PART I: CURRENT PUBLICATIONS SERIES

A. Yearbook of International Organizations

Work on Volume 1 is being completed for the 28th (1991/92) edition for 15th April 1991 according to the established annual schedule. Work on Volume 2 and Volume 3 is now underway for publication in the summer.

The major issue indicated on the occasion of the last report was the possible restructuring of the whole Yearbook series due to both the problem of space limitations and to that of user-friendliness. This issue has been successfully circumvented (or evaded) once again.

Saur finally agreed that the possible solutions identified by them were impractical, or of marginal value within the publishing constraints. It was agreed, once again, that the UIA would find ways around the space constraint and would take minimal steps to increase user-friendliness of the volumes.

The main decision taken in the case of Volume 1 has been to exclude Section R (religious orders) and certain classes of subsidiary body which had previously been included in Sections E or F. These bodies are already indicated in the text of the main entry and may have the same address. Some 597 bodies were therefore transferred to a new Section K. Like Sections H, G, J and U, the entries of this section are not published in Volume 1. The index references are made to the parent body. The entries will however be more appropriately treated in Volumes 2 and 3.

On the problem of the user-friendliness of the index, a further simplified sorting order has been used to avoid confusion previously encountered.

It remains to be seen exactly what procedure will be possible for the next edition. It is expected, as noted before, that the argument will be made that "excess" information can only appear in the compact disk version of the Yearbook (see below).

B. Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential

This publication appeared in 2 volumes on 28th March 1991 and is now the subject of marketing campaigns by Saur (Munich, London and New York) as well as by UIA.

The Encyclopedia as a whole contains 20,958 entries. These are linked by 114,395 cross-references. As indicated in an accompanying note on the contents, changes over the 1986 edition are as follows:

(a) Volume 1 (World problems, 1187 pages): The number of "problems" registered has increased by 29% to 13,167, and the number of descriptive entries has increased by 86% to 8,721. The number of cross-references between problem entries has increased by over 360% to 80,394. The number of pages devoted to world problems has increased by 92% (in a slightly more compact print size). A bibliography of 4,745 items has been added.

(b) Volume 2 (Human potential, 949 pages): The number of human development entries has increased by 154% to 4,051, with the cross-references between them increased by 237% to 15,027. The number of pages for this section increased by 190%. Bibliographies have been added to most sections. The commentary material has been completely restructured and extended, notably in relation to metaphors.

(c) From a production point of view, the most striking feature was the in-house preparation of some 250 introductory/explanatory pages in camera ready form. This was a major departure from earlier procedures and set a precedent for the Yearbook series. The procedure is being used for the preliminary pages of the current Yearbook volumes.

It is too early to determine reactions to the Encyclopedia from
reviewers and potential users. The publication is well presented (thanks to the personal interest of the Saur Production Manager in the cover) and most of the typographical choices worked out satisfactorily (bearing in mind that the mode of production only permits an overview of the assembled parts when it is too late to make changes). It is clear that (despite extensive use of spell-check routines) more time could have been spent on checking for minor errors, but these were one consequence of the pressure under which the last minute assembly of the work was done. The fact that the publication can be considered as the juxtaposition of mutually incompatible biases and controversies active in international society may serve to draw attention to the book by reviewers reacting to particular portions of the text.

The link to specific international organizations is maintained in Volume 3 of the Yearbook where organizations and problems are classified together under specific subject headings. It did not prove possible to indicate such links within the Encyclopedia has had been hoped.

C. Guides and Mini-directories

No additional information, although there is discussion concerning the production of a Directory of International Organizations based in Belgium (to be done in collaboration with FAIB).

D. International Association Statutes Series

No additional information. This would be an ideal project to continue in compact disk form. The problem remains that of gaining access to a scanner plus appropriate software (estimated cost ca. 300.000 FB)

E. Who's Who Series

The current situation is the subject of a separate report.

F. International Congress Calendar

The current situation is the subject of a separate report.

G. Transnational Associations

The current situation is the subject of a separate report.

H. Research Publications

Three earlier papers have appeared in published form:


Much of what would otherwise have been considered research has been focused into the contents of the Encyclopedia and its explanatory pages. Material from earlier UIA work has been partly used for that purpose.

PART II: PUBLISHING AND MARKETING

A. Contractual relationships with the publisher

No further information. No contract has yet been signed for the compact disk project. With the increasing amount of in-house preparation of camera-ready copy by UIA, a new costing balance for publications is being elaborated within existing contracts.

B. Pattern of sales

Saur continues to report this as "satisfactory" and with "continuing improvements" through the Bowker and Butterworth marketing machine. Sales out of Brussels also continue to improve.

C. Marketing

Basically there appears to be little change to Saur's posture and approach. The focus remains on the library market, to which the majority of the Saur publications are successfully directed. The commitment to extra marketing remains limited, episodic and ad hoc. The marketing responsibilities of Saur Munich, Saur London and Saur New York are not necessarily coordinated in what outsiders might consider a "rational" way, especially since these are now units at different depths of different branches of the holding company.

This continues to mean that the UIA is free to undertake and to benefit from any marketing out of Brussels. The only point of negotiation with Saur concerns the contents of the marketing brochures and the number of complimentary/press copies which are made available and to whom. Saur remains both sensitive and resistant to the UIA recommendations concerning marketing (for example concerning review copy policy).

PART III: IN-HOUSE COMPUTER SYSTEM

A. Current hardware situation

Two PC workstations have been replaced by ATs, bringing the total to 15 AT workstations. The principal justification was to attempt to increase speed of work for certain people handicapped by the slower machines. Because of the replacement of the old PC workstations, the UIA now has 6 of these "on the shelf". Three are being attached to the network (requiring network cards) for low priority tasks. The network now totals 19 UIA connected workstations, 2 offline stations, plus 2 FAIB/IAPCO stations.

Operation of the system is now relatively "surprise free".

B. Current software situation

No change. The accounting system is fully operational and parallel checking is almost completed.
C. Usage of the system

The computer system is used to a satisfactory degree. However it is no longer feasible to make much use of the 4 unallocated PC stations that have been replaced by the faster AT machines.

D. Adaptation of working methods

The system continues to be central to most operations. Staff continue to develop new skills relating to their particular needs.

PART IV: FUTURE PROBLEMS, DEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

A. Information system

(a) CD-ROM: The main development scheduled relates to the compact disk. This should not however affect in-house operations to any significant degree. Despite the strong re-commitment by Saur to the compact disk indicated in the 29th November report, discussions have not been straight-forward. Following a meeting on 28th January with Saur's new sub-contractors for this work (SRZ Berlin), it was agreed that a 3 or 4-tier proposal would be elaborated reflecting the scope and contents of the CD-ROM:

- Level 0: Yearbook only
- Level 1: Yearbook plus other facilities, notably the possibility of including a French version of the Yearbook and French interfaces (as discussed in the 29th November report)
- Level 2: Inclusion of complementary databases: Calendar, World Problems, Statutes
- Level 3: Provision for more sophisticated features (organization charts, etc)

It was expected that SRZ would dialogue with UIA to clarify these levels and the investment required, both for Saur and for UIA (to the enable the UIA to attempt to involve its "francophone" contacts in producing a "French edition" of the Yearbook on the same compact disk). In fact SRZ only reported late in March on the minimal level and without any attempt to dialogue with UIA. Following a strong UIA protest, the report is being redone by a new expert.

In the meantime Saur has publicized the intention to market the Yearbook on CD-ROM, even though no formal contract has yet been signed with UIA. A particular issue, that has been agreed in principle, is that of data security (discussed in earlier reports). The practical consequences have not been resolved as yet.

(b) Possible French translation of the Yearbook

Preliminary discussions have been undertaken with the French Government concerning the possibility of the "French" version of the Yearbook. Some of the details are presented in an accompanying note.

(c) Information system vulnerability

Previous reports have discussed the vulnerability of the UIA operations in terms of:

- power failure (now solved with surge control equipment);
- viruses (a problem avoided by avoiding interaction with external systems);
- data security (as noted for the CD-ROM system of dissemination and the possibility of optical scanning).

A much more immediately threatening problem has now arisen. The building in which the UIA is located has been burglarized on at least 4 occasions over the past year. On several occasions the UIA offices have been broken into.

It is fortunate that it would appear that the burglars are only interested in cash. They do not appear to have interfered with the computer equipment or to have removed any data tapes.
The MAI is in a difficult position in attempting to respond to this situation. Nevertheless the UIA production is now dependent on the goodwill of burglars in confining their axe-swinging to doors and not to equipment. A "higher grade" of criminal could easily put the UIA out of business over night.

B. Challenge of openness
No additional information.

C. Dependence and diversification
No additional information.

D. Enablement of international initiatives
No additional information.

E. Comprehension of information
No additional information.

F. Current explorations in presenting information
No additional information.

G. Other new products
No additional information.

H. Computer conferencing facility
No additional information.

I. Research
The work done for the Encyclopedia provides a very useful base for further work relating the concerns of international organizations, the problems constraining them and to be dealt with, and the accelerating search for more appropriate modes of thinking ("new ways of thinking" in FAST terms).

Although the UIA prime statutory focus is on international organizations it is appropriate to reflect on the configuration of issues to which the UIA can most strategically respond, given its strengths and limitations. Whilst UIA documentation of international organizations has become increasingly efficient and "routinized", the significance and appropriateness of the action of this vast network of bodies has become increasingly questionable in the face of the increasingly uncontrollable network of problems. At the same time, what was previously a UIA "monopoly" (precisely because other for-profit bodies could not do the same documentary work in an economically viable manner) is now threatened by the evolution of the information society.

In this context, it would seem that the UIA is obliged to seek ways of working at the new cutting edges as they may come to affect the conception and strategies of international organizations. The strategic dilemmas of "sustainable development" are the most obvious example.

The work done on metaphor in relation to policy-making has been well-received and has resulted in further suggestions for work along these lines. Metaphor is increasingly seen as a way of providing a cognitive bridge between the concerns of policy-makers and those of the image-dependent political world. It is also related to the widespread concern for new paradigms and new images of a viable future.

Current work scheduled includes:

(a) Invited contribution to "Tools for Critical Choice by Top Decision Makers", which is a project of the Development Administration Division of the United Nations, for which Yehezkel Dror is senior consultant.

(b) Invited contribution to a colloquium "Métaphores pour survivre l'avenir" (France, 1991).

(c) Possible involvement in a consortium (Gamma Europe, Prelude International Network and CITA Namur) contributing to the forthcoming Project Global Perspective 2010 (Tasks of science and technology) of EEC FAST (Forecasting and Assessment in Science and Technology).

J. UIA Development constraints
As noted in November 1990, despite the many opportunities indicated above, the UIA faces a major problem in moving beyond its current pattern of activity. It is important to recognize that most projects are very tightly budgeted and are based on personnel salary levels which tend to be below commercial rates, especially for skilled, multilingual tasks (and especially in comparison with multinational or intergovernmental salary scales). This of course makes it possible for the UIA to undertake projects which would not be economically viable in other contexts. This situation does however result in severely reduced capacity to take on extra projects even though they may be technically feasible.

The "mini-directory" programme is a good example. Whilst it has been possible to produce mini-directories as "proofs", distributed to the relevant bodies, it has not been possible to follow up on requests to convert them into low-priced publications. The problem is that this involves extra steps in marketing and negotiating with the bodies in question, and computer skills to make any minor modifications to the final product required. These skills are only available at present at the expense of other activities, often those essential to the basic production cycle.

The maintenance and development of the computer system is a third example. After its installation, the system has been extensively redesigned and extended without calling upon external professionals. The level of in-house computer skill continues to increase and is reasonably satisfactory for day-to-day and production operations -- provided key people do not have to leave for medical or other reasons. But it is clear that current options of developing special publications (such as "mini-directories"), use of higher quality printers, CD-ROM, on-line access, data exchanges with other bodies, and even the consequences of upgrading to Advanced Revelation, all make demands for which the current internal skills are inappropriate and for which it is difficult to accept sporadic use of relatively ill-informed, external assistance at the exorbitant rates charged for such services.

The above constraints may be considered as normal and "healthy" characteristics of a non-profit body -- especially given what the UIA has been able to achieve within those constraints and in comparison with other bodies, whether commercial or intergovernmental. Nevertheless it remains unclear to what degree it is "healthy" for the UIA to undertake projects which are a natural extension of its current achievements, but which place additional stresses on personnel who are either already overworked by some standards, or inappropriate for the tasks, or inadequately
compensated for them. The UIA has not been able to resolve the strange dilemma of producing extremely expensive publications at "market" rates using personnel who continue to work on a "non-profit" basis -- in part because it is the UIA publisher who benefits most significantly from the market rates. This results in real dilemmas when there is a need to indicate costs of a service to some external body. Are the costs at "market" rates or at rates based on "real" costs?