

INTRODUCTION

In the report on its second session, held in 1950 (*General Assembly, Official Records: Fifth Session, Supplement No. 12, A/1316*, p. 10), the International Law Commission observed that "precise knowledge of constitutional provisions of other countries is essential to those who in any country are engaged in negotiating treaties". The present volume, prepared by the Division for the Development and Codification of International Law of the Legal Department of the Secretariat of the United Nations, seeks to provide such information in as reasonably complete a form as possible, so far as such information was available at the end of 1952.

In January 1951, the Secretary-General addressed a circular letter to governments requesting information relative to their national laws and practices in the matter of the conclusion of treaties. In reply, a number of governments provided memoranda by way of comment on their constitutional rules; others transmitted, either in the original or in English or French translations, copies of the relevant provisions of their constitutions. Some governments did not reply; and in such cases the Secretariat translated the constitutional provisions from the best original text available. These texts reproduced here are in English or in French; if the original was in a language other than English or French it has been translated into English. In every case, the source from which the translation was made has been indicated.

From the above it will be seen that the scheme followed in presenting the material is not entirely uniform; nevertheless, so far as possible, the method adopted in previous volumes of the *United Nations Legislative Series* has been followed. Indeed, as there are countries—particularly of the British Commonwealth—where custom rather than written law governs the position, it has been inevitable that memoranda describing, and commenting upon, such customs should be appropriate.

In addition to the texts and memoranda, it has been thought useful to include a bibliography on the law of treaties. As will be seen, this bibliography is not confined to literature regarding the conclusion of treaties, but takes in all aspects of the subject.