Defining the UIA in relation to its Strategic Dilemmas
(Development of Annex 4, UIA Council, Montecatini, 2000)

UIA AIMS

Reinterpreted for the 21st Century

This is an exercise in reinterpreting UIA’s aims in language relevant to the 21st century:

• Sustain efforts towards superordinate meaning through union of transboundary associations, whether in their social, virtual or conceptual forms

• Through rigorous representation of diversity and patterns of relationship, sustain the “pattern that connects” that is supportive of future understandings of fundamental order and harmony that are meaningful across cultures and ideologies

• Explore the nature and relationship of more fundamental values sustaining individual and collective action

• Facilitate identification of strategic relevance amongst complex patterns of collective initiative in response to their perceived challenges

• Facilitate meaningful organization, whether through social, virtual or conceptual forms

• Ensure long-term sustainability through vigilant use of resources, notably in the case of the organization itself

• Emphasize action in consonance with values of members and personnel, where these are consistent with those of the organization

Current statutory aims (Article 3)

The UIA is a non-profit making international non-governmental organization having a scientific aim, operating as an institute for research, study, information, consultation, promotion and service.

Its aims are:

• to contribute to a universal order based on principles of human dignity, solidarity of peoples and freedom of communication;
• to undertake and promote research and study on transnational associative networks, considered as essential components of contemporary society;
• to collect and distribute the most comprehensive documentation possible on international organizations and associations, both governmental and non-governmental, and on new forms of transnational co-operation;
• to collect and distribute data on the various meetings organized by international bodies;
• to encourage and undertake all activity aimed at promoting the development and efficiency of non-governmental networks, as well as intercommunication between people working in the international framework and in interassociative co-operation;
• to study, categorize, analyze, compare and illuminate world problems as perceived by international organizations.

Statutory aims (1910)
The Union has as its aim the establishment of permanent relations between associations and international institutions and thus to support their action and their work. It notably has as its aim:

- joint study of all questions relative to the organization, the coordination of effort, and the unification of methods, with respect to that which are held in common, or are of analogous nature, between diverse associations or institutions
- cooperation between them for study, information, documentation and the extension of relations.

Through realization of its aim, the Union intends to contribute to the progress of pacific international and the organization of international life.
DILEMMAS

Despite its strategic “nimbleness” and operational adaptability, the UIA is faced with a number of awkward challenges in making policy decisions. The challenges are outlined in what follows, but underlying any response is the question of exactly what is the UIA and what “business” is it in.

Information (Database) services: With most categories of UIA information, the emerging information society provides examples of encroachment on areas in which the UIA previously had a unique advantage.

The nature of the UIA’s advantage is now shifting to the degree of interlinkage within and between the databases, to their comprehensiveness, and to their interactivity. It continues to hold an advantage in its ability to ensure database maintenance on a long-term basis at relatively low costs compared to those that are possible for commercial or intergovernmental agencies – but this advantage is tied to its dilemmas over personnel salaries. However this advantage does not automatically translate into a ready ability to solicit funds since most, if not all, funding sources are focused on sectoral subsets of the database (health, energy, etc) or particular kinds of information (eg addresses).

• Organizations: There are an increasing number of international “organization” database facilities, notably on the web. These include those offered as services to other organizations by particular organizations or consortia. Increasingly they take the form of websites. They may well focus on NGOs or “civil society” organizations, possibly with a particular issue focus. UN agencies are increasingly active in establishing such databases, as are “umbrella” organizations. An increasing percentage of international bodies now have their own websites containing the kinds of descriptive information the UIA provides in its own publications (or on the web) – or possibly much more, as in the case of large intergovernmental bodies.

The UIA’s advantage remains its selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the considerable hyperlinking to other bodies within the database (and from the other UIA databases). Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the exclusion of national bodies and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some bodies, or the absence of any entry at all. Strategically the weakness of the UIA in placing such information on the web is the ease with which competitors can gain access to higher quality information – notably if their own service is subsidized (and offered free of charge).

The UIA needs to develop selective access strategies to pre-empt further development of certain kinds of database. However it must necessarily recognize that its real advantage can only come from making available kinds of information that others are less inclined to provide. Hence the importance of hyperlinks between entries, to other web resources, and to non-organization UIA databases that increase the richness of the UIA site.

The recent sale of the UIA publisher K G Saur Verlag (Munich) to Gale Research (Chicago) will prove to be an interesting challenge. Gale has traditionally been the publisher of a significant competitor to the Yearbook in the North American market. Gale derives considerable income from online sale of reference information through the Dialog system. This shift may have considerable marketing advantages for the UIA as well as real challenges, especially if a case is made to absorb UIA products into the Gale context and thus dilute their identity.

• Meetings: There are an increasing number of international “calendar” database facilities on the web. These include those offered by single conference centres, towns, regions or countries. They also include highly specialized and more general databases, as well as those of large organizations such as IAEA. These would typically be a tool of choice for professionals in a particular area. Typically it is now common for meetings of any size or consequence to have their own website as a means of communication amongst those potentially involved. The UIA makes some use of these web facilities in compiling its own Calendar. This remains the principal source of meeting statistics – for the
moment. This is an area that is potentially attractive to companies in the information industry, notably when integrated with hotel, travel and tourism information.

The UIA might choose to enter some partnership arrangement with such initiatives, although some may seek to operate as direct competitors. The UIA’s advantage remains its selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the degree of interlinkage into and from its other databases, especially that on organizations. Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the exclusion of national meetings and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some meetings, or the absence of any entry at all – especially when this information is available from other sources. Strategically the weakness of the UIA in placing such information on the web is the ease with which competitors can gain access to higher quality information – notably if their own service is subsidized (and offered free of charge).

The failure to integrate pre-1986 information is to be regretted, although this will be largely mitigated by web access to event information in the Yearbook profile of the organization.

The recent discussion to reopen discussions with ICCA concerning hyperlinkage between UIA and ICCA meeting information is an interesting challenge. Again the challenge is not technical but rather in relation to issues of identity and perceived advantage. For example it is possible that such a linkage could be framed by ICCA as a form of UIA membership of ICCA. The fact of ICCA’s current Associate Membership of UIA could be considered as signalling UIA naivety. The UIA needs to be attentive to offering access to its databases to parties that are essentially redistributors of information – possibly for commercially-related purposes.

- **Problem / Issue information**: There are an increasing number of international “issue” database facilities on the web. These include those offered by particular organizations or services. They may be highly specialized or focus on clusters of issues (eg environment, humanitarian, etc). The UIA’s advantage remains the selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the considerable hyperlinking to other issues within the database (and from the other UIA databases). Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the amount of information and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some issues, or the absence of any entry at all.

Clearly documenting international organization is central to the activities of UIA and has been since its foundation. It was born of the documentary preoccupations of its founders and their relationship to the library community – now transformed into the information services of a knowledge society. In a real sense it is through its use of information that it “represents” the international community of organizations. This sense has traditionally been of far greater importance than its occasional vain attempts in the distant past to represent international organizations through any democratic membership process.

**Access to information**: The UIA is under continuing pressure to make available some kinds of information at low cost, if not freely. This applies particularly to addresses of international organizations. Relevant points are:

- **Extent of UIA data freely available**: The UIA already makes available substantial amounts of information free of charge, notably data on problems and strategies. In the case of organization data, the UIA has been making freely available the vital web addresses of their websites. In an earlier approach, this was immediately extractable by others to create their own databases. The approach has now been modified, but nevertheless such information remains freely available but in a less extractable form. Complete lists of problems, strategies and organizations are made available to facilitate organization action and visibility.

- **Exploitation for commercial purposes**: In a significant number of cases, such requests are received from consultants who are paid to acquire the information, or from others who seek to use it for commercial purposes.
• **Competition with Saur products**: Users acquiring such information may seek to do so in order to avoid acquiring some of the UIA publications which ensure the revenue through which the UIA databases are maintained.

• **Requests from non-profit bodies**: The criterion of “non-profit” is not a sufficiently clear determinant for such access. Many governmental bodies are “non-profit”. Consultants may act on behalf of “non-profit” bodies from which they receive large contracts. Genuine non-profit bodies may seek such access in order to build up their own databases. Some have even requested copies of the entire UIA database for this purpose -- and as a natural right.

• **Relationship with Associate Members**: Access to such information is one of the privileges offered to UIA’s Associate Members, who pay not only for the right of access but also for the cost of extraction. Some Associate Members, such as ICCA, may be effectively redistributing the information to their members.

• **Academic researchers**: As with the remarks concerning “non-profit” bodies, academic researchers have a very different attitude to “data” to be used for scientific purposes. Once acquired it is freely sharable within the academic community. On the other hand it is in the interest of the UIA to ensure that research is done on the data that it collects. And much has been done.

• **Extraction costs**: The procedures to extract data on the basis of complex criteria may themselves be time-consuming, possibly involving special programming.

• **Competitive relationships**: In some cases those seeking, or potentially seeking, access to UIA data are themselves direct competitors of the UIA (eg ICCA).

• **Pulping references books**: The practice adopted by SAUR of pulping unsold copies (notably of the Yearbook) is clearly highly offensive in a world in which many libraries cannot afford to acquire such publications. This has been the subject of a number of debates in the UIA Committee. Basically the challenge is multiple:
  (a) where they are made available to potential clients, SAUR has good reason to be opposed;
  (b) where they have to be transported at significant cost (including to UIA, prior to onward dispatch), costs can be prohibitive;
  (c) if neither of the previous points apply, recipients may still be faced with exorbitant customs charges, for which they have no resources.

The UIA is clearly in the business of ensuring widespread access to the information it processes. But the UIA has always been tortured by its difficulties in determining what information to make freely available and what information to make available at cost -- or for a fee to ensure an income to maintain its information processing facilities. In making such distinctions, and in the absence of continuing subsidies, the question of to whom such information should be made available at what price has been a continuing dilemma.

**Competitive non-profit environment**: Gone are the days when it could be assumed that “non-profit” was somehow associated with “non-competitive” and “altruistic” – in which shared strategic preoccupation with societal problems suggested the possibility of mutually supportive relationships in practice. The UIA is confronted with an interesting array of non-profit “competitors”, although the “competitive” (“unfriendly”) nature of the relationship is typically denied, even though the drain on available collective resources is tangible:

• **Intergovernmental organizations**: Such bodies, or more typically their departments or agencies, have long competed for resources both amongst themselves (even between departments) and with third parties – and notably in relation to information on non-governmental organizations, or on “issues”. As noted above, the major agencies are now establishing their databases as web facilities,
or have plans to do so. They may do this in partnership with selected groups of other organizations and may typically avoid any form of consultation with bodies responsible for earlier initiatives – including those of an intergovernmental nature.

To the extent that these databases are developed as strategic partnerships with commercial operations (e.g., UN/CISCO partnership for NetAid), they may be deliberately (but deniably) designed as aggressive marketing exercises to marginalize other initiatives, whether governmental or nongovernmental – and that includes the UIAs. The fact that the UIA may have a consultative relationship with such an IGO has proved to be absolutely irrelevant to such strategic decisions. The fact that such IGOs claim to be challenged by budgetary constraints is ironic when the UIA has long maintained its databases on a non-subsidized basis – potentially under jeopardy from IGO initiatives designed to (deniably) to undermine them.

- **Nongovernmental organizations**: Initiatives, of the form described for intergovernmental bodies, may also be developed by nongovernmental bodies. Web environments focusing on humanitarian, development, environment, and other concerns have already been created – including inter-sectoral initiatives. These naturally compete with one another. The UIA’s must naturally be expected to compete with them.

- **Academic initiatives**: Following the “discovery” of the non-profit sector by the academic community in the 1980s, a number of well-funded disciplines have been able to redirect their traditional sources of funds to support “civil society” related initiatives. Ironically, just as “NGO” was discovered by the United Nations through Article 71, it may be argued that “civil society” under its current form has been discovered by a particular coalition of disciplines and funders. Both definitions are notably significant in terms of what they tend not to include. These coalitions have the resources to reframe the debate on civil society in according to particular prescriptive agendas in ways that may affect the UIA. For example through the production of a *Global Civil Society Yearbook* (an initiative through the Centre for Civil Society, based at the London School of Economics, traditionally having little interest in such matters).

The foundation of the UIA predates the preoccupation of these sectors with matters of interest to the UIA. However, since these new initiatives are well-resourced, the UIA is now confronted by an array of actors sharing these preoccupations and often indifferent to, or ignorant of, the UIA role in this connection. The UIA needs to explore very carefully the nature of its relationship with such sectors to avoid being “taken hostage” by their respective modes of action. This challenge is most clearly seen in the case of United Nations bodies. Their representatives have long been equally skilled in paying lip service to the value of NGOs and avoiding any significant form of cooperation with them. The UIA has done far more over the years in documenting the intergovernmental community than has ever been acknowledged by such bodies in the form of any pattern of action supportive of the UIA efforts. The UIA has received no subsidies from them and contracts have been very rare and usually focused on relieving short-term policy crises rather than in the spirit of the long-term documentary effort undertaken by the UIA.

By remaining bound by any consultative relationship formula of decreasing (if any) operational significance, the UIA is increasingly hostage to a system that effectively seeks to dilute its significance as part of an array of NGOs pursuing specialized interests. Whilst the UIA endeavours to reflect these interests to a high degree in its information services, it is highly questionable whether it needs to be directly associated with them, especially those of a recurring fashionable or celebratory variety. From this perspective it is important to determine exactly what such association has contributed to the UIA efforts, or could do in the future. The contribution of the UIA to such enterprises needs to be assessed in the light of its strengths and weaknesses. As a high-tech knowledge initiative its contribution is indirect and exemplified by the opportunities of the web. The nature of its resources in terms of skills and limited funds makes questionable any involvement emphasizing lobbying skills in a highly competitive environment.
Meeting attendance: This poses several kinds of challenge:

Representation: To what extent is it vital for the UIA to be present to demonstrate its concern with the issues or the organizational context – given the assiduity with which it “represents” these bodies in its documentation for wider web dissemination? Minimally such participation involves registration and appearance on the list of participants. It may offer the opportunity for the competitive distribution of literature alongside that of many others. Or it may suggest active involvement in the conference process in order to acquire greater visibility than others, competing for speaking time, etc.

Cost: Attendance typically requires a significant UIA investment in terms of time, travel, accommodation and registration. Costs are rarely covered from other sources.

Value: Criteria have proven difficult to establish to determine the value of such UIA presence. When the UIA’s presence is specifically requested for a particular role, and costs are covered, the situation is much clearer – especially when there is a well-defined output with which the UIA can be associated. When the UIA is merely present as one of several hundred representatives (notably at “briefings”), the value is less clear, especially if the role is effectively one of rubber-stamping decisions and policies taken by a pre-selected group in processes in which the UIA’s involvement had not been requested.

Contrasting examples include:

- **NGO-related gatherings:** There are increasing numbers of NGO gatherings, notably in the tradition of associating with major UN conferences (Copenhagen, Geneva, etc), with the consultative status process (CONGO), or with specific issues (racism, etc). Typically these may have between 300 and 3000 organization representatives. Costs are rarely covered from other sources, indeed the UIA is solicited to cover costs of representatives from developing countries. Little attention is paid to the possibilities offered by the web to ensure greater, and more, frequent interaction with more geographically widespread participants – presumably because of the effect on the role of those whose funding permits their physical presence.

- **NGO-related research:** In the 1970s, the UIA participated actively in meetings of the International Studies Association which were significant for their lack of attention to international NGOs. Since the late 1980s, and following Rio, there are increasing numbers of meetings concerned with civil society research. These continue to be primarily an extension of the interests of social scientists researching community association and tend to have little concern with the internationality of the body. The UIA is currently participation in meetings of ISTR. Costs are rarely covered from other sources.

- **Knowledge-organization:** The participation of the UIA in meetings relating to its traditional professional role (dating back to its origins) in knowledge organization and information handling continues to be solicited. Costs are frequently covered.

- **Meeting organization:** The UIA is occasionally solicited for assistance in organization of unusual meetings (eg Parliament of the World’s Religions, World Futures Studies Federation). Some costs are usually covered. The challenge of these meetings is the need to find new ways to deal with differences. An analogous set of criteria questions concern attendance at meetings of Associate Members (summer schools, etc).

The UIA needs to be clear on the value of participating in major UN events that involve large numbers of participants. There have been many examples and the advantages and disadvantages of UIA attendance amongst numerous other bodies need to be carefully explored – especially when the events take on an increasingly symbolic or celebratory character, or where the issues are well-articulated in other media to which the UIA has access. The UIA needs to be attentive to any policy of attendance based on “because everyone will be there” or “UIA ought to be there” and what this implies in terms of resource use and follow-up.
“Partnerships”: Strategic partnerships are advocated as a way through the challenges of organizing funding and action in the 21st Century.

- **With intergovernmental organizations:** To date such partnerships have been closely related to various formulas of “consultative relationship”. These formulas have recently been revised or are subject to revision in many cases, notably as a result of the “opening of the doors” associated with the Earth Summit (1992). The UIA has such with UNESCO, UN/ECOSOC and ILO. It has collaborated with FAO, the Council of Europe, UNITAR, and the Commonwealth Science Council. It has acted as one of the research institutes in the network of the UN University. A special ECOSOC resolution establishes cooperation between the United Nations and the UIA for the preparation of the Yearbook of International Organizations. It has long been clear that its prime consultative relationships with UNESCO and ECOSOC result in no practical action or consideration whatsoever on the part of the institutions in question in relation to the UIA, even in matters directly relevant to the reasons for the relationship. The UIA has however continued to enable those bodies to “consult” the UIA, notably through increasing access to its databases and their profiling of the international community, its issues and its strategies. Formal contact has been successful only when the institution has had a short-term need that the UIA was able to fulfill. The UIA finds itself increasingly defined as part of a sea of demanding NGOs with such institutions are increasingly unable to collaborate with in a dignified manner. The UN itself has now severely compromised its own integrity through its close association with multinational corporations (Global Compact) for which it required NGO moral sanction. For financial reasons the pattern of information distribution from which the UIA benefited has also been severely curtailed. The UIA could therefore usefully limit its partnerships with such bodies to links of an electronic variety that allow for mutual consultation in a form consistent with the needs and competence of both parties – or to ad hoc opportunities, if and when these seem appropriate. Such institutions have long felt free to relate to NGOs unconstrained by the consultative relationship.

- **For-profit partnerships:** Strategic partnerships between non-profit and for-profit bodies is a feature of the 1990s and the decade to come – even in the case of the United Nations. It could be argued that the UIA has had such a strategic partnership with SAUR since the early 1980s, and with it’s Associate Members. The concern is to determine with what kinds of bodies such partnerships are viable. This is especially important in the case of the knowledge industry where a partnership involving sharing of data can rapidly deprive an organization of its information assets. The question is where does wisdom start and where does naiveté stop?

**Commercial relationships:** The UIA has successfully survived as a non-profit organization at the frontier between the profit and non-profit worlds. It has done so by selling publications for a profit and developing other relationships with for-profit organizations (Associate Members, suppliers, etc). This results in various dilemmas:

- **Advertising:** The UIA has long been attentive to advertising possibilities. Advertising revenue was a significant component of early issues of the review and the Calendar. It has always been excluded in the case of the Yearbook – with the exception of information on other UIA publications. The stance was to maintain a non-commercial, professional image of the UIA products. Success in advertising was limited by the national orientation of many advertisers potentially interested in UIA publications – but concerned at their limited distribution in any one country. The advent of the web completely reframes the challenge. There are many possibilities for generating advertising revenue:
  - by automatically inserting adverts (logos, banners) on selected pages,
  - by click-through facilities

  However the issue remains the extent to which users should associate a jumble of third party advertising messages with the UIA information.
• **Associate Members**: Because of the commercial orientation of the meeting industry bodies that form the core of the associate membership, the UIA is challenged in its ability to make certain information available at lower costs when such members pay for exclusive access to it.

The UIA has benefited from a long-term relationship characterized by mutual respect and consideration in the case of K G Saur Verlag. This might be considered a model of a successful relationship. It might also be considered atypical in that many examples of sponsorship are now very short-term and may reflect very limited interest in the UIA’s own objectives. In this respect the current attempts of the UN to develop relationships with multinational corporations (following a long series of resolutions against them) should be followed with interest.

**Image and Visibility**: There is continuing expression of concern with regard to the image and visibility of the UIA.

• **Image**: What is the UIA? For whom is the UIA? What does it need to be for particular audiences (conference industry, researchers, academics, librarians, NGOs, IGOs, governments, media, personnel, etc)? Traditionally the UIA has:
  (a) allowed itself to be defined in large measure by the expectations of the perceiver;
  (b) emphasized its products and services before any institutional identity;
  (c) resisted simplistic identification with any particular image;
  (d) avoided extensive image-building investment.

Many organizations have switched the focus of their image-definition to the web. The UIA website reflects many of the ambiguities of its past priorities, both in terms of strengths and weaknesses. However, even as a design challenge, the production of a website to reflect the many aspects of the UIA is quite daunting. This is especially the case where design decisions have to take account of an understanding of the interaction amongst thousands of UIA web pages (on separate cross-linked UIA web servers) that need to meet the needs of very different kinds of users and priorities.

• **Visibility**: To whom should the UIA be “visible”? What is the operational significance of such visibility? Is UIA public relations ineffective if the UIA is not well-known? A simple answer to this question would suggest that the UIA, as an institution, should ideally be as visible as Greenpeace or Amnesty. However these bodies tend to be associated with issues frequently highlighted by the media. With how many bodies should the UIA seek to compete to achieve preferential recognition? At what cost? In whose interest? The UIA has traditionally chosen a different strategy, namely presenting its products without highlighting the producer of the products. This has been preferred as an effective operational strategy in order to collect information successfully from organizations -- for a “Yearbook” (or for a “Calendar”, an “Encyclopedia”) rather than by a “Union”.

This approach has been extended into the UIA’s web strategy. A significant number of users come to pages of the UIA website via third party search engines pointing to specific information on non-UIA bodies, issues, or strategies at a low level in the UIA site. Emphasis is thus placed on the service rendered to the user in terms of their specific need -- rather than on the body rendering the service. The UIA is typically mentioned on the page – but incidentally rather than as the most prominent feature, namely a soft-sell rather than a pushy hard-sell. Users, if curious, are offered access to further information on the UIA, but they do not have to give attention to such information before getting an answer to their initial inquiry. Metaphorically, the UIA web strategy is to offer access to individual “trees”, and leave it to the user to determine whether they want to acquire any knowledge about the “forest” and its management. But, as pointed out under “image”, there is a real problem in providing users with information adequate to their needs without over-simplifying the UIA, and without over-complexifying what is communicated – and nevertheless offering those who are interested an insight into the full spectrum of UIA issues and concerns and the manner in which they are
• **Credibility**: Linking “image” and “visibility” is the question of credibility. Traditionally the UIA has relied for its credibility on the quality of the information it produces. The early efforts to increase credibility by associating with intergovernmental bodies now appears an outdated and ineffectual strategy, especially since many of the consultative status IGOs face their own sever credibility challenges.

• **Branding and logo**: There is a certain style of marketing that uncritically accepts the merit of “branding”. This is typical of UIA Associate Members who like to be associated with a branded product and to be branded in order to acquire a sense of identity. Blatant branding ignores the approach taken to marketing quality products and raises issues about how the UIA chooses to see and present itself.

• **Marketing**: It is often assumed that the UIA “marketing” efforts are inadequate in terms of the results sought. It should be remembered that up to the 1970s the UIA undertook its own publication marketing, prior to switching the majority to SAUR. The main difficulty with marketing is that the audience for UIA products and services is thinly dispersed and traditionally involved costly mailing exercises. Through its website the UIA has achieved considerable visibility at very low cost and without yet engaging in typical web marketing strategies. There is a strong possibility that the sustained level of UIA publication sales through SAUR is due to their visibility on the UIA website.

**Complexity**: The UIA, despite the relatively small size of its Secretariat, is engaged in a number of relatively complex, interconnected initiatives. It is often difficult to ensure effective discussion of its strategic challenges because of this complexity – especially when only parts of this range of activities are considered relevant to any discussion. For some it is convenient, if not highly desirable, to perceive the UIA only through a particular facet of its activities – and to present it to others in this light.

The dilemma for the UIA is that, despite this need for simplicity, a significant aspect of its brief is effectively that of mapping complexity – like astronomers, but mapping the knowledge ecosystem. It is its respect for the richness of the organizational and knowledge ecosystem that distinguishes it from many sectoral and discipline-oriented approaches that have their own strategic advantages.

**Membership challenges**: In developing its Full Membership (*Membres Actifs*), the UIA is severely constrained by the nature of the UIA meetings to which members could be invited, their infrequency, the distances/costs of their attendance, and the motivation of members. These necessarily result in unrepresentative attendance and preclude cooptation of valuable members -- precisely because they would be disinclined (or unable) to participate fully. Clearly the opportunities of the web to broaden the membership and increase participation (without requiring physical presence) remain to be explored, as well as their statutory implications.

**Conflict of interest**: Given the complex scope of UIA activity, it is not surprising that there is potential conflict of interest, in relation to UIA activities, amongst some of its members coopted precisely because of their association with different associative trends and concerns:

• **Full Members**: Clearly in order for UIA to be “representative” of the range of concerns with which it deals, it necessarily has as members some people who are strongly associated with competing non-profit interests (as noted above). This is manifest in failure to inform the UIA Secretariat (notably with regard to non-confidential publications which could be reviewed or cited in UIA publications), or to ensure that the UIA is presented to relevant parties. Clearly there is also the question of the degree that such actions can be taken without infringing on responsibilities to the competing institutional interest – and any assumption that such members should bring benefits to the UIA from their other associations.
Examples include:
- Members of staff in UN bodies who are directly informed of initiatives relevant to UIA (e.g., to establish an *International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations* – ICPO, and its integration into various systems of national accounts)
- Members involved in academic initiatives relating to NGOs
- Members involved in NGO gatherings relevant to UIA projects

**Associate Members:** In subscribing to the principles of its mandate, the UIA involves as its Associate Members some (e.g., ICCA) who compete directly with the UIA in the provision of certain services (ICCA has just launched an online Calendar service).

**Active vs Honorary membership:** The UIA has been unable to resolve the conflicts between the “honorary” nature of its full membership, the “activity” implicitly associated with such membership (despite conflict of interest), and the statutory articulation of distinctions of principle that do not correspond with operational realities (effectively failing to give place to others that are active supporters in practice). The operating reality of the UIA would be more realistically defined if:

- UIA Full Members constituted an “Honorary Council” (“Amis de l’UIA”);
- UIA Executive Council constituted a “Board of Trustees” designated to guarantee conformity to statutory provisions;
- UIA Corresponding Members constituted a group of Active Participants in UIA electronic work.

Involvement in one group should not preclude, or be dependent on, involvement in another. Unfortunately antiquated constraints of Belgian legislation, notably with respect to electronic involvement in statutory meetings, prevent any transition to a constitution that would facilitate, rather than obstruct, the emergence of an operational mode appropriate to worldwide activity of the UIA in a knowledge-oriented society.

The conflicts inherent in the above point to the degree to which the UIA has effectively been taken hostage by members (formally associated with seemingly valuable institutional “partners”) that prompted their co-optation – when the members are necessarily unable or unwilling to catalyze any further collaboration of such bodies with the UIA. This forces the UIA into undue respect and consideration of that institution (despite its manifest indifference). Similarly members co-opted because of their eminence may be quite unable to give time to the UIA but preclude the UIA from co-opting members of more modest background likely to demonstrate active involvement over a longer period of time. The conflict becomes more apparent in the case of the absence of any financial obligation from Full Members, leading to a long-standing pattern in which all funds are necessarily generated by secretariat initiatives, usually without any support of Full Members, and often by individuals who are not considered eligible for full membership.

**NGO services:** There is continuing concern regarding the nature of “services” that the UIA should, does, or could, offer to NGOs – and the conditions under which this should be done. Relevant points include:

- **UIA role in relation to NGOs:** The UIA has a statutory role in relation to facilitating nongovernmental organization. Many bodies, often well-subsidized, now respond to the needs of “nongovernmental organizations” and “civil society bodies” in their many forms (some newly emergent). They even compete to do so. It is therefore relevant to ask whether the UIA’s skills and resources should be allocated to provide a class of services that others seek to provide, or whether it should seek to provide services which others are less interested in providing, or are unable to provide.

- **Services as an investment:** There is a view that some services by the UIA should be provided at cost or for free. These services need to be identified and the resources to be reallocated to them
should be identified in the light of considerations given earlier.

- **Personnel appropriate to new services**: The UIA has a heavy investment in services that generate funds to maintain its information service activity. It has not invested in personnel skills to provide other kinds of services and it is not clear that personnel with such skills could generate supporting income or be remunerated at the rates consistent with those skills.

- **Web services**: Many “services” are effectively provided worldwide by the UIA via the web. It is not clear to what extent it is understood what these services are in relation to other services that it is assumed are not being provided by the UIA.

- **Opportunity cost**: Even if it is agreed that the UIA should be providing a particular service, this may involve reallocating scarce resources to achieve this – thus raising the question as to how to ensure the economic viability of such a decision. Even where such services involve hiring extra personnel, if this involves extensive training, this may also be problematic. Some services involving high cost personnel, may disrupt the delicate UIA Secretariat salary scale.

- **Revenue generating services**: To what extent should services provided be assessed in terms of the revenue that they generate?

**Personnel**: The dilemmas associated with UIA personnel (salaries, quality, permanence/continuity) have been described elsewhere. The fundamental issue is that the UIA is dependent, in the continuing provision of its sophisticated information services, on maintaining the loyalty of skilled personnel under conditions of work that are not competitive with commercial organizations engaged in similar tasks. The kinds of people prepared to work under such conditions generate special management challenges.

As is increasingly typical of creative commercial organizations in the knowledge management business, loyalty is retained through enthusiasm for task, objective, and their creative development, as well as the qualities of the work environment. Such people do not respond readily to strategies and tasks articulated as abstractions divorced from their own understanding of the constraints and relevant opportunities that emerge as feedback from their work. This is especially the case when such people are responsible for sustaining institutional income and generating funds for new projects. The particular challenge in the case of the UIA is that its work is essentially long-term and dependent on a longer learning period to sustain continuity. Such people are not easily replaceable according to the style of commercial organizations, even when this may seem appropriate.

These conditions place both individuals and the UIA as a working community under special tensions between the centripetal and centrifugal pulls to which individuals are subject. Most recently these have been partially resolved by increasing experiments in the use of teleworking, although these do not respond to the challenges of maintaining a sophisticated in-house information system.
Defining the UIA in relation to its Strategic Dilemmas
(Development of Annex 4, UIA Council, Montecatini, 2000)

UIA AIMS

Reinterpreted for the 21st Century

This is an exercise in reinterpreting UIA’s aims in language relevant to the 21st century:

• Sustain efforts towards superordinate meaning through union of transboundary associations, whether in their social, virtual or conceptual forms

• Through rigorous representation of diversity and patterns of relationship, sustain the “pattern that connects” that is supportive of future understandings of fundamental order and harmony that are meaningful across cultures and ideologies

• Explore the nature and relationship of more fundamental values sustaining individual and collective action

• Facilitate identification of strategic relevance amongst complex patterns of collective initiative in response to their perceived challenges

• Facilitate meaningful organization, whether through social, virtual or conceptual forms

• Ensure long-term sustainability through vigilant use of resources, notably in the case of the organization itself

• Emphasize action in consonance with values of members and personnel, where these are consistent with those of the organization

Current statutory aims (Article 3)

The UAI is a non-profit making international non-governmental organization having a scientific aim, operating as an institute for research, study, information, consultation, promotion and service.

Its aims are:

• to contribute to a universal order based on principles of human dignity, solidarity of peoples and freedom of communication;
• to undertake and promote research and study on transnational associative networks, considered as essential components of contemporary society;
• to collect and distribute the most comprehensive documentation possible on international organizations and associations, both governmental and non-governmental, and on new forms of transnational co-operation;
• to collect and distribute data on the various meetings organized by international bodies;
• to encourage and undertake all activity aimed at promoting the development and efficiency of non-governmental networks, as well as intercommunication between people working in the international framework and in interassociative co-operation;
• to study, categorize, analyze, compare and illuminate world problems as perceived by international organizations.

Statutory aims (1910)
The Union has as its aim the establishment of permanent relations between associations and international institutions and thus to support their action and their work. It notably has as its aim:

- joint study of all questions relative to the organization, the coordination of effort, and the unification of methods, with respect to that which are held in common, or are of analogous nature, between diverse associations or institutions
- cooperation between them for study, information, documentation and the extension of relations.

Through realization of its aim, the Union intends to contribute to the progress of pacific international and the organization of international life.
DILEMMAS

Despite its strategic “nimbleness” and operational adaptability, the UIA is faced with a number of awkward challenges in making policy decisions. The challenges are outlined in what follows, but underlying any response is the question of exactly what is the UIA and what “business” is it in.

**Information (Database) services:** With most categories of UIA information, the emerging information society provides examples of encroachment on areas in which the UIA previously had a unique advantage.

The nature of the UIA’s advantage is now shifting to the degree of **interlinkage** within and between the databases, to their **comprehensiveness**, and to their **interactivity**. It continues to hold an advantage in its ability to ensure database maintenance on a long-term basis at relatively low costs compared to those that are possible for commercial or intergovernmental agencies – but this advantage is tied to its dilemmas over personnel salaries. However this advantage does not automatically translate into a ready ability to solicit funds since most, if not all, funding sources are focused on sectoral subsets of the database (health, energy, etc) or particular kinds of information (eg addresses).

- **Organizations:** There are an increasing number of international “organization” database facilities, notably on the web. These include those offered as services to other organizations by particular organizations or consortia. Increasingly they take the form of websites. They may well focus on NGOs or “civil society” organizations, possibly with a particular issue focus. UN agencies are increasingly active in establishing such databases, as are “umbrella” organizations. An increasing percentage of international bodies now have their own websites containing the kinds of descriptive information the UIA provides in its own publications (or on the web) – or possibly much more, as in the case of large intergovernmental bodies.

The UIA’s advantage remains its selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the considerable hyperlinking to other bodies within the database (and from the other UIA databases). Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the exclusion of national bodies and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some bodies, or the absence of any entry at all. Strategically the weakness of the UIA in placing such information on the web is the ease with which competitors can gain access to higher quality information – notably if their own service is subsidized (and offered free of charge).

The UIA needs to develop selective access strategies to pre-empt further development of certain kinds of database. However it must necessarily recognize that its real advantage can only come from making available kinds of information that others are less inclined to provide. Hence the importance of hyperlinks between entries, to other web resources, and to non-organization UIA databases that increase the richness of the UIA site.

The recent sale of the UIA publisher K G Saur Verlag (Munich) to Gale Research (Chicago) will prove to be an interesting challenge. Gale has traditionally been the publisher of a significant competitor to the Yearbook in the North American market. Gale derives considerable income from online sale of reference information through the Dialog system. This shift may have considerable marketing advantages for the UIA as well as real challenges, especially if a case is made to absorb UIA products into the Gale context and thus dilute their identity.

- **Meetings:** There are an increasing number of international “calendar” database facilities on the web. These include those offered by single conference centres, towns, regions or countries. They also include highly specialized and more general databases, as well as those of large organizations such as IAEA. These would typically be a tool of choice for professionals in a particular area. Typically it is now common for meetings of any size or consequence to have their own website as a means of communication amongst those potentially involved. The UIA makes some use of these web facilities in compiling its own Calendar. This remains the principal source of meeting statistics – for the
moment. This is an area that is potentially attractive to companies in the information industry, notably when integrated with hotel, travel and tourism information.

The UIA might choose to enter some partnership arrangement with such initiatives, although some may seek to operate as direct competitors. The UIA’s advantage remains its selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the degree of interlinkage into and from its other databases, especially that on organizations. Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the exclusion of national meetings and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some meetings, or the absence of any entry at all – especially when this information is available from other sources. Strategically the weakness of the UIA in placing such information on the web is the ease with which competitors can gain access to higher quality information – notably if their own service is subsidized (and offered free of charge).

The failure to integrate pre-1986 information is to be regretted, although this will be largely mitigated by web access to event information in the Yearbook profile of the organization.

The recent discussion to reopen discussions with ICCA concerning hyperlinkage between UIA and ICCA meeting information is an interesting challenge. Again the challenge is not technical but rather in relation to issues of identity and perceived advantage. For example it is possible that such a linkage could be framed by ICCA as a form of UIA membership of ICCA. The fact of ICCA’s current Associate Membership of UIA could be considered as signalling UIA naivety. The UIA needs to be attentive to offering access to its databases to parties that are essentially redistributors of information – possibly for commercially-related purposes.

- **Problem / Issue information**: There are an increasing number of international “issue” database facilities on the web. These include those offered by particular organizations or services. They may be highly specialized or focus on clusters of issues (eg environment, humanitarian, etc). The UIA’s advantage remains the selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the considerable hyperlinking to other issues within the database (and from the other UIA databases). Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the amount of information and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some issues, or the absence of any entry at all.

Clearly documenting international organization is central to the activities of UIA and has been since its foundation. It was born of the documentary preoccupations of its founders and their relationship to the library community – now transformed into the information services of a knowledge society. In a real sense it is through its use of information that it “represents” the international community of organizations. This sense has traditionally been of far greater importance than its occasional vain attempts in the distant past to represent international organizations through any democratic membership process.

**Access to information**: The UIA is under continuing pressure to make available some kinds of information at low cost, if not freely. This applies particularly to addresses of international organizations. Relevant points are:

- **Extent of UIA data freely available**: The UIA already makes available substantial amounts of information free of charge, notably data on problems and strategies. In the case of organization data, the UIA has been making freely available the vital web addresses of their websites. In an earlier approach, this was immediately extractable by others to create their own databases. The approach has now been modified, but nevertheless such information remains freely available but in a less extractable form. Complete lists of problems, strategies and organizations are made available to facilitate organization action and visibility.

- **Exploitation for commercial purposes**: In a significant number of cases, such requests are received from consultants who are paid to acquire the information, or from others who seek to use it for commercial purposes.
• **Competition with Saur products:** Users acquiring such information may seek to do so in order to avoid acquiring some of the UIA publications which ensure the revenue through which the UIA databases are maintained.

• **Requests from non-profit bodies:** The criterion of “non-profit” is not a sufficiently clear determinant for such access. Many governmental bodies are “non-profit”. Consultants may act on behalf of “non-profit” bodies from which they receive large contracts. Genuine non-profit bodies may seek such access in order to build up their own databases. Some have even requested copies of the entire UIA database for this purpose -- and as a natural right.

• **Relationship with Associate Members:** Access to such information is one of the privileges offered to UIA’s Associate Members, who pay not only for the right of access but also for the cost of extraction. Some Associate Members, such as ICCA, may be effectively redistributing the information to their members.

• **Academic researchers:** As with the remarks concerning “non-profit” bodies, academic researchers have a very different attitude to “data” to be used for scientific purposes. Once acquired it is freely sharable within the academic community. On the other hand it is in the interest of the UIA to ensure that research is done on the data that it collects. And much has been done.

• **Extraction costs:** The procedures to extract data on the basis of complex criteria may themselves be time-consuming, possibly involving special programming.

• **Competitive relationships:** In some cases those seeking, or potentially seeking, access to UIA data are themselves direct competitors of the UIA (eg ICCA).

• **Pulping references books:** The practice adopted by SAUR of pulping unsold copies (notably of the Yearbook) is clearly highly offensive in a world in which many libraries cannot afford to acquire such publications. This has been the subject of a number of debates in the UIA Committee. Basically the challenge is multiple:
  (a) where they are made available to potential clients, SAUR has good reason to be opposed;
  (b) where they have to be transported at significant cost (including to UIA, prior to onward dispatch), costs can be prohibitive;
  (c) if neither of the previous points apply, recipients may still be faced with exorbitant customs charges, for which they have no resources.

The UIA is clearly in the business of ensuring widespread access to the information it processes. But the UIA has always been tortured by its difficulties in determining what information to make freely available and what information to make available at cost -- or for a fee to ensure an income to maintain its information processing facilities. In making such distinctions, and in the absence of continuing subsidies, the question of to whom such information should be made available at what price has been a continuing dilemma.

**Competitive non-profit environment:** Gone are the days when it could be assumed that “non-profit” was somehow associated with “non-competitive” and “altruistic” -- in which shared strategic preoccupation with societal problems suggested the possibility of mutually supportive relationships in practice. The UIA is confronted with an interesting array of non-profit “competitors”, although the “competitive” (“unfriendly”) nature of the relationship is typically denied, even though the drain on available collective resources is tangible:

• **Intergovernmental organizations:** Such bodies, or more typically their departments or agencies, have long competed for resources both amongst themselves (even between departments) and with third parties -- and notably in relation to information on non-governmental organizations, or on “issues”. As noted above, the major agencies are now establishing their databases as web facilities,
or have plans to do so. They may do this in partnership with selected groups of other organizations and may typically avoid any form of consultation with bodies responsible for earlier initiatives – including those of an intergovernmental nature.

To the extent that these databases are developed as strategic partnerships with commercial operations (e.g., UN/CISCO partnership for NetAid), they may be deliberately (but deniably) designed as aggressive marketing exercises to marginalize other initiatives, whether governmental or nongovernmental – and that includes the UIAs. The fact that the UIA may have a consultative relationship with such an IGO has proved to be absolutely irrelevant to such strategic decisions. The fact that such IGOs claim to be challenged by budgetary constraints is ironic when the UIA has long maintained its databases on a non-subsidized basis – potentially under jeopardy from IGO initiatives designed to (deniably) to undermine them.

- **Nongovernmental organizations**: Initiatives, of the form described for intergovernmental bodies, may also be developed by nongovernmental bodies. Web environments focusing on humanitarian, development, environment, and other concerns have already been created – including inter-sectoral initiatives. These naturally compete with one another. The UIA’s must naturally be expected to compete with them.

- **Academic initiatives**: Following the “discovery” of the non-profit sector by the academic community in the 1980s, a number of well-funded disciplines have been able to redirect their traditional sources of funds to support “civil society” related initiatives. Ironically, just as “NGO” was discovered by the United Nations through Article 71, it may be argued that “civil society” under its current form has been discovered by a particular coalition of disciplines and funders. Both definitions are notably significant in terms of what they tend not to include. These coalitions have the resources to reframe the debate on civil society in according to particular prescriptive agendas in ways that may affect the UIA. For example through the production of a *Global Civil Society Yearbook* (an initiative through the Centre for Civil Society, based at the London School of Economics, traditionally having little interest in such matters).

The foundation of the UIA predates the preoccupation of these sectors with matters of interest to the UIA. However, since these new initiatives are well-resourced, the UIA is now confronted by an array of actors sharing these preoccupations and often indifferent to, or ignorant of, the UIA role in this connection. The UIA needs to explore very carefully the nature of its relationship with such sectors to avoid being “taken hostage” by their respective modes of action. This challenge is most clearly seen in the case of United Nations bodies. Their representatives have long been equally skilled in paying lip service to the value of NGOs and avoiding any significant form of cooperation with them. The UIA has done far more over the years in documenting the intergovernmental community than has ever been acknowledged by such bodies in the form of any pattern of action supportive of the UIA efforts. The UIA has received no subsidies from them and contracts have been very rare and usually focused on relieving short-term policy crises rather than in the spirit of the long-term documentary effort undertaken by the UIA.

By remaining bound by any consultative relationship formula of decreasing (if any) operational significance, the UIA is increasingly hostage to a system that effectively seeks to dilute its significance as part of an array of NGOs pursuing specialized interests. Whilst the UIA endeavours to reflect these interests to a high degree in its information services, it is highly questionable whether it needs to be directly associated with them, especially those of a recurring fashionable or celebratory variety. From this perspective it is important to determine exactly what such association has contributed to the UIA efforts, or could do in the future. The contribution of the UIA to such enterprises needs to be assessed in the light of its strengths and weaknesses. As a high-tech knowledge initiative its contribution is indirect and exemplified by the opportunities of the web. The nature of its resources in terms of skills and limited funds makes questionable any involvement emphasizing lobbying skills in a highly competitive environment.
Meeting attendance: This poses several kinds of challenge:

Representation: To what extent is it vital for the UIA to be present to demonstrate its concern with the issues or the organizational context – given the assiduity with which it “represents” these bodies in its documentation for wider web dissemination? Minimally such participation involves registration and appearance on the list of participants. It may offer the opportunity for the competitive distribution of literature alongside that of many others. Or it may suggest active involvement in the conference process in order to acquire greater visibility than others, competing for speaking time, etc.

Cost: Attendance typically requires a significant UIA investment in terms of time, travel, accommodation and registration. Costs are rarely covered from other sources.

Value: Criteria have proven difficult to establish to determine the value of such UIA presence. When the UIA’s presence is specifically requested for a particular role, and costs are covered, the situation is much clearer – especially when there is a well-defined output with which the UIA can be associated. When the UIA is merely present as one of several hundred representatives (notably at “briefings”), the value is less clear, especially if the role is effectively one of rubber-stamping decisions and policies taken by a pre-selected group in processes in which the UIA’s involvement had not been requested.

Contrasting examples include:

- **NGO-related gatherings:** There are increasing numbers of NGO gatherings, notably in the tradition of associating with major UN conferences (Copenhagen, Geneva, etc), with the consultative status process (CONGO), or with specific issues (racism, etc). Typically these may have between 300 and 3000 organization representatives. Costs are rarely covered from other sources, indeed the UIA is solicited to cover costs of representatives from developing countries. Little attention is paid to the possibilities offered by the web to ensure greater, and more, frequent interaction with more geographically widespread participants – presumably because of the effect on the role of those whose funding permits their physical presence.

- **NGO-related research:** In the 1970s, the UIA participated actively in meetings of the International Studies Association which were significant for their lack of attention to international NGOs. Since the late 1980s, and following Rio, there are increasing numbers of meetings concerned with civil society research. These continue to be primarily an extension of the interests of social scientists researching community association and tend to have little concern with the internationality of the body. The UIA is currently participation in meetings of ISTR. Costs are rarely covered from other sources.

- **Knowledge-organization:** The participation of the UIA in meetings relating to its traditional professional role (dating back to its origins) in knowledge organization and information handling continues to be solicited. Costs are frequently covered.

- **Meeting organization:** The UIA is occasionally solicited for assistance in organization of unusual meetings (eg Parliament of the World’s Religions, World Futures Studies Federation). Some costs are usually covered. The challenge of these meetings is the need to find new ways to deal with differences. An analogous set of criteria questions concern attendance at meetings of Associate Members (summer schools, etc).

The UIA needs to be clear on the value of participating in major UN events that involve large numbers of participants. There have been many examples and the advantages and disadvantages of UIA attendance amongst numerous other bodies need to be carefully explored – especially when the events take on an increasingly symbolic or celebratory character, or where the issues are well-articulated in other media to which the UIA has access. The UIA needs to be attentive to any policy of attendance based on “because everyone will be there” or “UIA ought to be there” and what this implies in terms of resource use and follow-up.
**“Partnerships”:** Strategic partnerships are advocated as a way through the challenges of organizing funding and action in the 21st Century.

- **With intergovernmental organizations:** To date such partnerships have been closely related to various formulas of “consultative relationship”. These formulas have recently been revised or are subject to revision in many cases, notably as a result of the “opening of the doors” associated with the Earth Summit (1992). The UIA has such with UNESCO, UN/ECOSOC and ILO. It has collaborated with FAO, the Council of Europe, UNITAR, and the Commonwealth Science Council. It has acted as one of the research institutes in the network of the UN University. A special ECOSOC resolution establishes cooperation between the United Nations and the UIA for the preparation of the Yearbook of International Organizations. It has long been clear that its prime consultative relationships with UNESCO and ECOSOC result in no practical action or consideration whatsoever on the part of the institutions in question in relation to the UIA, even in matters directly relevant to the reasons for the relationship. The UIA has however continued to enable those bodies to “consult” the UIA, notably through increasing access to its databases and their profiling of the international community, its issues and its strategies. Formal contact has been successful only when the institution has had a short-term need that the UIA was able to fulfil. The UIA finds itself increasingly defined as part of a sea of demanding NGOs with such institutions are increasingly unable to collaborate with in a dignified manner. The UN itself has now severely compromised its own integrity through its close association with broken promises and massacres (Srebrenica and Rwanda), and its more recent association with multinational corporations (Global Compact) for which it required NGO moral sanction. For financial reasons the pattern of information distribution from which the UIA benefited has also been severely curtailed. The UIA could therefore usefully limit its partnerships with such bodies to links of an electronic variety that allow for mutual consultation in a form consistent with the needs and competence of both parties – or to ad hoc opportunities, if and when these seem appropriate. Such institutions have long felt free to relate to NGOs unconstrained by the consultative relationship.

- **For-profit partnerships:** Strategic partnerships between non-profit and for-profit bodies is a feature of the 1990s and the decade to come – even in the case of the United Nations. It could be argued that the UIA has had such a strategic partnership with SAUR since the early 1980s, and with it’s Associate Members. The concern is to determine with what kinds of bodies such partnerships are viable. This is especially important in the case of the knowledge industry where a partnership involving sharing of data can rapidly deprive an organization of its information assets. The question is where does wisdom start and where does naiveté stop?

**Commercial relationships:** The UIA has successfully survived as a non-profit organization at the frontier between the profit and non-profit worlds. It has done so by selling publications for a profit and developing other relationships with for-profit organizations (Associate Members, suppliers, etc). This results in various dilemmas:

- **Advertising:** The UIA has long been attentive to advertising possibilities. Advertising revenue was a significant component of early issues of the review and the Calendar. It has always been excluded in the case of the Yearbook – with the exception of information on other UIA publications. The stance was to maintain a non-commercial, professional image of the UIA products. Success in advertising was limited by the national orientation of many advertisers potentially interested in UIA publications – but concerned at their limited distribution in any one country. The advent of the web completely reframes the challenge. There are many possibilities for generating advertising revenue:
  - by automatically inserting adverts (logos, banners) on selected pages,
  - by click-through facilities

However the issue remains the extent to which users should associate a jumble of third party advertising messages with the UIA information.
• **Associate Members:** Because of the commercial orientation of the meeting industry bodies that form the core of the associate membership, the UIA is challenged in its ability to make certain information available at lower costs when such members pay for exclusive access to it.

The UIA has benefited from a long-term relationship characterized by mutual respect and consideration in the case of K G Saur Verlag. This might be considered a model of a successful relationship. It might also be considered atypical in that many examples of sponsorship are now very short-term and may reflect very limited interest in the UIA’s own objectives. In this respect the current attempts of the UN to develop relationships with multinational corporations (following a long series of resolutions against them) should be followed with interest.

**Image and Visibility:** There is continuing expression of concern with regard to the image and visibility of the UIA.

• **Image:** What is the UIA? For whom is the UIA? What does it need to be for particular audiences (conference industry, researchers, academics, librarians, NGOs, IGOs, governments, media, personnel, etc)? Traditionally the UIA has:
  (a) allowed itself to be defined in large measure by the expectations of the perceiver;
  (b) emphasized its products and services before any institutional identity;
  (c) resisted simplistic identification with any particular image;
  (d) avoided extensive image-building investment.

Many organizations have switched the focus of their image-definition to the web. The UIA website reflects many of the ambiguities of its past priorities, both in terms of strengths and weaknesses. However, even as a design challenge, the production of a website to reflect the many aspects of the UIA is quite daunting. This is especially the case where design decisions have to take account of an understanding of the interaction amongst thousands of UIA web pages (on separate cross-linked UIA web servers) that need to meet the needs of very different kinds of users and priorities.

• **Visibility:** To whom should the UIA be “visible”? What is the operational significance of such visibility? Is UIA public relations ineffective if the UIA is not well-known? A simple answer to this question would suggest that the UIA, as an institution, should ideally be as visible as Greenpeace or Amnesty. However these bodies tend to be associated with issues frequently highlighted by the media. With how many bodies should the UIA seek to compete to achieve preferential recognition? At what cost? In whose interest? The UIA has traditionally chosen a different strategy, namely presenting its products without highlighting the producer of the products. This has been preferred as an effective operational strategy in order to collect information successfully from organizations -- for a “Yearbook” (or for a “Calendar”, an “Encyclopedia”) rather than by a “Union”.

This approach has been extended into the UIA’s web strategy. A significant number of users come to pages of the UIA website via third party search engines pointing to specific information on non-UIA bodies, issues, or strategies at a low level in the UIA site. Emphasis is thus placed on the service rendered to the user in terms of their specific need -- rather than on the body rendering the service. The UIA is typically mentioned on the page – but incidentally rather than as the most prominent feature, namely a soft-sell rather than a pushy hard-sell. Users, if curious, are offered access to further information on the UIA, but they do not have to give attention to such information before getting an answer to their initial inquiry. Metaphorically, the UIA web strategy is to offer access to individual “trees”, and leave it to the user to determine whether they want to acquire any knowledge about the “forest” and its management. But, as pointed out under “image”, there is a real problem in providing users with information adequate to their needs without over-simplifying the UIA, and without over-complexifying what is communicated – and nevertheless offering those who are interested an insight into the full spectrum of UIA issues and concerns and the manner in which they are
integrated.

- **Credibility:** Linking “image” and “visibility” is the question of credibility. Traditionally the UIA has relied for its credibility on the quality of the information it produces. The early efforts to increase credibility by associating with intergovernmental bodies now appears an outdated and ineffectual strategy, especially since many of the consultative status IGOs face their own sever credibility challenges.

- **Branding and logo:** There is a certain style of marketing that uncritically accepts the merit of “branding”. This is typical of UIA Associate Members who like to be associated with a branded product and to be branded in order to acquire a sense of identity. Blatant branding ignores the approach taken to marketing quality products and raises issues about how the UIA chooses to see and present itself.

- **Marketing:** It is often assumed that the UIA “marketing” efforts are inadequate in terms of the results sought. It should be remembered that up to the 1970s the UIA undertook its own publication marketing, prior to switching the majority to SAUR. The main difficulty with marketing is that the audience for UIA products and services is thinly dispersed and traditionally involved costly mailing exercises. Through its website the UIA has achieved considerable visibility at very low cost and without yet engaging in typical web marketing strategies. There is a strong possibility that the sustained level of UIA publication sales through SAUR is due to their visibility on the UIA website.

**Complexity:** The UIA, despite the relatively small size of its Secretariat, is engaged in a number of relatively complex, interconnected initiatives. It is often difficult to ensure effective discussion of its strategic challenges because of this complexity – especially when only parts of this range of activities are considered relevant to any discussion. For some it is convenient, if not highly desirable, to perceive the UIA only through a particular facet of its activities – and to present it to others in this light.

The dilemma for the UIA is that, despite this need for simplicity, a significant aspect of its brief is effectively that of mapping complexity – like astronomers, but mapping the knowledge ecosystem. It is its respect for the richness of the organizational and knowledge ecosystem that distinguishes it from many sectoral and discipline-oriented approaches that have their own strategic advantages.

**Membership challenges:** In developing its Full Membership (Membres Actifs), the UIA is severely constrained by the nature of the UIA meetings to which members could be invited, their infrequency, the distances/costs of their attendance, and the motivation of members. These necessarily result in unrepresentative attendance and preclude cooptation of valuable members -- precisely because they would be disinclined (or unable) to participate fully. Clearly the opportunities of the web to broaden the membership and increase participation (without requiring physical presence) remain to be explored, as well as their statutory implications.

- **Conflict of interest:** Given the complex scope of UIA activity, it is not surprising that there is potential conflict of interest, in relation to UIA activities, amongst some of its members coopted precisely because of their association with different associative trends and concerns:

  - **Full Members:** Clearly in order for UIA to be “representative” of the range of concerns with which it deals, it necessarily has as members some people who are strongly associated with competing non-profit interests (as noted above). This is manifest in failure to inform the UIA Secretariat (notably with regard to non-confidential publications which could be reviewed or cited in UIA publications), or to ensure that the UIA is presented to relevant parties. Clearly there is also the question of the degree that such actions can be taken without infringing on responsibilities to the competing institutional interest – and any assumption that such members should bring benefits to the UIA from their other associations.
Examples include:
- Members of staff in UN bodies who are directly informed of initiatives relevant to UIA (e.g., to establish an *International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations* – ICPO, and its integration into various systems of national accounts)
- Members involved in academic initiatives relating to NGOs
- Members involved in NGO gatherings relevant to UIA projects

**Associate Members:** In subscribing to the principles of its mandate, the UIA involves as its Associate Members some (e.g., ICCA) who compete directly with the UIA in the provision of certain services (ICCA has just launched an online Calendar service).

**Active vs Honorary membership:** The UIA has been unable to resolve the conflicts between the “honorary” nature of its full membership, the “activity” implicitly associated with such membership (despite conflict of interest), and the statutory articulation of distinctions of principle that do not correspond with operational realities (effectively failing to give place to others that are active supporters in practice). The operating reality of the UIA would be more realistically defined if:

- UIA Full Members constituted an “Honorary Council” (“Amis de l’UIA”);
- UIA Executive Council constituted a “Board of Trustees” designed to guarantee conformity to statutory provisions;
- UIA Corresponding Members constituted a group of Active Participants in UIA electronic work.

Involvement in one group should not preclude, or be dependent on, involvement in another. Unfortunately antiquated constraints of Belgian legislation, notably with respect to electronic involvement in statutory meetings, prevent any transition to a constitution that would facilitate, rather than obstruct, the emergence of an operational mode appropriate to worldwide activity of the UIA in a knowledge-oriented society.

The conflicts inherent in the above point to the degree to which the UIA has effectively been taken hostage by members (formally associated with seemingly valuable institutional “partners”) that prompted their cooption – when the members are necessarily unable or unwilling to catalyze any further collaboration of such bodies with the UIA. This forces the UIA into undue respect and consideration of that institution (despite its manifest indifference). Similarly members coopted because of their eminence may be quite unable to give time to the UIA but preclude the UIA from coopting members of more modest background likely to demonstrate active involvement over a longer period of time. The conflict becomes more apparent in the case of the absence of any financial obligation from Full Members, leading to a long-standing pattern in which all funds are necessarily generated by secretariat initiatives, usually without any support of Full Members, and often by individuals who are not considered eligible for full membership.

**NGO services:** There is continuing concern regarding the nature of “services” that the UIA should, does, or could, offer to NGOs – and the conditions under which this should be done. Relevant points include:

- **UIA role in relation to NGOs:** The UIA has a statutory role in relation to facilitating nongovernmental organization. Many bodies, often well-subsidized, now respond to the needs of “nongovernmental organizations” and “civil society bodies” in their many forms (some newly emergent). They even compete to do so. It is therefore relevant to ask whether the UIA’s skills and resources should be allocated to provide a class of services that others seek to provide, or whether it should seek to provide services which others are less interested in providing, or are unable to provide.

- **Services as an investment:** There is a view that some services by the UIA should be provided at cost or for free. These services need to be identified and the resources to be reallocated to them
should be identified in the light of considerations given earlier.

• **Personnel appropriate to new services:** The UIA has a heavy investment in services that generate funds to maintain its information service activity. It has not invested in personnel skills to provide other kinds of services and it is not clear that personnel with such skills could generate supporting income or be remunerated at the rates consistent with those skills.

• **Web services:** Many “services” are effectively provided worldwide by the UIA via the web. It is not clear to what extent it is understood what these services are in relation to other services that it is assumed are not being provided by the UIA.

• **Opportunity cost:** Even if it is agreed that the UIA should be providing a particular service, this may involve reallocating scarce resources to achieve this – thus raising the question as to how to ensure the economic viability of such a decision. Even where such services involve hiring extra personnel, if this involves extensive training, this may also be problematic. Some services involving high cost personnel, may disrupt the delicate UIA Secretariat salary scale.

• **Revenue generating services:** To what extent should services provided be assessed in terms of the revenue that they generate?

**Personnel:** The dilemmas associated with UIA personnel (salaries, quality, permanence/continuity) have been described elsewhere. The fundamental issue is that the UIA is dependent, in the continuing provision of its sophisticated information services, on maintaining the loyalty of skilled personnel under conditions of work that are not competitive with commercial organizations engaged in similar tasks. The kinds of people prepared to work under such conditions generate special management challenges.

As is increasingly typical of creative commercial organizations in the knowledge management business, loyalty is retained through enthusiasm for task, objective, and their creative development, as well as the qualities of the work environment. Such people do not respond readily to strategies and tasks articulated as abstractions divorced from their own understanding of the constraints and relevant opportunities that emerge as feedback from their work. This is especially the case when such people are responsible for sustaining institutional income and generating funds for new projects. The particular challenge in the case of the UIA is that its work is essentially long-term and dependent on a longer learning period to sustain continuity. Such people are not easily replaceable according to the style of commercial organizations, even when this may seem appropriate.

These conditions place both individuals and the UIA as a working community under special tensions between the centripetal and centrifugal pulls to which individuals are subject. Most recently these have been partially resolved by increasing experiments in the use of teleworking, although these do not respond to the challenges of maintaining a sophisticated in-house information system.
UIA AIMS

Reinterpreted for the 21st Century

This is an exercise in reinterpreting UIA’s aims in language relevant to the 21st century:

- Sustain efforts towards superordinate meaning through union of transboundary associations, whether in their social, virtual or conceptual forms

- Through rigorous representation of diversity and patterns of relationship, sustain the “pattern that connects” that is supportive of future understandings of fundamental order and harmony that are meaningful across cultures and ideologies

- Explore the nature and relationship of more fundamental values sustaining individual and collective action

- Facilitate identification of strategic relevance amongst complex patterns of collective initiative in response to their perceived challenges

- Facilitate meaningful organization, whether through social, virtual or conceptual forms

- Ensure long-term sustainability through vigilant use of resources, notably in the case of the organization itself

- Emphasize action in consonance with values of members and personnel, where these are consistent with those of the organization

Current statutory aims (Article 3)

The UIA is a non-profit making international non-governmental organization having a scientific aim, operating as an institute for research, study, information, consultation, promotion and service.

Its aims are:

- to contribute to a universal order based on principles of human dignity, solidarity of peoples and freedom of communication;
- to undertake and promote research and study on transnational associative networks, considered as essential components of contemporary society;
- to collect and distribute the most comprehensive documentation possible on international organizations and associations, both governmental and non-governmental, and on new forms of transnational co-operation;
- to collect and distribute data on the various meetings organized by international bodies;
- to encourage and undertake all activity aimed at promoting the development and efficiency of non-governmental networks, as well as intercommunication between people working in the international framework and in interassociative co-operation;
• to study, categorize, analyze, compare and illuminate world problems as perceived by international organizations.

Statutory aims (1910)

The Union has as its aim the establishment of permanent relations between associations and international institutions and thus to support their action and their work. It notably has as its aim:

• joint study of all questions relative to the organization, the coordination of effort, and the unification of methods, with respect to that which are held in common, or are of analogous nature, between diverse associations or institutions
• cooperation between them for study, information, documentation and the extension of relations.

Through realization of its aim, the Union intends to contribute to the progress of pacific international and the organization of international life.
DILEMMAS

Despite its strategic “nimbleness” and operational adaptability, the UIA is faced with a number of awkward challenges in making policy decisions. The challenges are outlined in what follows, but underlying any response is the question of exactly what is the UIA and what “business” it is in.

Information (Database) services: With most categories of UIA information, the emerging information society provides examples of encroachment on areas in which the UIA previously had a unique advantage.

The nature of the UIA’s advantage is now shifting to the degree of interlinkage within and between the databases, to their comprehensiveness, and to their interactivity. It continues to hold an advantage in its ability to ensure database maintenance on a long-term basis at relatively low costs compared to those that are possible for commercial or intergovernmental agencies – but this advantage is tied to its dilemmas over personnel salaries. However this advantage does not automatically translate into a ready ability to solicit funds since most, if not all, funding sources are focused on sectoral subsets of the database (health, energy, etc) or particular kinds of information (eg addresses).

• Organizations: There are an increasing number of international “organization” database facilities, notably on the web. These include those offered as services to other organizations by particular organizations or consortia. Increasingly they take the form of websites. They may well focus on NGOs or “civil society” organizations, possibly with a particular issue focus. UN agencies are increasingly active in establishing such databases, as are “umbrella” organizations. An increasing percentage of international bodies now have their own websites containing the kinds of descriptive information the UIA provides in its own publications (or on the web) – or possibly much more, as in the case of large intergovernmental bodies.

The UIA’s advantage remains its selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the considerable hyperlinking to other bodies within the database (and from the other UIA databases). Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the exclusion of national bodies and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some bodies, or the absence of any entry at all. Strategically the weakness of the UIA in placing such information on the web is the ease with which competitors can gain access to higher quality information – notably if their own service is subsidized (and offered free of charge).

The UIA needs to develop selective access strategies to pre-empt further development of certain kinds of database. However it must necessarily recognize that its real advantage can only come from making available kinds of information that others are less inclined to provide. Hence the importance of hyperlinks between entries, to other web resources, and to non-organization UIA databases that increase the richness of the UIA site.

The recent sale of the UIA publisher K G Saur Verlag (Munich) to Gale Research (Chicago) will prove to be an interesting challenge. Gale has traditionally been the publisher of a significant competitor to the Yearbook in the North American market. Gale derives considerable income from online sale of reference information through the Dialog system. This shift may have considerable marketing advantages for the UIA as well as real challenges, especially if a case is made to absorb UIA products into the Gale context and thus dilute their identity.

• Meetings: There are an increasing number of international “calendar” database facilities on the web. These include those offered by single conference centres, towns, regions or countries. They also
include highly specialized and more general databases, as well as those of large organizations such as IAEA. These would typically be a tool of choice for professionals in a particular area. Typically it is now common for meetings of any size or consequence to have their own website as a means of communication amongst those potentially involved. The UIA makes some use of these web facilities in compiling its own Calendar. This remains the principal source of meeting statistics – for the moment. This is an area that is potentially attractive to companies in the information industry, notably when integrated with hotel, travel and tourism information.

The UIA might choose to enter some partnership arrangement with such initiatives, although some may seek to operate as direct competitors. The UIA’s advantage remains its selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the degree of interlinkage into and from its other databases, especially that on organizations. Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the exclusion of national meetings and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some meetings, or the absence of any entry at all – especially when this information is available from other sources. Strategically the weakness of the UIA in placing such information on the web is the ease with which competitors can gain access to higher quality information – notably if their own service is subsidized (and offered free of charge). The failure to integrate pre-1986 information is to be regretted, although this will be largely mitigated by web access to event information in the Yearbook profile of the organization.

The recent discussion to reopen discussions with ICCA concerning hyperlinkage between UIA and ICCA meeting information is an interesting challenge. Again the challenge is not technical but rather in relation to issues of identity and perceived advantage. For example it is possible that such a linkage could be framed by ICCA as a form of UIA membership of ICCA. The fact of ICCA’s current Associate Membership of UIA could be considered as signalling UIA naivety. The UIA needs to be attentive to offering access to its databases to parties that are essentially redistributors of information – possibly for commercially-related purposes.

**Problem / Issue information** There are an increasing number of international “issue” database facilities on the web. These include those offered by particular organizations or services. They may be highly specialized or focus on clusters of issues (eg environment, humanitarian, etc). The UIA’s advantage remains the selection, formatting and breadth of coverage, as well as the considerable hyperlinking to other issues within the database (and from the other UIA databases). Its weakness from a user’s perspective may be the amount of information and the lack of up-to-the-minute information on some issues, or the absence of any entry at all.

Clearly documenting international organization is central to the activities of UIA and has been since its foundation. It was born of the documentary preoccupations of its founders and their relationship to the library community – now transformed into the information services of a knowledge society. In a real sense it is through its use of information that it “represents” the international community of organizations. This sense has traditionally been of far greater importance than its occasional vain attempts in the distant past to represent international organizations through any democratic membership process.

**Access to information:** The UIA is under continuing pressure to make available some kinds of information at low cost, if not freely. This applies particularly to addresses of international organizations. Relevant points are:

- **Extent of UIA data freely available:** The UIA already makes available substantial amounts of information free of charge, notably data on problems and strategies. In the case of organization data, the UIA has been making freely available the vital web addresses of their websites. In an earlier
approach, this was immediately extractable by others to create their own databases. The approach has now been modified, but nevertheless such information remains freely available but in a less extractable form. Complete lists of problems, strategies and organizations are made available to facilitate organization action and visibility.

- **Exploitation for commercial purposes:** In a significant number of cases, such requests are received from consultants who are paid to acquire the information, or from others who seek to use it for commercial purposes.

- **Competition with Saur products:** Users acquiring such information may seek to do so in order to avoid acquiring some of the UIA publications which ensure the revenue through which the UIA databases are maintained.

- **Requests from non-profit bodies:** The criterion of “non-profit” is not a sufficiently clear determinant for such access. Many governmental bodies are “non-profit”. Consultants may act on behalf of “non-profit” bodies from which they receive large contracts. Genuine non-profit bodies may seek such access in order to build up their own databases. Some have even requested copies of the entire UIA database for this purpose -- and as a natural right.

- **Relationship with Associate Members:** Access to such information is one of the privileges offered to UIA’s Associate Members, who pay not only for the right of access but also for the cost of extraction. Some Associate Members, such as ICCA, may be effectively redistributing the information to their members.

- **Academic researchers:** As with the remarks concerning “non-profit” bodies, academic researchers have a very different attitude to “data” to be used for scientific purposes. Once acquired it is freely sharable within the academic community. On the other hand it is in the interest of the UIA to ensure that research is done on the data that it collects. And much has been done.

- **Extraction costs:** The procedures to extract data on the basis of complex criteria may themselves be time-consuming, possibly involving special programming.

- **Competitive relationships:** In some cases those seeking, or potentially seeking, access to UIA data are themselves direct competitors of the UIA (eg ICCA).

- **Pulping references books:** The practice adopted by SAUR of pulping unsold copies (notably of the Yearbook) is clearly highly offensive in a world in which many libraries cannot afford to acquire such publications. This has been the subject of a number of debates in the UIA Committee. Basically the challenge is multiple:
  (a) where they are made available to potential clients, SAUR has good reason to be opposed;
  (b) where they have to be transported at significant cost (including to UIA, prior to onward dispatch), costs can be prohibitive;
  (c) if neither of the previous points apply, recipients may still be faced with exorbitant customs charges, for which they have no resources.

The UIA is clearly in the business of ensuring widespread access to the information it processes. But the UIA has always been tortured by its difficulties in determining what information to make freely available and what information to make available at cost -- or for a fee to ensure an income to maintain its information processing facilities. In making such distinctions, and in the absence of continuing subsidies,
the question of to whom such information should be made available at what price has been a continuing dilemma.

**Competitive non-profit environment:** Gone are the days when it could be assumed that “non-profit” was somehow associated with “non-competitive” and “altruistic” – in which shared strategic preoccupation with societal problems suggested the possibility of mutually supportive relationships in practice. The UIA is confronted with an interesting array of non-profit “competitors”, although the “competitive” (“unfriendly”) nature of the relationship is typically denied, even though the drain on available collective resources is tangible:

- **Intergovernmental organizations:** Such bodies, or more typically their departments or agencies, have long competed for resources both amongst themselves (even between departments) and with third parties – and notably in relation to information on non-governmental organizations, or on “issues”. As noted above, the major agencies are now establishing their databases as web facilities, or have plans to do so. They may do this in partnership with selected groups of other organizations and may typically avoid any form of consultation with bodies responsible for earlier initiatives – including those of an intergovernmental nature.

  To the extent that these databases are developed as strategic partnerships with commercial operations (eg UN/CISCO partnership for NetAid), they may be deliberately (but deniably) designed as aggressive marketing exercises to marginalize other initiatives, whether governmental or nongovernmental – and that includes the UIAs. The fact that the UIA may have a consultative relationship with such an IGO has proved to be absolutely irrelevant to such strategic decisions. The fact that such IGOs claim to be challenged by budgetary constraints is ironic when the UIA has long maintained its databases on a non-subsidized basis – potentially under jeopardy from IGO initiatives designed to(deniably) to undermine them.

- **Nongovernmental organizations:** Initiatives, of the form described for intergovernmental bodies, may also be developed by nongovernmental bodies. Web environments focusing on humanitarian, development, environment, and other concerns have already been created – including inter-sectoral initiatives. These naturally compete with one another. The UIA’s must naturally be expected to compete with them.

- **Academic initiatives:** Following the “discovery” of the non-profit sector by the academic community in the 1980s, a number of well-funded disciplines have been able to redirect their traditional sources of funds to support “civil society” related initiatives. Ironically, just as “NGO” was discovered by the United Nations through Article 71, it may be argued that “civil society” under its current form has been discovered by a particular coalition of disciplines and funders. Both definitions are notably significant in terms of what they tend not to include. These coalitions have the resources to reframe the debate on civil society in according to particular prescriptive agendas in ways that may affect the UIA. For example through the production of a *Global Civil Society Yearbook* (an initiative through the Centre for Civil Society, based at the London School of Economics, traditionally having little interest in such matters).

The foundation of the UIA predates the preoccupation of these sectors with matters of interest to the UIA. However, since these new initiatives are well-resourced, the UIA is now confronted by an array of actors sharing these preoccupations and often indifferent to, or ignorant of, the UIA role in this connection. The UIA needs to explore very carefully the nature of its relationship with such sectors to avoid being “taken hostage” by their respective modes of action. This challenge is most clearly seen in the case of United
Nations bodies. Their representatives have long been equally skilled in paying lip service to the value of NGOs and avoiding any significant form of cooperation with them. The UIA has done far more over the years in documenting the intergovernmental community than has ever been acknowledged by such bodies in the form of any pattern of action supportive of the UIA efforts. The UIA has received no subsidies from them and contracts have been very rare and usually focused on relieving short-term policy crises rather than in the spirit of the long-term documentary effort undertaken by the UIA.

By remaining bound by any consultative relationship formula of decreasing (if any) operational significance, the UIA is increasingly hostage to a system that effectively seeks to dilute its significance as part of an array of NGOs pursuing specialized interests. Whilst the UIA endeavours to reflect these interests to a high degree in its information services, it is highly questionable whether it needs to be directly associated with them, especially those of a recurring fashionable or celebratory variety. From this perspective it is important to determine exactly what such association has contributed to the UIA efforts, or could do in the future. The contribution of the UIA to such enterprises needs to be assessed in the light of its strengths and weaknesses. As a high-tech knowledge initiative its contribution is indirect and exemplified by the opportunities of the web. The nature of its resources in terms of skills and limited funds makes questionable any involvement emphasizing lobbying skills in a highly competitive environment.

**Meeting attendance:** This poses several kinds of challenge:

*Representation:* To what extent is it vital for the UIA to be present to demonstrate its concern with the issues or the organizational context – given the assiduity with which it “represents” these bodies in its documentation for wider web dissemination? Minimally such participation involves registration and appearance on the list of participants. It may offer the opportunity for the competitive distribution of literature alongside that of many others. Or it may suggest active involvement in the conference process in order to acquire greater visibility than others, competing for speaking time, etc.

*Cost:* Attendance typically requires a significant UIA investment in terms of time, travel, accommodation and registration. Costs are rarely covered from other sources.

*Value:* Criteria have proven difficult to establish to determine the value of such UIA presence. When the UIA’s presence is specifically requested for a particular role, and costs are covered, the situation is much clearer – especially when there is a well-defined output with which the UIA can be associated. When the UIA is merely present as one of several hundred representatives (notably at “briefings”), the value is less clear, especially if the role is effectively one of rubber-stamping decisions and policies taken by a pre-selected group in processes in which the UIA’s involvement had not been requested.

Contrasting examples include:

- **NGO-related gatherings:** There are increasing numbers of NGO gatherings, notably in the tradition of associating with major UN conferences (Copenhagen, Geneva, etc), with the consultative status process (CONGO), or with specific issues (racism, etc). Typically these may have between 300 and 3000 organization representatives. Costs are rarely covered from other sources, indeed the UIA is solicited to cover costs of representatives from developing countries. Little attention is paid to the possibilities offered by the web to ensure greater, and more, frequent interaction with more geographically widespread participants – presumably because of the effect on the role of those whose funding permits their physical presence.
• **NGO-related research:** In the 1970s, the UIA participated actively in meetings of the International Studies Association which were significant for their lack of attention to international NGOs. Since the late 1980s, and following Rio, there are increasing numbers of meetings concerned with civil society research. These continue to be primarily an extension of the interests of social scientists researching community association and tend to have little concern with the internationality of the body. The UIA is currently participation in meetings of ISTR. Costs are rarely covered from other sources.

• **Knowledge-organization:** The participation of the UIA in meetings relating to its traditional professional role (dating back to its origins) in knowledge organization and information handling continues to be solicited. Costs are frequently covered.

• **Meeting organization:** The UIA is occasionally solicited for assistance in organization of unusual meetings (eg Parliament of the World’s Religions, World Futures Studies Federation). Some costs are usually covered. The challenge of these meetings is the need to find new ways to deal with differences. An analogous set of criteria questions concern attendance at meetings of Associate Members (summer schools, etc).

The UIA needs to be clear on the value of participating in major UN events that involve large numbers of participants. There have been many examples and the advantages and disadvantages of UIA attendance amongst numerous other bodies need to be carefully explored – especially when the events take on an increasingly symbolic or celebratory character, or where the issues are well-articulated in other media to which the UIA has access. The UIA needs to be attentive to any policy of attendance based on “because everyone will be there” or “UIA ought to be there” and what this implies in terms of resource use and follow-up.

“Partnerships”: Strategic partnerships are advocated as a way through the challenges of organizing funding and action in the 21st Century.

• **With intergovernmental organizations:** To date such partnerships have been closely related to various formulas of “consultative relationship”. These formulas have recently been revised or are subject to revision in many cases, notably as a result of the “opening of the doors” associated with the Earth Summit (1992). The UIA has such with UNESCO, UN/ECOSOC and ILO. It has collaborated with FAO, the Council of Europe, UNITAR, and the Commonwealth Science Council. It has acted as one of the research institutes in the network of the UN University. A special ECOSOC resolution establishes cooperation between the United Nations and the UIA for the preparation of the Yearbook of International Organizations. It has long been clear that its prime consultative relationships with UNESCO and ECOSOC result in no practical action or consideration whatsoever on the part of the institutions in question in relation to the UIA, even in matters directly relevant to the reasons for the relationship. The UIA has however continued to enable those bodies to “consult” the UIA, notably through increasing access to its databases and their profiling of the international community, its issues and its strategies. Formal contact has been successful only when the institution has had a short-term need that the UIA was able to fulfil. The UIA finds itself increasingly defined as part of a sea of demanding NGOs with such institutions are increasingly unable to collaborate with in a dignified manner. The UN itself has now severely compromised its own integrity through its close association with broken promises and massacres (Srebrenica and Rwanda), and its more recent association with multinational corporations (Global Compact) for which it required NGO moral sanction. For financial reasons the pattern of information distribution from which the UIA benefited5 has also been severely curtailed. The UIA could therefore usefully limit its partnerships with such bodies to links of an electronic variety that allow for mutual consultation in a form consistent with the needs and
competence of both parties – or to ad hoc opportunities, if and when these seem appropriate. Such institutions have long felt free to relate to NGOs unconstrained by the consultative relationship.

- **For-profit partnerships:** Strategic partnerships between non-profit and for-profit bodies is a feature of the 1990s and the decade to come – even in the case of the United Nations. It could be argued that the UIA has had such a strategic partnership with SAUR since the early 1980s, and with its Associate Members. The concern is to determine with what kinds of bodies such partnerships are viable. This is especially important in the case of the knowledge industry where a partnership involving sharing of data can rapidly deprive an organization of its information assets. The question is where does wisdom start and where does naiveté stop?

**Commercial relationships:** The UIA has successfully survived as a non-profit organization at the frontier between the profit and non-profit worlds. It has done so by selling publications for a profit and developing other relationships with for-profit organizations (Associate Members, suppliers, etc). This results in various dilemmas:

- **Advertising:** The UIA has long been attentive to advertising possibilities. Advertising revenue was a significant component of early issues of the review and the Calendar. It has always been excluded in the case of the Yearbook – with the exception of information on other UIA publications. The stance was to maintain a non-commercial, professional image of the UIA products. Success in advertising was limited by the national orientation of many advertisers potentially interested in UIA publications – but concerned at their limited distribution in any one country. The advent of the web completely reframes the challenge. There are many possibilities for generating advertising revenue:
  - by automatically inserting adverts (logos, banners) on selected pages,
  - by click-through facilities
However the issue remains the extent to which users should associate a jumble of third party advertising messages with the UIA information.

- **Associate Members:** Because of the commercial orientation of the meeting industry bodies that form the core of the associate membership, the UIA is challenged in its ability to make certain information available at lower costs when such members pay for exclusive access to it.

The UIA has benefited from a long-term relationship characterized by mutual respect and consideration in the case of K G Saur Verlag. This might be considered a model of a successful relationship. It might also be considered atypical in that many examples of sponsorship are now very short-term and may reflect very limited interest in the UIA’s own objectives. In this respect the current attempts of the UN to develop relationships with multinational corporations (following a long series of resolutions against them) should be followed with interest.

**Image and Visibility:** There is continuing expression of concern with regard to the image and visibility of the UIA.

- **Image:** What is the UIA? For whom is the UIA? What does it need to be for particular audiences (conference industry, researchers, academics, librarians, NGOs, IGOs, governments, media, personnel, etc)? Traditionally the UIA has:
  (a) allowed itself to be defined in large measure by the expectations of the perceiver;
  (b) emphasized its products and services before any institutional identity;
  (c) resisted simplistic identification with any particular image;
(d) avoided extensive image-building investment.

Many organizations have switched the focus of their image-definition to the web. The UIA website reflects many of the ambiguities of its past priorities, both in terms of strengths and weaknesses. However, even as a design challenge, the production of a website to reflect the many aspects of the UIA is quite daunting. This is especially the case where design decisions have to take account of an understanding of the interaction amongst thousands of UIA web pages (on separate cross-linked UIA web servers) that need to meet the needs of very different kinds of users and priorities.

- **Visibility:** To whom should the UIA be “visible”? What is the operational significance of such visibility? Is UIA public relations ineffective if the UIA is not well-known? A simple answer to this question would suggest that the UIA, as an institution, should ideally be as visible as Greenpeace or Amnesty. However, these bodies tend to be associated with issues frequently highlighted by the media. With how many bodies should the UIA seek to compete to achieve preferential recognition? At what cost? In whose interest? The UIA has traditionally chosen a different strategy, namely presenting its products without highlighting the producer of the products. This has been preferred as an effective operational strategy in order to collect information successfully from organizations -- for a “Yearbook” (or for a “Calendar”, an “Encyclopedia”) rather than by a “Union”.

This approach has been extended into the UIA’s web strategy. A significant number of users come to pages of the UIA website via third party search engines pointing to specific information on non-UIA bodies, issues, or strategies at a low level in the UIA site. Emphasis is thus placed on the service rendered to the user in terms of their specific need -- rather than on the body rendering the service. The UIA is typically mentioned on the page -- but incidentally rather than as the most prominent feature, namely a soft-sell rather than a pushy hard-sell. Users, if curious, are offered access to further information on the UIA, but they do not have to give attention to such information before getting an answer to their initial inquiry. Metaphorically, the UIA web strategy is to offer access to individual “trees”, and leave it to the user to determine whether they want to acquire any knowledge about the “forest” and its management. But, as pointed out under “image”, there is a real problem in providing users with information adequate to their needs without over-simplifying the UIA, and without over-complexifying what is communicated -- and nevertheless offering those who are interested an insight into the full spectrum of UIA issues and concerns and the manner in which they are integrated.

- **Credibility:** Linking “image” and “visibility” is the question of credibility. Traditionally the UIA has relied for its credibility on the quality of the information it produces. The early efforts to increase credibility by associating with intergovernmental bodies now appears an outdated and ineffectual strategy, especially since many of the consultative status IGOs face their own severe credibility challenges.

- **Branding and logo:** There is a certain style of marketing that uncritically accepts the merit of “branding”. This is typical of UIA Associate Members who like to be associated with a branded product and to be branded in order to acquire a sense of identity. Blatant branding ignores the approach taken to marketing quality products and raises issues about how the UIA chooses to see and present itself.

- **Marketing:** It is often assumed that the UIA “marketing” efforts are inadequate in terms of the results sought. It should be remembered that up to the 1970s the UIA undertook its own publication marketing, prior to switching the majority to SAUR. The main difficulty with marketing is that the audience for UIA products and services is thinly dispersed and traditionally involved costly mailing
exercises. Through its website the UIA has achieved considerable visibility at very low cost and without yet engaging in typical web marketing strategies. There is a strong possibility that the sustained level of UIA publication sales through SAUR is due to their visibility on the UIA website.

**Complexity:** The UIA, despite the relatively small size of its Secretariat, is engaged in a number of relatively complex, interconnected initiatives. It is often difficult to ensure effective discussion of its strategic challenges because of this complexity – especially when only parts of this range of activities are considered relevant to any discussion. For some it is convenient, if not highly desirable, to perceive the UIA only through a particular facet of its activities – and to present it to others in this light.

The dilemma for the UIA is that, despite this need for simplicity, a significant aspect of its brief is effectively that of mapping complexity – like astronomers, but mapping the knowledge ecosystem. It is its respect for the richness of the organizational and knowledge ecosystem that distinguishes it from many sectoral and discipline-oriented approaches that have their own strategic advantages.

**Membership challenges:** In developing its Full Membership (*Membres Actifs*), the UIA is severely constrained by the nature of the UIA meetings to which members could be invited, their infrequency, the distances/costs of their attendance, and the motivation of members. These necessarily result in unrepresentative attendance and preclude cooptation of valuable members -- precisely because they would be disinclined (or unable) to participate fully. Clearly the opportunities of the web to broaden the membership and increase participation (without requiring physical presence) remain to be explored, as well as their statutory implications.

**Conflict of interest:** Given the complex scope of UIA activity, it is not surprising that there is potential conflict of interest, in relation to UIA activities, amongst some of its members coopted precisely because of their association with different associative trends and concerns:

- **Full Members:** Clearly in order for UIA to be “representative” of the range of concerns with which it deals, it necessarily has as members some people who are strongly associated with competing non-profit interests (as noted above). This is manifest in failure to inform the UIA Secretariat (notably with regard to non-confidential publications which could be reviewed or cited in UIA publications), or to ensure that the UIA is presented to relevant parties. Clearly there is also the question of the degree that such actions can be taken without infringing on responsibilities to the competing institutional interest – and any assumption that such members should bring benefits to the UIA from their other associations.

Examples include:
- Members of staff in UN bodies who are directly informed of initiatives relevant to UIA (eg to establish an *International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations* – ICPO, and its integration into various systems of national accounts)
- Members involved in academic initiatives relating to NGOs
- Members involved in NGO gatherings relevant to UIA projects

- **Associate Members:** In subscribing to the principles of its mandate, the UIA involves as its Associate Members some (eg ICCA) who compete directly with the UIA in the provision of certain services (ICCA has just launched an online Calendar service).

**Active vs Honorary membership:** The UIA has been unable to resolve the conflicts between the “honorary” nature of its full membership, the “activity” implicitly associated with such
membership (despite conflict of interest), and the statutory articulation of distinctions of principle that do not correspond with operational realities (effectively failing to give place to others that are active supporters in practice). The operating reality of the UIA would be more realistically defined if:

- UIA Full Members constituted an “Honorary Council” (“Amis de l’UAI”);
- UIA Executive Council constituted a “Board of Trustees” designed to guarantee conformity to statutory provisions;
- UIA Corresponding Members constituted a group of Active Participants in UIA electronic work.

Involvement in one group should not preclude, or be dependent on, involvement in another. Unfortunately antiquated constraints of Belgian legislation, notably with respect to electronic involvement in statutory meetings, prevent any transition to a constitution that would facilitate, rather than obstruct, the emergence of an operational mode appropriate to worldwide activity of the UIA in a knowledge-oriented society.

The conflicts inherent in the above point to the degree to which the UIA has effectively been taken hostage by members (formally associated with seemingly valuable institutional “partners”) that prompted their cooptation – when the members are necessarily unable or unwilling to catalyze any further collaboration of such bodies with the UIA. This forces the UIA into undue respect and consideration of that institution (despite its manifest indifference). Similarly members coopted because of their eminence may be quite unable to give time to the UIA but preclude the UIA from coopting members of more modest background likely to demonstrate active involvement over a longer period of time. The conflict becomes more apparent in the case of the absence of any financial obligation from Full Members, leading to a long-standing pattern in which all funds are necessarily generated by secretariat initiatives, usually without any support of Full Members, and often by individuals who are not considered eligible for full membership.

NGO services: There is continuing concern regarding the nature of “services” that the UIA should, does, or could, offer to NGOs – and the conditions under which this should be done. Relevant points include:

- **UIA role in relation to NGOs:** The UIA has a statutory role in relation to facilitating nongovernmental organization. Many bodies, often well-subsidized, now respond to the needs of “nongovernmental organizations” and “civil society bodies” in their many forms (some newly emergent). They even compete to do so. It is therefore relevant to ask whether the UIA’s skills and resources should be allocated to provide a class of services that others seek to provide, or whether it should seek to provide services which others are less interested in providing, or are unable to provide.

- **Services as an investment:** There is a view that some services by the UIA should be provided at cost or for free. These services need to be identified and the resources to be reallocated to them should be identified in the light of considerations given earlier.

- **Personnel appropriate to new services:** The UIA has a heavy investment in services that generate funds to maintain its information service activity. It has not invested in personnel skills to provide other kinds of services and it is not clear that personnel with such skills could generate supporting income or be remunerated at the rates consistent with those skills.
• **Web services:** Many “services” are effectively provided worldwide by the UIA via the web. It is not clear to what extent it is understood what these services are in relation to other services that it is assumed are not being provided by the UIA.

• **Opportunity cost:** Even if it is agreed that the UIA should be providing a particular service, this may involve reallocating scarce resources to achieve this – thus raising the question as to how to ensure the economic viability of such a decision. Even where such services involve hiring extra personnel, if this involves extensive training, this may also be problematic. Some services involving high cost personnel, may disrupt the delicate UIA Secretariat salary scale.

• **Revenue generating services:** To what extent should services provided be assessed in terms of the revenue that they generate?

**Personnel:** The dilemmas associated with UIA personnel (salaries, quality, permanence/continuity) have been described elsewhere. The fundamental issue is that the UIA is dependent, in the continuing provision of its sophisticated information services, on maintaining the loyalty of skilled personnel under conditions of work that are not competitive with commercial organizations engaged in similar tasks. The kinds of people prepared to work under such conditions generate special management challenges.

As is increasingly typical of creative commercial organizations in the knowledge management business, loyalty is retained through enthusiasm for task, objective, and their creative development, as well as the qualities of the work environment. Such people do not respond readily to strategies and tasks articulated as abstractions divorced from their own understanding of the constraints and relevant opportunities that emerge as feedback from their work. This is especially the case when such people are responsible for sustaining institutional income and generating funds for new projects. The particular challenge in the case of the UIA is that its work is essentially long-term and dependent on a longer learning period to sustain continuity. Such people are not easily replaceable according to the style of commercial organizations, even when this may seem appropriate.

These conditions place both individuals and the UIA as a working community under special tensions between the centripetal and centrifugal pulls to which individuals are subject. Most recently these have been partially resolved by increasing experiments in the use of teleworking, although these do not respond to the challenges of maintaining a sophisticated in-house information system.
The strategic dilemmas above emerge from conflict between different visions of the statutory UIA role and obligations – whether in principle or in practice. These might be summarized as follows. In each case an effort has been made to show the link to a statutory or traditional role, whilst contrasting an impractical, outdated version of that role with the feasible variant in the emerging information society.

A: INFORMATION ROLES

UIA as Referral Service (“Telephone Exchange”): The UIA has always sought to provide this facility through its publications. Its personnel have always endeavoured to respond to telephone and mail requests for contacts. However, with the advent of the web, this facility has already been dramatically extended to assist enquirers around the world to make contact with bodies in their field of interest – whether to access their website or to e-mail directly to them.

UIA as Monitoring Agency (“Observatory”): As a clearing-house, this has been a major role of the UIA in relation to international organizations and meetings. This was for a time extended to reports of international conferences. It currently includes monitoring of problems and strategies that are the concern of international constituencies. This role has taken a new form with the presentation of the results on the web using visualization and virtual reality techniques.

UIA as Library: (“Alexandrian Library”): The UIA was created in 1910 within the context of such a vision (Mundaneum, FID, etc). From 1950 it moved away from that vision and in 1999 adopted a policy of non-retention of physical archives on organizational correspondence (proofs, etc). Since the 1970s, it has never been able to support a traditional documentalist role. It has never had adequate facilities for library-type consultation by visiting researchers. Such facilities are significantly underfunded even in the largest libraries. However, through the web the UIA has been able to offer cost-effective worldwide access to its databases by researchers in many locations. The switch to electronic media also opens up the possibility of storage of quantities of information that could not have been envisaged in paper form.

UIA as Evaluator (“Inquisitor”): The UIA has a statutory obligation to be neutral in its documenting of international bodies. Its “evaluation” of international bodies has always been restricted to their degree of internationality, with cautious comment on bodies that are suspected as fronts for other interests. Both UNITAR and UNESCO have requested UIA for evaluations of international bodies, but these have been limited to a very specific investigation of certain UNESCO NGOs. Some major international bodies use the presence of a profile in the Yearbook as a criterion for assessing the merits of communication/relationship with NGOs that solicit them. The UIA has however resisted
pressures from governmental bodies to censor information on organizations associated with certain regimes (East bloc, Taiwan, South Africa, etc). The UIA has emphasized provision of adequate information to users to enable them to make their own evaluations, notably from contextual linkages.
B: EDUCATIONAL ROLES

UIA as Learning Centre (“International University”): The UIA operated an “International University” during the 1920s in the form of a summer institute with organization executives offering lectures. The UIA collaborated with the ILO Turin Centre in the 1960s in an effort to develop training seminars. The UIA does not have staff specifically trained for such educational roles and the staff it has, with appropriate competence, have other obligations. This has also constrained any extensive use of stagiaires. However, through the web it has been possible for others to offer cost-effective worldwide access to UIA data to students, packaged into the form of courses. It is clear that with minimal effort, the existing UIA staff can develop such interfaces.

UIA as Research Centre (“Think Tank”): The UIA has traditionally invested in information-related research as an extension of its documentary work. This has also extended to meeting-related research, whether in terms of statistics or meeting dynamics. As such the UIA had status as a research centre in Belgium for a time. However, with the advent of computers and the web, this work has increasingly focused on new ways of presenting and communicating information on organizations and their concerns, in order to facilitate their work in new ways – notably by rendering their challenges more comprehensible. The recent major contract with the EU, was a research contract.

C: FACILITATION ROLES

UIA as Market Place (“Organizational Bazaar”): Part of the purpose of providing information on international bodies is to facilitate exchange between them. This exchange can be extended to purchase of services and bartering arrangements. The UIA has never been able to facilitate this activity directly. However, through the web and the recent advent of e-commerce techniques, it is now possible to offer cost-effective worldwide access to NGO products (print, electronic, video, posters, T-shirts, etc) -- as is being done by a number of online facilities. It is clear that with minimal effort, the existing UIA staff can develop such interfaces.

UIA as Consultancy (“Organizational Clinic”): The UIA has never sought to develop this role but has, throughout its existence, provided advice on request whenever possible. Occasionally such advice has been commissioned and has taken the form of conventional consultancy reports. However, with the advent of the web, it is clear that more specific advice can be offered more effectively to bodies requiring it wherever they are located. Aspects of this facility are already developed in the use of FAQ sheets and standard e-mail responses.

UIA as Facilitator (“Group Therapist”): The UIA mandate to facilitate the activities of international bodies has primarily focused on information. From the 1960s to the 1970s, it also focused on the improvement in the quality of international conference organization. Following the professionalization of this sector, the UIA concern has shifted to the dynamics of international meetings, as reflected in the themes of Associate Member meetings and participation as a communications consultant in meetings of other bodies. However, in a web environment, such facilitation is susceptible to new forms of catalysis using a range of new kinds of software.
D: ASSOCIATIVE ROLES

UIA as Conference (“Parliament of NGOs”): In the early part of the 20th century the UIA experimented with this strategy and duly entered into conflict with other such initiatives. Since the 1950s, the number of such gatherings, whether regular or ad hoc, has increased. The dynamics between such initiatives have been as significant as their results. The UIA is not organized to offer a more representative conference process, even if it were appropriate or possible to effectively marginalize other such initiatives by so doing. However, through the web and the recent advent of electronic conferencing, it is now possible for the UIA to offer cost-effective worldwide access to NGO discussion fora, as is being done by a number of online facilities. It is clear that with minimal effort, the existing staff can develop such interfaces. The UIA has already established one variant of this facility around the specific issue and strategy profiles in its databases.

UIA as Celebrator (“Temple”): The UIA has never sought to develop contexts in which associative values and issues are celebrated, nor has it ever had the public relations personnel to officiate at such events, or facilitate their dynamics. However, it has always used its review to collect materials celebrating associative life, and the web provides a much more cost-effective vehicle through which to do so.

UIA as Arbitration Tribunal (“Palais de Justice”): The UIA has never sought to develop this role (along the lines of the services offered to corporations by ICC), nor does it have the personnel qualified to assist in this way. However, with the advent of the web, it is possible that the UIA could provide an interface between interested parties and qualified arbitration services.

UIA as Funding Agency (“Bank”): The UIA has never sought to be a funding agency, whether to assist developing country NGOs, students, or international programs. Nor has it ever had the resources to do so, even though it has been erroneously listed as a source of such funds in a number of directories. However, with the advent of the web, the UIA is in a better position to enable those in need to discover and make contact with relevant sources of funding (and already does so in response to e-mail inquiries).

UIA as Regulator (“Police”): The UIA has never sought to regulate the international community whether or not this role was desired. In its early years it placed some emphasis on the need for coordination amongst the many international bodies although this has since proven to be non-viable even amongst UN agencies. However, with the information it provides and notably as it is presented on the web, the UIA contributes to the self-regulation and self-coordination process.

UIA as Publicist (“Arsenal”): The UIA has never undertaken massive campaigns in support of NGOs using an arsenal of facts and arguments. However, it has always used its review to collect such materials, and the web provides a much more cost-effective vehicle through which to do so.

UIA as Lobbyist (“Courtier”): The UIA invested heavily in this role in its early years, notably in relation to its disputed role in the creation of the League of Nations and UNESCO. Since the 1950s it has not had either the personnel or the resources to develop a lobbying strategy in an environment in which the decision-makers and the effectiveness of their
decisions have become increasingly elusive. This function has become primarily associated with the UIA publications rather than the UIA as an institution and the same could well be said of its current web strategy.

UIA as Coordinator ("Real Estate Agent"): The UIA has never sought any role that might be associated with attribution of "territory" to organizations in order to avoid duplication between them. It has been solicited for similar roles, notably attribution of ISBN numbers, top level web domain management (.INT). However it is interesting that with the advent of the web and virtual reality, many bodies are acquiring real estate in virtual reality (cf geocities project), and the UIA is well positioned to offer access to such virtual territory.

E: SERVICE ROLES

There are now a number of initiatives on the web that respond to the service needs of NGO-type organizations.

UIA as Service Centre ("Restaurant du Coeur"): The UIA was created to facilitate the activities of nongovernmental bodies. It has never had the facilities or personnel to provide full-scale one-on-one assistance to bodies requesting such help, especially those at the national level. It has always provided occasional advice in response to telephone and mail inquiries, when resources permitted. However, through the web it has been able to offer cost-effective worldwide access to responses to “frequently asked questions” to organizations in many locations. Many such responses are also provided by e-mail.

UIA as Employment Centre ("Job Centre"): The UIA has never sought to develop this role, although occasional use of the review has been made for this purpose. However, with the advent of the web, it is clear that CVs/Job-announcements can be made available on the web at minimal cost to assist those seeking employment. For example, a unified organizations job market could be developed online where opportunity announcements would brought together. It should be noted that there are already a strong number of initiatives in the employment information market (including Reed / Elsevier). Some attempt to duplicate much UIA work -- already offering a daily email service listing non-profit jobs (although most are with USA based organizations and rarely reach the international level).

UIA as Advice Bureau ("Help Desk"): The UIA has always endeavoured to provide advice in response to queries although this is increasingly difficult as the queries become complex, beyond the UIA’s focus, or numerous. Several members of staff are assiduous in responding to e-mail queries – notably those evoked by the problems entries on the UIA website. To the extent possible, users are pointed to help pages concerning “frequently asked questions”.

F: PRODUCTION ROLES

UIA as Producer ("Knowledge Factory"): The UIA has always sustained itself economically through sale of information products and services – effectively as a SME. However, in the emerging information society, this function is increasingly appreciated as an important aspect of the knowledge economy and the associated e-commerce opportunities. In this spirit, the UIA has already committed major forms of editing to teleworking at a distance – a mode of work that may prove fundamental to its operations in the future.
G: COMMUNITY ROLES

UIA as Community ("Intentional Community"): The success of the UIA over many decades has to a significant degree been due to the quality of the work environment, irrespective of its material features. This has ensured the presence of personnel over unusual lengths of time, working more as a community than as a conventional, hierarchically structured, team. In this respect it has long anticipated many of the developments in organization dynamics that are only gradually being incorporated into other kinds of organization.
The strategic dilemmas above emerge from conflict between different visions of the statutory UIA role and obligations – whether in principle or in practice. These might be summarized as follows. In each case an effort has been made to show the link to a statutory or traditional role, whilst contrasting an impractical, outdated version of that role with the feasible variant in the emerging information society.

A: INFORMATION ROLES

UIA as Referral Service (“Telephone Exchange”): The UIA has always sought to provide this facility through its publications. Its personnel have always endeavoured to respond to telephone and mail requests for contacts. However, with the advent of the web, this facility has already been dramatically extended to assist enquirers around the world to make contact with bodies in their field of interest – whether to access their website or to e-mail directly to them.

UIA as Monitoring Agency (“Observatory”): As a clearing-house, this has been a major role of the UIA in relation to international organizations and meetings. This was for a time extended to reports of international conferences. It currently includes monitoring of problems and strategies that are the concern of international constituencies. This role has taken a new form with the presentation of the results on the web using visualization and virtual reality techniques.

UIA as Library: (“Alexandrian Library”): The UIA was created in 1910 within the context of such a vision (Mundaneum, FID, etc). From 1950 it moved away from that vision and in 1999 adopted a policy of non-retention of physical archives on organizational correspondence (proofs, etc). Since the 1970s, it has never been able to support a traditional documentalist role. It has never had adequate facilities for library-type consultation by visiting researchers. Such facilities are significantly underfunded even in the largest libraries. However, through the web the UIA has been able to offer cost-effective worldwide access to its databases by researchers in many locations. The switch to electronic media also opens up the possibility of storage of quantities of information that could not have been envisaged in paper form.

UIA as Evaluator (“Inquisitor”): The UIA has a statutory obligation to be neutral in its documenting of international bodies. Its “evaluation” of international bodies has always been restricted to their degree of internationality, with cautious comment on bodies that are suspected as fronts for other interests. Both UNITAR and UNESCO have requested UIA for evaluations of international bodies, but these have been limited to a very specific investigation of certain UNESCO NGOs. Some major international bodies use the presence of a profile in the Yearbook as a criterion for assessing the merits of communication/relationship with NGOs that solicit them. The UIA has however resisted
pressures from governmental bodies to censor information on organizations associated with certain regimes (East bloc, Taiwan, South Africa, etc). The UIA has emphasized provision of adequate information to users to enable them to make their own evaluations, notably from contextual linkages.
B: EDUCATIONAL ROLES

UIA as Learning Centre (“International University”): The UIA operated an “International University” during the 1920s in the form of a summer institute with organization executives offering lectures. The UIA collaborated with the ILO Turin Centre in the 1960s in an effort to develop training seminars. The UIA does not have staff specifically trained for such educational roles and the staff it has, with appropriate competence, have other obligations. This has also constrained any extensive use of stagiaires. However, through the web it has been possible for others to offer cost-effective worldwide access to UIA data to students, packaged into the form of courses. It is clear that with minimal effort, the existing UIA staff can develop such interfaces.

UIA as Research Centre (“Think Tank”): The UIA has traditionally invested in information-related research as an extension of its documentary work. This has also extended to meeting-related research, whether in terms of statistics or meeting dynamics. As such the UIA had status as a research centre in Belgium for a time. However, with the advent of computers and the web, this work has increasingly focused on new ways of presenting and communicating information on organizations and their concerns, in order to facilitate their work in new ways – notably by rendering their challenges more comprehensible. The recent major contract with the EU, was a research contract.

C: FACILITATION ROLES

UIA as Market Place (“Organizational Bazaar”): Part of the purpose of providing information on international bodies is to facilitate exchange between them. This exchange can be extended to purchase of services and bartering arrangements. The UIA has never been able to facilitate this activity directly. However, through the web and the recent advent of e-commerce techniques, it is now possible to offer cost-effective worldwide access to NGO products (print, electronic, video, posters, T-shirts, etc) -- as is being done by a number of online facilities. It is clear that with minimal effort, the existing UIA staff can develop such interfaces.

UIA as Consultancy (“Organizational Clinic”): The UIA has never sought to develop this role but has, throughout its existence, provided advice on request whenever possible. Occasionally such advice has been commissioned and has taken the form of conventional consultancy reports. However, with the advent of the web, it is clear that more specific advice can be offered more effectively to bodies requiring it wherever they are located. Aspects of this facility are already developed in the use of FAQ sheets and standard e-mail responses.

UIA as Facilitator (“Group Therapist”): The UIA mandate to facilitate the activities of international bodies has primarily focused on information. From the 1960s to the 1970s, it also focused on the improvement in the quality of international conference organization. Following the professionalization of this sector, the UIA concern has shifted to the dynamics of international meetings, as reflected in the themes of Associate Member meetings and participation as a communications consultant in meetings of other bodies. However, in a web environment, such facilitation is susceptible to new forms of catalysis using a range of new kinds of software.
D: ASSOCIATIVE ROLES

**UIA as Conference (“Parliament of NGOs”):** In the early part of the 20th century the UIA experimented with this strategy and duly entered into conflict with other such initiatives. Since the 1950s, the number of such gatherings, whether regular or ad hoc, has increased. The dynamics between such initiatives have been as significant as their results. The UIA is not organized to offer a more representative conference process, even if it were appropriate or possible to effectively marginalize other such initiatives by so doing. However, through the web and the recent advent of electronic conferencing, it is now possible for the UIA to offer cost-effective worldwide access to NGO discussion fora, as is being done by a number of online facilities. It is clear that with minimal effort, the existing staff can develop such interfaces. The UIA has already established one variant of this facility around the specific issue and strategy profiles in its databases.

**UIA as Celebrator (“Temple”):** The UIA has never sought to develop contexts in which associative values and issues are celebrated, nor has it ever had the public relations personnel to officiate at such events, or facilitate their dynamics. However, it has always used its review to collect materials celebrating associative life, and the web provides a much more cost-effective vehicle through which to do so.

**UIA as Arbitration Tribunal (“Palais de Justice”):** The UIA has never sought to develop this role (along the lines of the services offered to corporations by ICC), nor does it have the personnel qualified to assist in this way. However, with the advent of the web, it is possible that the UIA could provide an interface between interested parties and qualified arbitration services.

**UIA as Funding Agency (“Bank”):** The UIA has never sought to be a funding agency, whether to assist developing country NGOs, students, or international programs. Nor has it ever had the resources to do so, even though it has been erroneously listed as a source of such funds in a number of directories. However, with the advent of the web, the UIA is in a better position to enable those in need to discover and make contact with relevant sources of funding (and already does so in response to e-mail inquiries).

**UIA as Regulator (“Police”):** The UIA has never sought to regulate the international community whether or not this role was desired. In its early years it placed some emphasis on the need for coordination amongst the many international bodies although this has since proven to be non-viable even amongst UN agencies. However, with the information it provides and notably as it is presented on the web, the UIA contributes to the self-regulation and self-coordination process.

**UIA as Publicist (“Arsenal”):** The UIA has never undertaken massive campaigns in support of NGOs using an arsenal of facts and arguments. However, it has always used its review to collect such materials, and the web provides a much more cost-effective vehicle through which to do so.

**UIA as Lobbyist (“Courtier”):** The UIA invested heavily in this role in its early years, notably in relation to its disputed role in the creation of the League of Nations and UNESCO. Since the 1950s it has not had either the personnel or the resources to develop a lobbying strategy in an environment in which the decision-makers and the effectiveness of their
decisions have become increasingly elusive. This function has become primarily associated with the UIA publications rather than the UIA as an institution and the same could well be said of its current web strategy.

**UIA as Coordinator (“Real Estate Agent”):** The UIA has never sought any role that might be associated with attribution of “territory” to organizations in order to avoid duplication between them. It has been solicited for similar roles, notably attribution of ISBN numbers, top level web domain management (.INT). However it is interesting that with the advent of the web and virtual reality, many bodies are acquiring real estate in virtual reality (cf geocities project), and the UIA is well positioned to offer access to such virtual territory.

**E: SERVICE ROLES**

There are now a number of initiatives on the web that respond to the service needs of NGO-type organizations.

**UIA as Service Centre (“Restaurant du Coeur”):** The UIA was created to facilitate the activities of nongovernmental bodies. It has never had the facilities or personnel to provide full-scale one-on-one assistance to bodies requesting such help, especially those at the national level. It has always provided occasional advice in response to telephone and mail inquiries, when resources permitted. However, through the web it has been able to offer cost-effective worldwide access to responses to “frequently asked questions” to organizations in many locations. Many such responses are also provided by e-mail.

**UIA as Employment Centre (“Job Centre”):** The UIA has never sought to develop this role, although occasional use of the review has been made for this purpose. However, with the advent of the web, it is clear that CVs/Job-announcements can be made available on the web at minimal cost to assist those seeking employment. For example, a unified organizations job market could be developed online where opportunity announcements would brought together. It should be noted that there are already a strong number of initiatives in the employment information market (including Reed / Elsevier). Some attempt to duplicate much UIA work -- already offering a daily email service listing non-profit jobs (although most are with USA based organizations and rarely reach the international level).

**UIA as Advice Bureau (“Help Desk”):** The UIA has always endeavoured to provide advice in response to queries although this is increasingly difficult as the queries become complex, beyond the UIA’s focus, or numerous. Several members of staff are assiduous in responding to e-mail queries – notably those evoked by the problems entries on the UIA website. To the extent possible, users are pointed to help pages concerning “frequently asked questions”.

**F: PRODUCTION ROLES**

**UIA as Producer (“Knowledge Factory”):** The UIA has always sustained itself economically through sale of information products and services – effectively as a SME. However, in the emerging information society, this function is increasingly appreciated as an important aspect of the knowledge economy and the associated e-commerce opportunities. In this spirit, the UIA has already committed major forms of editing to teleworking at a distance – a mode of work that may prove fundamental to its operations in the future.
G: COMMUNITY ROLES

UIA as Community ("Intentional Community"): The success of the UIA over many decades has to a significant degree been due to the quality of the work environment, irrespective of its material features. This has ensured the presence of personnel over unusual lengths of time, working more as a community than as a conventional, hierarchically structured, team. In this respect it has long anticipated many of the developments in organization dynamics that are only gradually being incorporated into other kinds of organization.
## Varieties of "Union of International Associations"
*(24 Oct. 1999)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UIA</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Periodicity</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>'Associations' meaning</th>
<th>'International' meaning</th>
<th>'Union' meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>Representat. Legal status Services Symposia Statutory exist.</td>
<td>Ad hoc</td>
<td>UN/IGOs INGOs Full Members</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>JR, GD, TJ, CD,NL</td>
<td>Representation IGO Relations Services</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Legal bodies Consult. relat.</td>
<td>Treaties Conventions Representation</td>
<td>Ratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>Revue TA</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>INGOs Libraries</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>JR, GD, PG</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Vie Inter. (1910)</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Cross-border membership/activity</td>
<td>INGO readership opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2</td>
<td>Calendar Statistics Data services</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Conf. industry Ass. Members</td>
<td>Sales Membership Services</td>
<td>GdC,RT, SH, MG, CD, N L</td>
<td>Information NGO promo.</td>
<td>1952 (1910)</td>
<td>Meeting participation</td>
<td>Cross-border travel</td>
<td>Collation of information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 6a (Table 1)

**Degrees of fulfilment of UIA operational and strategic objectives**

This matrix is used in Table 2 to code current and proposed UIA initiatives in an effort to identify those which shift the strategic centre of gravity towards A and away from D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Optimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective resource use</td>
<td>One-to-one (individual letters / requests)</td>
<td>Many-to-one (UIA input of responses)</td>
<td>One-to-many (publications / on-line databases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy determination</td>
<td>Driven by competitive market (commercialized / professionalized)</td>
<td>Driven by int. policy fashions (uncontrolled requests)</td>
<td>Driven by UIA - selected opportunistic contracts/subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic viability</td>
<td>Cost sink (minimum multiplier effects)</td>
<td>Cost sink (with multiplier effects)</td>
<td>Cost recovery (minimum multiplier effects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative advantage</td>
<td>Competition with multiple others (better resourced / more competent)</td>
<td>Provision of generalized services (low-level competition)</td>
<td>Strategic competition with significant others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>One-off</td>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>Periodic renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration policy (partnerships)</td>
<td>Mutual undermining (coalition games)</td>
<td>Soliciting support at expense of others (competitive hype)</td>
<td>Selective strategic assistance by UIA (minimal benefit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content coherence</td>
<td>Provision of information available elsewhere</td>
<td>Selective inform. Consultancy (how-to advice)</td>
<td>Comprehensive / Complementary information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination / Delocalization</td>
<td>Local / Regional UIA effort (marketing)</td>
<td>Local / Regional user initiative / participation</td>
<td>World-wide UIA effort (marketing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility / Exposure (UIA vs. UIA initiatives)</td>
<td>Visibility/Exposure of UIA to significant others</td>
<td>Visibility / Exposure of (UIA) initiatives to significant others</td>
<td>Widespread visibility / exposure of UIA initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance to others (incl. NGOs)</td>
<td>Sales at market rate</td>
<td>Selective discount to NGOs and others</td>
<td>Selective free services to NGOs and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff team</td>
<td>Hire-Fire (zero group learning)</td>
<td>Core person(s) + Hire-Fire (minimal group learning)</td>
<td>Team continuity (collective learning)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 6a (Table 1)

Degrees of fulfilment of UIA operational and strategic objectives

This matrix is used in Table 2 to code current and proposed UIA initiatives in an effort to identify those which shift the strategic centre of gravity towards A and away from D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Optimal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Effective resource use</td>
<td>One-to-one (individual letters / requests)</td>
<td>Many-to-one (UIA input of responses)</td>
<td>One-to-many (publications / on-line databases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Policy determination</td>
<td>Driven by competitive market (commercialized / professionalized)</td>
<td>Driven by int. policy fashions (uncontrolled requests)</td>
<td>Driven by UIA - selected opportunistic contracts/subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Economic viability</td>
<td>Cost sink (minimum multiplier effects)</td>
<td>Cost sink (with multiplier effects)</td>
<td>Cost recovery (minimum multiplier effects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Comparative advantage</td>
<td>Competition with multiple others (better resourced / more competent)</td>
<td>Provision of generalized services (low-level competition)</td>
<td>Strategic competition with significant others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Duration</td>
<td>One-off</td>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>Selective renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Collaboration policy (partnerships)</td>
<td>Mutual undermining (coalition games)</td>
<td>Soliciting support at expense of others (competitive hype)</td>
<td>Selective strategic assistance by UIA (minimal benefit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Content coherence</td>
<td>Provision of information available elsewhere</td>
<td>Selective inform. Consultancy (how-to advice)</td>
<td>Comprehensive / Complementary information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dissemination / Delocalization</td>
<td>Local / Regional UX effort (marketing)</td>
<td>Local / Regional user initiative / participation</td>
<td>World-wide UX effort (marketing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Visibility / Exposure (UX vs. UX initiatives)</td>
<td>Visibility / Exposure of UX to significant others</td>
<td>Visibility / Exposure of (UX) initiatives to significant others</td>
<td>Widespread visibility / exposure of UX initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Assistance to others (incl. NGOs)</td>
<td>Sales at market rate</td>
<td>Selective discount to NGOs and others</td>
<td>Selective free services to NGOs and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Staff team</td>
<td>Hire-Fire (zero group learning)</td>
<td>Core person(s) + Hire-Fire (minimal group learning)</td>
<td>Team continuity (collective learning)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
### Degrees of fulfilment of UIA operational and strategic objectives (by initiative)

The codes in the cells of this multi-part table are derived from Table 1 as a way of mapping the strategic focus of UIA with respect to a particular initiative.

#### Part A: Main publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective resource use</td>
<td>Policy determ.</td>
<td>Economic viability</td>
<td>Comparative advantage</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Collab. Policy</td>
<td>Content / Coherence</td>
<td>Dissemin. / Delocal.</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>Staff team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internaional organizations</td>
<td>B:Book-CD</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D ABC?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Orgs. (Fr)</td>
<td>B:Web</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D AB?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex 6b: Table 2: 5 March 1999 (Draft)
### Part B: Encyclopedia databases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective resource use</td>
<td>Policy determin.</td>
<td>Economic viability</td>
<td>Comparative advantage</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Collab. Policy</td>
<td>Content / Coherence</td>
<td>Dissemin. / Delocal.</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>Staff team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies</td>
<td>B:Book-CD A:Web</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B BA</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human values</td>
<td>B:Book-CD B:Web</td>
<td>B A</td>
<td>C A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B C</td>
<td>A BA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>DB DD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>B:Book-CD A:Web</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B BA</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (encyc.)</td>
<td>B:Book-CD B:Web</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B BA</td>
<td>A A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B CC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part C: Contacts and research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective resource use</td>
<td>Policy determin.</td>
<td>Economic viability</td>
<td>Comparative advantage</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Collab. Policy</td>
<td>Content / Coherence</td>
<td>Dissemin. / Delocal.</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>Staff team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspond. Orgs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clusters (FAIB, etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centres (MAI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGO (UN..) Contacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University contacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Friends of UIA&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web contacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys (question.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research / Papers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO legal status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal (TA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part D: Meetings and data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective resource use</td>
<td>Policy determin.</td>
<td>Economic viability</td>
<td>Comparative advantage</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Collab. Policy</td>
<td>Content / Coherence</td>
<td>Dissemin. / Delocal.</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>facilitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consulting</strong></td>
<td><strong>contracts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Requests</strong></td>
<td>(+visitors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web</strong></td>
<td><strong>initiatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DA</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TA</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DA</strong></td>
<td><strong>mailing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TA</strong></td>
<td><strong>mailing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>data</strong></td>
<td><strong>extracts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UIA Initiatives and Services

In reviewing the challenges of UIA services, notably in the light of the report of the UIA Working Group, there is need for a framework through which different initiatives, proposals and deficiencies can be evaluated.

One attempt to do so is reflected in an incomplete first draft of a set of tables (see Annex 6 on Degree of fulfilment of UIA operational and strategic objectives).

The essential dilemmas might be articulated as follows:

1. **Why UIA?** Where there is a need or demand on the part of some NGOs for services, the question is increasingly whether the UIA is the most appropriate body to respond to this demand. This is especially clear in the case of web-based initiatives. There is now an emergence of international web-based electronic umbrella organizations like APC, OneWorld, Threshold Foundation, etc. Each offers a particular pattern of services for NGOs interested in clusters of themes. Overlap, and competition for resources, between them is also significant.

2. **Web role?** The past 2-3 years have seen a phenomenal growth in NGO presence on the web, as indicated by the table of statistics (Annex 2 in Report of Information / Research Developments). This means that any proposal for NGO services, involving the UIA, needs to be seen within this context, especially since this context offers (for the first time) means of access to NGOs that are geographically distant from the traditional centres. The internet is a new publication and interaction paradigm. Structured impact can clearly be seen in the academic world, the world of governance (at all levels), the world of activism and associational processes and information / documentation world (among others). The UIA is already developing tools that will allow it to draw upon global human resources in the development and expansion of its work.

3. **UIA or its services?** It could be argued that the problem of many institutions is not to get information but to avoid information overload. The UIA’s web technique bypasses this problem. However it is not the UIA that is marketed, but the information provided by the UIA. The question is to what degree the user needs to be aware of the UIA in benefiting from the services provided by the UIA.

4. **Degree of service?** The UIA existing web presence already results in the generation of considerable e-mail traffic demanding further information and services from the UIA. The source may be NGOs, researchers, students, or people suffering personally from problems described in the UIA’s databases. The issue is with what degree of assiduity to respond to which requests given the time that this requires.

5. **Costs and priorities?** Fundamental questions with respect to any demand to the UIA for services are:
• (a) which requests can be made dependent on payment
• (b) at what (discounted?) rate
• (c) and who should perform these services
• (d) with what priority

6. **Web vs Saur?** The UIA has considerable web visibility across a wide range of subject areas. The web site has between 4,000 and 6,000 hits a day. This is scheduled to increase dramatically within the next months with the UIA’s on-line database facility. This is in effect more powerful marketing device than that commanded by Saur, because it reaches people and groups who use the web to articulate their need for more information. With respect to UIA marketing, it is important to distinguish between:

• (a) Saur’s own efforts
• (b) UIA direct marketing of products on the web
• (c) UIA indirect marketing of information on the web, that cites the UIA products as source
• (d) UIA direct and image marketing of other kinds

It is (d) which is currently the most costly in people-time and for which UIA has no appointed person, because of the costs involved for a person with the appropriate qualifications. Were any marketing campaign to be envisaged, the questions are:

• who would be targeted? Is the objective to “target”?
• with what objective? Are clear objectives appropriate in a complex environment where UIA visibility may be at the expense of UIA services?
• at what cost?
• with what degree of effectiveness in the UIA’s international context?

It could be argued that the level of sales of the Yearbook is being maintained as a result of marketing information which serves to draw in new associate members.

7. **Book (Saur?) dependency?** The information industry is in transition from purely book-based to a mix of book, CD and web. No clear formulas have emerged for any information producer to ensure the viability of their initiative in a context in which much information is made freely available. This has notable but unpredictable implications for the future of the Yearbook and the Calendar. The UIA’s current web experiments, notably using the Encyclopedia databases, are effectively being financed by contracts from the European Commission.

8. **Organization focus?** It is readily assumed that the UIA core mandate is focused on “organizations” and therefore the Yearbook – despite its essential inaccessibility to NGOs for cost reasons. However it is noteworthy that it is the past investment in the 4th edition of the Encyclopedia that has positioned the UIA so as to attract a considerable amount of issue-oriented new funding, and enables it to build on current contractual successes in making information more freely available. It could be argued that this does takes the UIA away from its core mandate, except for the fact that most of the information on “problems” and “strategies” is derived from those same organizations. Through the web each individual problem or strategy profile is linked back to such organizations. There are some 17816
organization-strategy links for example. The UIA is thus providing an interface through which web users are hyperlinked on towards organizations. The UIA web is thus serving not only as a gateway to information about organizations, it is serving as a gateway to organizations.

9. **Journal?** The role of Transnational Associations is a complex one. Its problems and possibilities have been reframed by the web. With respect to problems, this raises questions about charging, copyright and the need for a hardcopy version. With respect to possibilities, this offers a considerably wider audience and without constraints on article length.

10. **Nature of services to whom?** The UIA website is already responding to needs of individuals and organizations with a problem or interest, researchers and others in a multiplicity of as yet undefined categories beyond UIA’s traditional audience. With respect to:

   - (a) **Services to NGOs:** “NGOs” are at this point an increasingly blurred mix with an increasingly blurred range of foci. Different coalitions and interest groups have different foci. Is it in the UIA’s interest to compete to be “the focus” when so many others, with resources, are anxious to perform that role? How is the UIA to distinguish between what it would like to offer freely, at a discount, or at cost, or at cost-plus rates – and to whom?

   - (b) **Services to the commercial sector:** The role of the Calendar must necessarily evolve in a web environment with many competing variants. What is the UIA seeking to achieve by competing with commercial, specialized or subsidized calendar producers?

   - (c) **Services to academia:** With the increasing investment in the UIA bibliographical work, the relationship to academia has evolved – to the point that an active network of NGO researchers is now part of the processes of Yearbook vol 4 preparation. With the increasing availability of documents and data on the web, a much greater dialogue occurs with people having academic interests – in addition to practitioners and others. It would be a mistake to bracket the Encyclopedia as an academic product given the major institutional contracts that it has proved capable of generating.

11. **Participation?** The nature of the relationship with organizations is now changing within an information society. The providers and users of information are combining into new “provider-user” role. The current contract with the European Commission provides for the development of this facility (already being tested) which enables users to comment on (or even edit) entries via the web. This raises a more fundamental issue for the UIA of how what kinds of people collaborate with the UIA work in the future? Again, is it “with” the UIA or “within” some part of the information context maintained by the UIA?

12. **Fundamental dilemmas:** Implicit in all of the above, is the challenge for the UIA of:

   - (a) determining what constitutes effective action in terms of its mandate
   - (b) what financial concessions it wishes to make, at what cost, to those it deems in need of information services or other assistance
   - (c) what posture to adopt with respect to sponsorship arrangements which run the risk of detracting from the UIA’s image
• (d) what effort to put into responding to calls to essentially indifferent IGOs?
• (e) how to make best use of personnel or to pay for additional personnel in the light of a new pattern of requests.
The UIA is faced with an interesting strategic challenge composed of the following elements:

A: Multiplication of databases, websites and publications on "NGOs", "civil society" and "global issues":

Many of these are produced by NGOs, often in (aggressive) competition with each other
Many are more glossy than that of the UIA, focussing on design rather than content
Most are characterized above all by what they do not include in defining their understanding of the scope of NGO, civil society or issues of global concern
Each initiative has its own pattern of personalities, partners, supporters, etc
Some provide links to UIA data, some do not (for whatever reason)
Each is apparently crafted to focus a particular way of seeing the strategic challenge
Many are anxious to offer "services" and "facilities" of various kinds to NGOs

B: Multiplication of conferences purporting to deal with the above themes in some combination:

Typically focused around UN NGOs, and indifferent to other kinds of NGOs
Typically characterized by statements from key figures praising NGOs and their importance
Typically without any recommendations that lend themselves to practical implementation
Typically without adequate secretariats or follow-up procedures
Typically characterized by particular agendas that neglect previous initiatives and are neglected by the initiatives that follow them

C: Multiplication of contexts in which "NGOs", "civil society" and "global issues" are a focus of study:

Typically funded within university centres
Typically neglectful of the full range of NGO and other organizational phenomena
Typically focused on a particular pattern of issues
Typically avoiding any specific interest in international NGOs

In the above context, the UIA is well-positioned with respect to:

Maintaining significant long-term secretariat funding and skilled personnel
Producing advanced information products and services which meet a perceived need
Using these advantages to fund a comprehensive website (whose contents may be linked to or copied by other initiatives, effectively providing a service to them)
Developing strategic partners in the relevant fields of knowledge management
Comprehensiveness of its coverage of international nonprofit organizations of all kinds
Comprehensiveness of its coverage of global issues of all kinds
Comprehensiveness, and systematic nature, of its coverage of interlinkages between these items (taking the form of web hyperlinks)

In the above context, the UIA is NOT well-positioned with respect to:
Engaging in publicity campaigns about NGOs, other than via its information services
Engaging in campaigns to aggressively position the UIA with respect to other NGO actors
Engaging in campaigns to aggressively position the UIA with respect to the UN
Engaging in service activities to meet needs of NGOs -- other than those provided by its information products

These considerations raise the question of the interpretation of the UIA statutory mandate with respect to NGOs and global issues, dating back to its foundation. Points for consideration are:

**Secretariat:** The UIA secretariat has never been organized to provide services to NGOs, other than in the form of information. It has neither the funding base to provide free services nor the appropriate personnel. Since its foundation, it has been a knowledge management organization. It is not a lobbying organization and historically has demonstrated its weaknesses when it has attempted to adopt this role. Question: Should the UIA acquire new personnel and program priorities?

**Meaning of facilitation:** Historically this has been effectively fulfilled through information products, but less effectively fulfilled with respect to a broader category of "services". Question: Should the UIA be concerned with this broader category, especially when so many other bodies are anxious to take up roles in that respect?

**Meaning of visibility:** UNESCO is currently tortured by its own lack of visibility (debate of September 1999), suggesting that lesser bodies face a real challenge in increasing their visibility. Question: Should the UIA seek to be visible in new ways in aggressive competition with others, or should it focus on the visibility of what it can offer in the web environment of the future?

**Comprehensiveness:** The UIA has maintained and enhanced the founders focus on developing a comprehensive information framework for all types of international organization and concern, as well as with the actions to deal with them. It is in this area of knowledge organization and management (a key discipline for the information era of the 21st century) that the UIA’s expertise lies. It is a competence that engenders financial support on a longer-term, rather than a sporadic, basis. Question: Should the UIA not concentrate on, and develop, its fields of demonstrated strategic competence rather than venture into areas which others are anxious to work competitively or for profit?

**Positioning:** Intergovernmental institutions are bombarded by NGO solicitations and faced with many challenges to their budgets because of past inadequacies. IGOs are adept at forming their own temporary strategic partnerships in violation of the comprehensiveness to which the UIA is committed. Question: Does the UIA need to devote lobbying effort to position itself in new ways with respect to such institutions, which historically cannot be said to have demonstrated more than token interest in the UIA's initiatives?