Bureau for Informatics BII <i>Bureau intergouvernemental pour l'informatique</i>	Convention of 6 December 1951	Rome	Original name: international computation center, renamed in 1973, dissolved in 1988