

# GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS



## Non-Governmental Organizations in World Politics

The construction of global governance

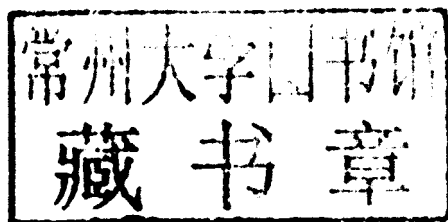
Peter Willetts

ROUTLEDGE

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UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
UNSSOD	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization
WELL	Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WHO	World Health Organization
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (changed from the World Wildlife Fund in 1961)

## **Routledge Global Institutions**

Edited by Thomas G. Weiss

*The CUNY Graduate Center, New York, USA*

and Rorden Wilkinson

*University of Manchester, UK*

### **About the series**

The "Global Institutions" series is designed to provide readers with comprehensive, accessible, and informative guides to the history, structure, and activities of key international organizations as well as books that deal with topics of key importance in contemporary global governance. Every volume stands on its own as a thorough and insightful treatment of a particular topic, but the series as a whole contributes to a coherent and complementary portrait of the phenomenon of global institutions at the dawn of the millennium.

Books are written by recognized experts, conform to a similar structure, and cover a range of themes and debates common to the series. These areas of shared concern include the general purpose and rationale for organizations, developments over time, membership, structure, decision-making procedures, and key functions. Moreover, current debates are placed in historical perspective alongside informed analysis and critique. Each book also contains an annotated bibliography and guide to electronic information as well as any annexes appropriate to the subject matter at hand.

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For those of us who teach, research, and practice in the area, such limited access to information has been frustrating. We were delighted when Routledge saw the value of a series that bucks this trend and provides key reference points to the most significant global institutions and issues. They are betting that serious students and professionals will want serious analyses. We have assembled a first-rate line-up of authors to address that market. Our intention, then, is to provide one-stop shopping for all readers—students (both undergraduate and postgraduate), negotiators, diplomats, practitioners from non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and interested parties alike—seeking information about the most prominent institutional aspects of global governance.

## NGOs in world politics

We could not have found a better-placed scholar than Peter Willetts to write this volume on a controversial and challenging topic that many people have compared, unfavorably, to herding cats. Currently Emeritus Professor of Global Politics at City University, London, Peter has researched this topic extensively including two earlier and well-regarded books dealing with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>1</sup>

His subtitle, *The Construction of Global Governance*, tells the reader why the editors are enthusiastic to have this title finally appear in our series. It was one of the first topics that we deemed essential to appear on our masthead. Why? Because long gone are the days when students of international relations could only focus on the 250 or so existing intergovernmental organizations as the primary players in international society. While we have plenty of titles in this series on them, formal institutions such as the United Nations or the World Bank or NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) no longer occupy center stage for students of international organization. They share an ever more crowded governance stage not only with nearly 200 UN member states but also with both civil society and for-profit corporations: including some 7,500 international NGOs and 10,000 single-state NGOs with significant international activities as well as some 75,000 transnational corporations and their 750,000 foreign affiliates.<sup>2</sup> This panoply of institutions may not yet represent a “post-Westphalian” world, but this new reality clearly is inadequately reflected in state-centric analytical perspectives that dominate most theoretical treatments of important actors in world politics.

Peter’s thorough treatment here focuses on the network of transnational and local NGOs as well as social movements that make civil society one of the most challenging and complex topics in international relations today. His work clearly walks the reader through the political, legal, historical, and social dimensions of NGOs, including such challenging questions as “Are they democratic?”



While UN Charter Article 71 made room for non-governmental organizations from the very outset of the world organization, the nature of that ever-changing relationship was a minor concern for both analysts and international officials. "Until recently, the notion that the chief executive of the United Nations would have taken this issue seriously might have caused astonishment," wrote then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in the foreword to an edited volume on the subject of UN-NGO interactions. "The United Nations was considered to be a forum for sovereign states alone. Within the space of a few short years, however, this attitude has changed. Non-governmental organizations are now considered full participants in international life."<sup>3</sup> This book was one of the first to grapple with such a challenging a topic, but Peter Willetts now has gone further in his treatment of a subject that has evolved significantly in the last decade and a half.

We thoroughly recommend *Non-Governmental Organizations in World Politics* to all interested not only in the study of world politics, international organization, and global governance but also to those keen to understand why global politics operates the way it does. As always, we look forward to comments from first-time or veteran readers of the Global Institutions series.

Thomas G. Weiss,  
the CUNY Graduate Center,  
New York, USA

Rorden Wilkinson,  
University of Manchester, UK  
July 2010

# Abbreviations

AFL	American Federation of Labor
APC	Association for Progressive Communications
ARPA	Advanced Research Projects Agency
ARPANET	Advanced Research Projects Agency Network
BBS	bulletin board system
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	community-based organization
CERN	European Council for Nuclear Research
CHR	Commission on Human Rights (ECOSOC subsidiary body)
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CONGO	Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations
COP	Conference of the Parties (to an international treaty)
CRIES	Regional Co-ordinating Agency for Economic and Social Research (Nicaragua)
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (ECOSOC subsidiary body)
CSI	Christian Solidarity International
CSO	civil society organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women (ECOSOC subsidiary body)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (of the United Nations)
ELCI	Environment Liaison Centre International
ENDA-TM	Environment and Development Action in the Third World
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCCC	Framework Convention on Climate Change
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FONDAD	Forum on Debt and Development
FTP	file transfer protocol

IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (also known as the World Conservation Union)
IUSSP	International Union for the Scientific Study of Population
JANET	Joint Academic Network (United Kingdom)
MANGO	Micro-Computing for NGOs (Zimbabwe)
NGLS	Non-Governmental Liaison Service (a UN system, inter-agency body)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPL	National Physical Laboratory (United Kingdom)
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRA	National Rifle Association (USA)
NSFNet	National Science Foundation Network (USA)
OCIMF	Oil Companies International Marine Forum
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEN	Ontario Environmental Network
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PC	personal computer
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee (usually of a UN conference)
PVO	private voluntary organization
SCAR	Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (a committee of the ICSU)
SCOPE	Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (a committee of the ICSU)
TCP-IP	Internet Protocol Suite, including the Transmission Control Protocol and the Internet Protocol
TNC	transnational corporation
TRP	Transnational Radical Party
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro 1992)
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm 1972)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations International Drugs Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

First published 2011 by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

Transferred to Digital Printing 2011

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Typeset in Times New Roman by  
Pindar NZ, Auckland, New Zealand

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Willetts, Peter.

Non-Governmental Organizations in World Politics: the construction of  
global governance / Peter Willetts.

p. cm. — (Routledge global institutions; 49)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. International organization. 2. International cooperation.
3. Non-governmental organizations. I. Title.

JZ1318.W545 2010

341.2—dc22

2010026785

ISBN13: 978-0-415-38124-6 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-38125-3 (pbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-83430-5 (ebk)

# Non-Governmental Organizations in World Politics

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Amnesty International and Oxfam to Greenpeace and Save the Children are now key players in global politics. This accessible and informative textbook provides a comprehensive overview of the significant role and increasing participation of NGOs in world politics.

Peter Willetts examines the variety of different NGOs, their structure, membership and activities, and their complex relationship with social movements and civil society. He makes us aware that there are many more NGOs exercising influence in the United Nations system than the few famous ones.

Conventional thinking is challenged in a radical manner on four questions: the extent of the engagement of NGOs in global policy-making; the status of NGOs within international law; the role of NGOs as crucial pioneers in the creation of the Internet; and the need to integrate NGOs within mainstream international relations theory.

This is the definitive guide to this crucial area within international politics and should be required reading for students, NGO activists, and policy-makers.

**Peter Willetts** is Emeritus Professor of Global Politics at City University, London. His previous publications on NGOs include *Pressure Groups in the Global System* (London: Pinter, 1982) and the edited volume *"The Conscience of the World": The Influence of Non-Governmental Organisations in the UN System* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1996).

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