REPORT OF INFORMATION / RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Prepared on the occasion of the UIA General Assembly, 20 October 2001
(covering the period since the General Assembly, 23-24 October 1998)

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I. PUBLICATION ON PAPER (current)

A. Yearbook of International Organizations: Regular editing and publishing of the following editions:

- 36th (1999-2000): Vol 1 split into two parts, because of size
  Currently complete with the exception of the new 450-page Volume 5 on *Statistics, Visualizations and Patterns* (out in December 2001). This volume is a major effort to recover and reconcile statistics from all past editions of the Yearbook (and statistical studies based on it in *Transnational Associations*) and to present them with appropriate graphs and other techniques. For this reason the UIA has allocated funds in excess of those provided by SAUR to scan, format and correct the data. Of particular importance is the fact that since the 1950s the statistical base has evolved with new categories of organizations requiring much effort to reconcile apparent inconsistencies. In addition to graphically representing tabular data, the publication will also include an extensive, and unique, range of images of networks of organization, problems and strategies.

B. Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential: Work on the electronic version of some databases in this publication continued under contract, as described below. No paper version was foreseen, although tentative discussions continue.

C. Who's Who in International Organizations:


D. International Congress Calendar: Work on this quarterly publication has continued in a regular manner. It is now in its 42nd year. An online version is now operational (see below). The statistics prepared from it annually, were presented for the first time with graphic and colour enhancement in 2001. This was welcomed by the Associate Members for whom this publication is exclusively prepared.

E. Transnational Associations: This is the subject of separate reports by Paul Ghils on editorial issues, as well as by Joel Fischer on further electronic adaptation.

II. PUBLICATIONS ON CD-ROM (current)

A. Yearbook Plus: *International Organizations and Biographies*: The annual edition was produced as planned in the normal manner in October of each year in 1998 through 2001 (7th edition). It included part of the revised text from the *Whos Who in International Organizations*. 
The issue of security against abuse of UIA CD’s remains a matter of active concern – given the ease with which CDs (and therefore the UIA CDs) can be copied.

B. Encyclopedia Plus: Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential: The production of a CD version within the context of the contract through which some Encyclopedia databases were currently being developed was excluded in preference to web publication. It remains a possibility.

C. International Congress Calendar: Although technically feasible, this is not envisaged for commercial and security reasons.

III. PUBLICATION ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB (current)

The main UIA website has been extensively revised and redesigned – although much work remains to be done to unify the presentation and improve navigability.

In addition to the UIA’s in-house network server, a distinction should be made between:

A. Static page server: During the period since 1998, the UIA has maintained up to 11,000 static pages placed on the server of the non-UIA service provider (currently located in Amsterdam). With some significant exceptions relating to current materials, these are maintained on a relatively low priority basis. They generate a significant amount of feedback and serve a major marketing function. A major shift was made during 1999 from access offered to demo versions of the databases to dynamic access. Many static pages were downgraded to point through to the dynamic pages – and more recently deleted. The period July-October 1999 saw the relatively traumatic bankruptcy of the Agora service provider (a cooperative of which the UIA was a founding member – thanks to UIA Member James Wellesley-Wesley -- that was partly housed in the UIA offices) and a switch to the commercial service provider that has itself since been absorbed into a multinational service provider. Fortunately this did not affect the UIA site.

B. Dynamic page server: The UIA also makes available information from its databases dynamically on a UIA in-house server dedicated to that task and connected to the Amsterdam service. Most UIA databases are now “accessible” on the web. However the only databases freely accessible to “Guests” are those relating to the Encyclopedia (namely the Problems, Strategies, Human development and Values databases). The other databases are only accessible minimally or for trial or for test purposes. However SAUR agreed in July 2000 to a system whereby the UIA makes available the Organizations database under subscription that is integrated into the marketing of the book and CD versions. This was started in September 2000 with the first paid subscriber from 26 September.

It is worth noting the understandable explosion in activity of international organizations on the Web. Some 19,951 organizations now have websites. 21,762 have e-mail at their main offices, and 2,187 have e-mail at their regional offices. Of those having website, the evolution has been as follows:

- January 1996: ~300
- October 1997: 3,600+
- August 1998: 8,000+
- August 1999: ~12,000
August 2000: ~16,000
August 2001: ~20,000

Statistics on access to UIA websites are presented in Annex 1. The UIA dynamic site currently has over 25,000 registered users.

With respect to the online databases on the dynamic server (at http://www.uia.org/data.htm):

- **Databases and access:**
  - Since September 2000, UIA databases for international organizations, world problems, strategies, human development and human values have been online and interlinked – extensive access is free of charge. Organization data is made available under subscription.
  - The online version of the international meetings database is virtually completed and was presented to Associate Members in October 2001.
  - Integration of UIA information is now at a historical point (after nearly a century of effort) – with all its databases interlinked as a rich network of profiles.
  - Users can now provide comments on specific profiles that are immediately integrated into the database for access by other users.
  - A new computer proof process has been developed to communicate more effectively with all international organizations profiled in the Yearbook. A notable feature is that it gives each organization a unique password enabling them to consult their own entry on the web -- as well as that of any organization in their network that they cite as collaborators. For the first time, it offers organizations a way of using the Yearbook free of charge without undermining the contract with SAUR. Work has been started on the possibility of allowing international organizations to update their profiles electronically.
  - Access via visual displays (maps) continues to be enhanced (see below).

- **Technical improvements:**
  - The databases have been successfully switched to a new server in the period November 2000-February 2001, because of demand and the weaknesses of the previous configuration. However because of weaknesses characteristic of any software package, this remains an area of continuing major concern.
  - Much effort has gone into increasing security features (notably against different forms of abuse including excessive copying and virus attacks). This remains an area of major concern.
  - Major software restructuring has been done to focus on user management and provide specific and variable access rights for different categories of paying or non-paying users, whether for marketing/trial purposes, to encourage organizations to supply/check information, to limit possibilities of abuse, or to respect contractual relations with SAUR.
- **Associated facilities**
  - A secure **on-line payment system** has been developed and installed, with confirmation of purchase arriving by e-mail. It is integrated with the UIA price-list and a **currency conversion** facility. Adaptation to the **euro** has already been implemented. This reduces workload and the use of paper and facilitates update of prices.
  - Users can now **sponsor editorial work** on single entries or on whole databases through online payments. This micro-sponsoring facility is an extension of the new online payment facility and allows even small amounts (eg 1 euro)
  - Users are now able to enable users to **sponsor distribution of unsold copies** of the Yearbook that may otherwise be pulped
  - **Discussion fora** have been created for users (at [http://db.uia.org/forum/default.asp](http://db.uia.org/forum/default.asp)), and for Associate Members, notably as a means of handling standard queries. It is indexed by search engines.
  - Significant progress has been made in relation to **multimedia** facilities (see below)
  - Users can now obtain free **automatic translations** of UIA web pages from English into 8 languages (Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Portuguese). This has been extended to the database profiles. Other possibilities are being considered.

User response from around the world to these facilities is satisfactory. UIA information services are widely indexed by web search engines.

**IV. PROJECT INITIATIVES**

- **European Commission:**
  - Information Context for Biodiversity Conservation: Work on this DG-XIII contract (January 1998-December 1999) proceeded satisfactorily with respect to development of the Problems and Strategies databases (see Annex 2 for further details). The contract was extended through to 30 April 2000 to permit completion of certain tasks and to enable use of unspent funds. Work on the web access facilities was satisfactorily. A special web access address has been registered at [www.ecolynx.org](http://www.ecolynx.org) for this project. Work on the multi-media extensions of this project is proceeding less rapidly, but the test interfaces already suggest dramatic new approaches to access to UIA data (see demo).
  - Contract follow-up: In the period after completion of the EU 5th Framework project on Biodiversity, and prior to the 6th Framework (now being released in October 2001), a visit to a EU authority was arranged by Marc Luyckx to identify strategic opportunities for the UIA. This produced the strong recommendation that UIA should partner with a “major company” and should only focus on large budget proposals (in excess of 5 million euro) -- a major feat for any nonprofit organization. Several initiatives were undertaken in conformity with this
recommendation: Bertelsman (competitor of SAUR), two Dutch companies, discussions with a key IBM representative, a UK company, and with a Belgacom representative. However, in conformity with this recommendation, it is appropriate to recall the advantage that UIA has in its relationship with SAUR (itself part of a “major company”). Possibilities of submitting a joint proposal were discussed with the SAUR representative in July 2001.

- EU-India Economic Cross-Cultural Programme: A project under this programme has been drafted together with Development Alternatives and offices of the Programme’s offices in Brussels and New Delhi. The call for proposals on this matter has been postponed by the Commission.

- EU Fifth Framework Call for Proposals: This new call was put out by the European Commission in March 1999:
  
  A number of possibilities, complementary to the UIA’s INFO2000, infoDev and IHEAL initiatives, were considered for submission.

  FET Open Short Proposals (EU Future and Emerging Technologies section of the Information Society Technologies programme of the EU Fifth Framework) : Cultivating Knowledge Ecosystems, in collaboration with 1 NGO and 2 SMEs; submitted 15 September 1999. Amount requested: 100,000 euros. This was rejected in April 2000.

- Interactive Health Ecology Access Links (IHEAL) Project: The UIA was a sub-consultant to the NGO UNED-UK, which had been funded by the European Commission (DG-XI) to support work in preparation for the June 1999 Conference of European Environment and Health Ministers. The UIA was responsible for the text content of a participative web database (extension of the Encyclopedia); others were responsible for a GIS (mapping) component and organization database. This was a pilot project solely to provide a demonstration at the Healthy Planet Forum, the NGO event that ran parallel to the Conference of Ministers in June 1999. The estimated total budget for the project is 63,888 EUR (£42,938), of which the 23,526 EUR was allocated to the development of UIA databases. No further funds were obtained for further development of the project.

- InfoDev (World Bank): Work on this project proposal to the World Bank was completed and submitted under the title: Interactive Contextual Environmental Planning Tool (InterCEPT) for developing countries. Amount requested: $250,000. After evaluation, the project was accepted in June 1999 as a “highly ranked proposal awaiting funding” and so listed on on the Bank’s website. It was removed from the poll of such projects in March 2000 since no funds had been made available.

- Rural Development Information: The UIA has continued its discussion with various groups associated with rural and community development projects (in Scotland, Palestine, India and Australia) concerning linkage (and distance learning) between a virtual community (Internet) and "real" local communities, using the development of one to support the development of another. This would be a further extension of the INFO2000 / infoDev initiatives. Less emphasis was given to these possibilities since June 1999.

- MyTown: During her last visit to Australia, Nadia McLaren initiated discussions with the MyTown consortium based in Melbourne. MyTown is an online empowerment resource for local community development. It is currently in pilot planning phase, under the support of major
corporate sponsors. Provisional access to the UIA databases is offered through the MyTown website.

- **TRACC**: Tentative negotiations are underway to determine the feasibility of an Encyclopedia of Transnational Criminal Organization. This is a project of the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (American University, Washington DC) introduced by UIA to SAUR, but which may offer the possibilities for a partnership using materials from the UIA Encyclopedia.

- **Congrex**: The UIA has been approached by Congrex, a leading international conference organizer, with a view to co-sponsoring an annual conference series in Paris (an “Association Forum”) for association executives (see Annex 3). Initially the first in the series was envisaged for November 2002. However the organizational and financial implications, and unresolved concerns about participation and objectives, as well as the number of meetings undertaken by UIA currently (and their staffing implications) meant that further negotiations have been postponed until after this General Assembly.

V. FUTURE PUBLISHING DEVELOPMENTS

A. CD and Paper publications

Following with SAUR, it has been tentatively agreed to initiate a **historical series** of publications on CD and/or paper. An initial evaluation prior to the GALE takeover resulted in a negative decision. Subsequent discussions indicate that this can continue to be explored. In addition to an earlier proposal for profiles of defunct organizations no longer published in the current Yearbook, these might include scanned versions of the following early UIA publications:


Possibilities of a future edition of the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* on CD continue to be discussed with SAUR.

B. Future publication on the World Wide Web

The UIA is still in process of shifting from focus on the static server to a hybrid focus in which users of the static pages are referred to databases accessible from the dynamic server. This involves:

- User authentication (password, etc) through which access to particular databases will be restricted according to a wide range of marketing, partnership, sponsorship and editorial needs.
- Ability of a distant user to correct, supplement or criticize entries as a whole in any database, or any field in that entry
- Ability to display back to the user all comments already received on an entry, by field (with the possibility of e-mail contact with other users supplying comments)
• Ability to redisplay the entry with comments incorporated into the body of the description by field to provide an overview of the amended entry
• Ability to qualify comments (eg "5-star", "3-star", "0-star") according to a system of accreditation
• Ability for distant editors to edit particular entries.

Further work is required on this facility but it is currently being tested through open access to numerous users

As indicated above, the subscription access to the Organizations database over the web is being extended to the Calendar database. These subscriptions will both be handled in a minimal e-commerce mode, namely by traditional invoicing for a password, rather than via credit card transactions. The contractual relationship with SAUR for the Calendar is likely to be handled differently from that for the Organizations.

For all databases, experiments will continue on the degree of access offered to “Guests” vs to various categories of users (at various rates).

Other sources of web income envisaged from database use:

• **Click-through revenue**: Dynamic pages can be generated offering access to users to other web sites by clicking through. Where the facility then accessed by user offers revenue for such referral, the UIA can earn income from passing users on in this way. Typically this would be appropriate in the case bibliographical information (amazon.com) or web search engines (google.com). This is more appropriate when the facility does not require the use of special logos. Experiments with this were briefly interesting but ceased dramatically as part of the dot.com financial crash in 2000.

• **Banner advertising**: A small experiment has been conducted with the use of banner advertising on a single static page. This is designed to generate income from advertisers when users access the page on which the advertisement is running. The issue here is the obtrusive nature of the banner and the relevance of the advertising. Banner advertising can be better and more appropriately focused in the case of the Calendar database.

**VI. PUBLISHING AND MARKETING**

**A. Contractual relationships with SAUR**

The UIA has had a mutually satisfactory relationship with its publisher K G Saur Verlag (Munich) since the early 1980s (see Annex 4). Klaus Saur remains intimately engaged and recognized by the international reference libraries (eg his relation to IFLA) and therefore continues to be a logical partner. SAUR was acquired by Reed Elsevier some 10 years ago. In November 2000 it was sold to Gale Research (Detroit), part of the Thomson Group. Gale has long been the publisher of a principal competitor of the UIA Yearbook of International Organizations in the USA, namely the Encyclopedia of Associations. However, such is the relationship between competing bodies in this market, there have been occasions in the past when Gale was distributing UIA publications for SAUR.
This major change gave rise to much discussion between SAUR and GALE and SAUR and UIA regarding the intentions of GALE and the probable treatment of the Yearbook as marketed with the GALE Encyclopedia. The following points should be noted:

- GALE is a major marketer of reference books, and therefore technically this is excellent for improved sales of the Yearbook, especially in the USA

- SAUR has been acquired by GALE as an independent publishing house because of its performance. All parties recognize that it would be foolish for GALE to intervene unnecessarily – at least in the short term.

- SAUR is extremely keen to continue to benefit from the collaboration with the UIA and has been very attentive to UIA concerns, some of which they share

- Contracts are negotiated between UIA and SAUR, not with GALE

- GALE has sought economies of scale by printing and binding in the USA, necessitating a change in format from A4. This is the case with the current edition of the Yearbook. This poses new shipping problems.

- GALE produces and markets only a relatively limited range of CD-ROMs to any degree but does have a very strong online service

- GALE has sought to purchase data from the Yearbook as part of a “collaborative relationship”. The UIA has refused. GALE notably has an editorial policy of buying data from any convenient source and selling it on to any buyers. The UIA refusal caused some stress.

- As part of improving the relationship, SAUR has made proposals for other publications, notably a new hardcover edition of the UIA Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential.

Given the events of 11th September 2001, it is of course absolutely unclear what will be the effects on the global economy, on the US economy, on library budgets, and on purchase of European books by American libraries (a “loyalty factor”). Consequently it remains unclear what will be the situation for the UIA. According to a preliminary economic assessment issued in October 2001 by the World Bank, the terrorist attacks in the USA will negatively affect the already dim forecast of global economic growth for the next two years, and will severely impact upon the growth of developing countries worldwide.

B. Sales and marketing through SAUR/GALE

Reported sales levels have been maintained in a difficult market, possibly due to the web marketing effectively undertaken through the UIA static and dynamic pages on the web. SAUR is clearly impressed at the staying power of the Yearbook in particular, and of UIA publications in general.

As indicated above, these are exceptionally uncertain times and how sales will be affected by the combination of the foreseen recession and the GALE marketing strategy are a matter of concern for the coming period.
C. Internet marketing through UIA

The UIA staff has built up considerable in-house familiarity with internet marketing skills. These have yet to be applied systematically because of the need to implement facilities to make the online system as user friendly as possible and to handle a variety of users with different financial arrangements. Internet marketing represents a considerable advantage over conventional paper-based marketing in terms of cost and distribution – especially for markets thinly distributed worldwide.

A significant issue relating to marketing, given the size, complexity and scope of the UIA web site, has been the allocation of resources to its management, notably from a design and navigability perspective, especially the integration of the static and dynamic sites. Some resources have been allocated to this but much remains to be done.

The work on non-text media (see below) is expected to prove a fruitful form of interaction with a wider audience.

A discussion paper on the issues facing UIA was prepared by William Martin, a Scottish colleague with experience in this area, following his visit to the UIA and presented to a recent Council meeting.

In response to the many opportunities of the web, the UIA has developed (partially in response to the subscriber needs suggested by SAUR) a range of user categories:

- Non-paying users:
  - guest/trial user
  - registered user
  - international organizations
- Paying users:
  - name/password user
  - IP user
  - IP range user (for large institutions)

Of the 63 paying subscribers to Yearbook Online, 20 are UN institutions (clients negotiated by SAUR, not within the framework of consultative status relations), with remainder being universities, research institutes, convention bureaux and other bodies.

Users of both the UIA’s static and dynamic web facility are located in every country of the world ensuring significant visibility of the UIA in ways that were not previously possible.

D. Web “launch”

The UIA has committed to “launching” its website in one form or another. To date this has been done through various gradualist techniques. UIA web exposure is good considering the low level launch activities, with links to our site and resources from a wide range of constituencies – whether on the initiative of the responsible web managers or through prompting by Joel Fischer. However much of the organization data on the web quickly becomes stale, either due to loss of funding or lack of initiative. Thus UIA does need to "promote" / launch when it is ready to do so in order to make its authoritative presence known and felt in the internet environment. "Start up's" in this area are able to garner attention / success because they promote widely and loudly.
E. Unsold copies

The pulping by SAUR of the unsold copies of the regular publications continues to be a source of regret. Two initiatives have been undertaken in this respect:

- A UIA staff member, Tömás J Fülöpp, undertook to transport 20 copies from the SAUR depot in Germany to Slovakia for distribution to NGO networks there and to bring back an equivalent number from the German depot to the UIA Secretariat for distribution from there

- As noted earlier, a facility has been made available on the UIA web site to enable users to sponsor distribution of unsold copies

VII. COMPUTER FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A. In-house (database management, publication production, accounting, mailing)

The extensive UIA computer system continues to give satisfactory service. Although there have been some serious system failures, these have not been unusual for such a system and downtime has been very limited -- thanks above all to the in-house maintenance skills of Joel Fischer as de facto system administrator. Vigilance is however required with regard to security-related issues and back-ups. It is important to recall the degree to which UIA database maintenance, publication production, accounting, marketing, mailings, e-mail, and web research are dependent on this system:

- **Workstation hardware** naturally continues to require replacement or upgrading, notably to provide web and e-mail access from workstations, and significantly in order to enable further development of web and multimedia facilities. This upgrading process was also a response to problems potentially associated with the Y2K issue (only minor problems resulted at the time). A sophisticated workstation was donated (as a long-term loan) to UIA by HP-Belgium following solicitation to several computer manufacturers

- **Workstation software** also continues to require upgrading, notably in response to the increasing threats of virus attacks and to more challenging applications (statistics, graphics). The possibility of making partial use of Linux-based systems has been successfully tested, and continues to be reviewed. A Linux server will be installed operationally to redistribute work currently handled by the UIA’s dynamic server. The accounting package is being upgraded to handle the euro conversion.

- **Network hardware and software**: Although this has given satisfactory service, the version currently in use is several generations out of date and is no longer maintained by the suppliers. A **major in-house review** is therefore in progress to determine how to upgrade both software and hardware components in the immediate future.

- **Proofing**: Dispatch of e-mail proofs to organizations has been successfully undertaken in large quantities. This significantly reduces postal and handling costs and appears in some cases to generate a better response rate. It also ensures more direct and continuing contact with organizations. (see also remarks on on-line proofing)
B. Dynamic server (user access to online databases)

The independent server facility has been developed since 1999 and is now reasonably satisfactory, thanks especially to Tomáš Fülöpp. The server has been the subject of continuing concern because of technical uncertainties (common to such development), the quality of the hardware and software, the frequent need for upgrades (often freely available on the web) as problems are discovered, back-ups in case of major failure, virus attacks, etc.

The first server has twice been replaced in terms of hardware, and once in terms of database software, in order to improve the quality of service.

The UIA is very fortunate in that the format of the data on its in-house server is identical with that for its dynamic server. However there are continuing concerns about how to maintain communication between the two systems (to ensure users have access to updated information) without increasing the risk of virus and attacks to which such systems are vulnerable on a daily basis.

Now that it may be queried 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – and through holidays – any failure in services has serious consequences for users and for the UIA. Unexplained failures have proved to be especially challenging.

C. External / Static server (unchanging pages)

This facility has proved remarkably successful with an average of approximately 200,000 hits per day.

The UIA web and e-mail facilities survived the bankruptcy (in July-September 1999) of the Agora cooperative (of which the UIA was a founding member). The facility was taken over by XS4ALL (in turn taken over by KPN), and transferred to computers in Amsterdam -- all in a four month period. Whilst service has been maintained throughout (not without moments of anxiety), there have been problematic technical and commercial issues (some to the UIA’s advantage).

In September 2001 the shared 126k leased line from the Secretariat to this service provider was significantly upgraded to 256k UIA-reserved line for the following reasons:

- to improve access from the web to the databases on the UIA’s dynamic server, notably for subscribers and international organizations checking their profiles
- to improve access of UIA personnel to the web, notably for organization research
- to open the possibility of relocating the UIA’s static page server from Amsterdam in order to cut costs

D. Distance editing

The possibility of enabling people to update database entries from a distance, and even to maintain the system in some instances, continues to be a developmental challenge. Already the UIA has two editors operating at a distance; some system maintenance is also done from a distance. Improved facilities are envisaged to increase the options offered by this approach and to reduce the time wasted in reconciling work done at a distance with that done in-house. These technical developments open up possibilities with respect to a more flexible involvement of UIA staff and collaborators to bypass some of the difficulties associated with requiring the presence of personnel in Brussels.
Again an important feature of this challenge is that of security – but also of managing a network of knowledge workers who do not meet face-to-face (or only rarely).

E. UIA Statutory meetings and member working groups

Technical facilities now exist within the UIA to enable a variety of formats of electronic meeting of UIA Full Members. They include:

- simple e-mail
- listservers (or via Pegasus)
- discussion fora
- “chat” facilities
- video conferencing

The principal factors inhibiting such development in practice are:

- equipment and software conveniently accessible to Members
- willingness and aptitude of Members to make use of such facilities
- any need to coordinate times for simultaneous interaction as opposed to asynchronous interaction
- personnel resources to manage such interaction from the Secretariat
- any moderation required to maintain the focus of such interaction
- tendency of such dialogue to fail to meet the expectations of some and to be disproportionately over-used by others

VIII. RESEARCH-RELATED ISSUES

A. Documents

A number of documents were produced as the outcome of various projects:

- International Meeting Statistics 2000 (prepared in colour for Associate Members)
B. NGO Security

This specific theme has been developed by Allan Howard as a result of a Council decision as a follow up to the Bettati survey and report on NGO on hazardous missions. This work will be presented in a separate report. Essentially it has involved the following initiatives:

- research on the web
- establishment of a discussion forum
- development of the UIA web site on this matter
- contacts with a number of parallel initiatives and concerned parties
- attendance at a briefing conference on the International Criminal Court as the most probable locus for resolution of these matters

It should be noted that Allan Howard has made two presentations on related matters to meetings of Associate Members

C. Other themes and papers

The UIA maintains a unique position in terms of documentary work and research on all organizational forms. It has not become caught in the definitional traps and category game-playing of “NGO”, "third sector", "civil society", etc nor has its area of vision been restricted by specialized areas of trade associations, pressure groups, etc

In this context it is appropriate to note the relevance of some of the research themes of recent UIA papers. These include questions of:

- new approaches to dialogue
- comprehension across category and cultural boundaries
- strategic coherence under conditions of polarization
- implications for information systems and knowledge management

Research reports developed by UIA staff continue to be placed on the static web page facility. Some were prepared in response to events of the following:

- World Futures Studies Federation
- Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development
- World Affairs Council (San Francisco)
- First Global Brain Workshop: From Intelligent Networks to the Global Brain
- Foundation for the Future (Humanity 3000 Symposium)
- Millennium Leaders Summit for the International Meetings Industry
- US National Intelligence Council conference on "The Evolution of the Nation-State through 2015"
- UNESCO-sponsored conference on "Knowledge and East-West Traditions"

The Info2000 media-focused contract has permitted significant breakthroughs in the visualization of relationship information offers the possibility of new products. An *Atlas of International Relationships* was discussed once again with SAUR – but effectively this is now incorporated into the new Volume 5 of the Yearbook.
In response to a call for proposals by InfoDev (World Bank): Challenges and Opportunities of the Networking Revolution (1990-2010), a study proposal in response to the call was prepared but only submitted for information purposes to demonstrate relevance to the INTERCEPT project awaiting funding. The study was subsequently developed and submitted as: Coherent Policy-making beyond the Information Barrier (in response to an invitation from the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development in preparation for a workshop in San Francisco, December 1999)

Under contract from the London School of Economics (through its Centre for Civil Society and Centre for the Study of Global Governance), the UIA prepared an extensive set of statistical tables that appeared in the new annual Global Civil Society report (2001).

In relation to the recent discovery by historians that Paul Otlet was one of the precursor thinkers who envisaged in 1935 what is now the World Wide Web, a paper was prepared on:

Union of International Associations -- Virtual Organization: Paul Otlet's 100-year Hypertext Conundrum?

Many new research papers are now accessible on the UIA website (www.uia.org/uia docs). Older papers, notably from Transnational Associations, are progressively being scanned to make them accessible on the web.

Articles in current issues of Transnational Associations are increasingly made available online.

Consideration is being given to scanning of UIA’s historical (1910-1925) publications on civil society to permit web access.

D. Academic network

Notably in relation to the bibliographical work on Yearbook Vol, Joel Fischer has maintained and developed the (electronic) network of international relations scholars producing studies included therein.

This network also provides valuable leads for articles for publication in Transnational Associations

E. Multimedia

Developed initially under the Info2000 contract (1997-2000), as a means of increasing access to UIA online information by a wider variety of users, visualization and sound techniques have now been incorporated or are in process of development (see http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/examples). Web users have access to these facilities.

Smaller versions of maps have been printed on T-shirts, postcards and other products to give visibility to the online facilities (http://www.uia.org/visuals). These were notably distributed on the occasion of the UN World Conference on Social Development (Geneva, 2000)

Approximately 100 images created by this process will appear as pages in the new Yearbook Vol 5. (see Annex 6)
The experiments with sound also offer interesting possibilities both from a cognitive perspective and from a marketing perspective – permitting interaction with a new range of user.

**F. Map posters**

UIA has been able to solve some challenging technical problems of printing network maps generated through its dynamic web site -- and is now able to produce high-quality, poster-sized (or larger), multi-colour maps of networks of problems, organizations or strategies for use in conferences. The UIA’s capacity to do this is unique at this time.

These experiments suggest the possibility of a significant new kind of product for the UIA from which new revenue can be generated. They also have the possibility of being valuable, low-key, public relations and marketing tools. One great advantage is that many different network maps can be generated.

**G. Knowledge management**

A web summary of UIA’s knowledge management work is available (at www.uia.org/uiprof/posie3.htm) This has been matched to the current EU research programs on the information society (see Annex 5).

**H. Archives**

A decision was made to reduce the UIA archive holdings of organizational descriptions that were occupying much space, were of relatively low value, and necessitated unjustified staff time. Unlike the previous culling, which was transferred to the Belgian Royal Archives some 10 years ago, on this occasion the selected files were trashed.

**IX. OFFICE-RELATED ISSUES**

**A. Security and fire risk**

The physical (as opposed to electronic) security of the UIA offices remains a matter of concern due to the way the offices are used by people working a variety of hours, in a building of offices in which there are people working a variety of hours, and in which there are public meetings outside office hours -- and there is no permanent concierge service.

On 26th December 2000, a fire was detected by chance in a UIA front office at 6.30 in the morning. Fortunately the damage was slight, but the office was only finally reusable after repairs by the state landlord, mid-October 2001.

In the light of current threats of bio-terrorism, the potential threat to UIA via incoming mail should be recognized.

**B. Use of offices**

Due to uncertainties associated with the future of the MAI, it is not clear how UIA should plan to make best use of its office space and the computer cabling in which it has invested.
The 9-month delay in refurbishing one office is an indication of a dysfunctional situation. Another is
the peremptory requirement that a series of offices be vacated to permit widow frames to be
upgraded – nullifying the UIA investment in necessary window blinds, and requiring investment in
a new set.
C. Furniture

The UIA was fortunate to receive three major donations of quality furniture during the reporting period. Two of these were from a multinational corporation.

X. ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONNEL ISSUES

A. Working methods

Work on publications is increasingly undertaken with much greater reliance on:

• **work away from the Brussels secretariat**: the logo project was largely undertaken from Leuven (home of a former UIA staff member, who has since again become a staff member), as was the recent Who's Who project, contributions to the Encyclopedia databases, and Yearbook commentary materials; major editing of the Yearbook is now done very successfully in London; development and production of the CD-ROM, previously done in Montreal, has been switched to Paris, and now to London and Amsterdam with little disruption (following the movements of the person responsible).

• **electronic mail and file transfer**: with editors working at a distance, the UIA has effectively been experimenting with a form of "tele-working"; international organizations increasingly communicate with the UIA by e-mail, notably concerning the Yearbook; much information is obtained from the Web. It is planned to further experiment with this mode of operating in the light of new developments with dynamic web publishing on its server.

• **flexible working arrangements**: volunteers made some contributions to the Encyclopedia (and hopefully will continue to do so in the future) and to the preparatory work for the French translation of the Yearbook; *stagiaires* have been used for translation work. In some cases this has been converted into paid work, even in the form of contracts.

These developments are partly in response to **budgetary constraints**, to the needs of individuals, or to the desire to benefit, or continue to benefit, from known expertise with UIA data and programs. It is expected that the UIA involvement with the Web will further change the balance and nature of secretariat operations.

In response to the electronic environment, UIA staff continues to achieve unusual breakthroughs using **in-house tools and resources**; support and purchase of such resources are undertaken frugally. Much useful software can be obtained freely from the web. The electronic environment is causing rapid changes in the: **internal modes of work**; the way information flows to and from the UIA; as well as between personnel.

B. Personnel

**Salaries remain a regular concern of staff**; due both to the Belgian system in general and the high rate of tax. Staff are now acquiring skill sets (e.g. broader computing and internet specific) which would make them extremely attractive in the commercial sector. Additionally, non-Belgian staff are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to residency, taxation and social security (pension) issues.

UIA continues to face challenges of identifying qualified candidates for open positions, in the light of the above constraints. Additionally, while more continues to be achieved with less, there are
concerns about what elements might be lost as the Yearbook operation adjusts to a smaller staff, a larger share of information available through the internet, and increased electronic contact with organizations. The under-staffing situation tends to be severely aggravated by long-term illnesses of key personnel.

Under-staffing: Although considered to be characteristic of many nonprofit bodies, it is useful to recognize its nature in the case of the UIA:

- It is vital to recognize that the UIA generates its resources almost entirely from the activities of the limited number of Secretariat personnel whose capacities are already severely stretched.
- Unfortunate compromises have to be made with regard to delaying or neglecting certain obligations, notably courtesy responses; this is especially unsatisfactory when they might develop into further income-generating work.
- The possibility for taking on extra tasks is very limited unless the tasks are an extension or development of existing program tasks and skills.
- Extraordinary tasks have the potential to be extremely destabilizing of existing program commitments, especially in relation to regular production deadlines.
- Locating and taking on extra staff, usually involves delays before the new person is proven to be useful in complex tasks; the person necessarily requires training that is itself a drain on existing personnel working on urgent tasks.
- Recommendations to engage in remedial fund-raising of any kind should therefore bear in mind the (often “unprofitable”) investment that this normally requires in Secretariat time and/or advising external parties (for example the 18 month cycle in the case of the “successful” proposal to the World Bank).

Any assistance of Full Members in directly obtaining additional funds (as exemplified by the actions of James Wellesley-Wesley over the years), rather than recommending that the Secretariat take initiatives to obtain such funds, would therefore be much welcomed.

XI. STRATEGIC ISSUES

The long-term strategic issues were discussed in a report to an earlier Council meeting (Reflections on a Possible UIA Information Strategy). This forms part of a series of Secretariat notes since 1998, summarized in a document of May 2001: Dimensions of Current UIA Strategy. A visual presentation has also been prepared.

What follows is a checklist of issues for consideration:

A. Positive features

1. Healthy financial position, with prudent reserves
2. Maintaining sales level (surprisingly good, according to SAUR) in a declining reference market
3. Good relations with principal distributor (SAUR)
4. Solid core of dedicated personnel of proven capacity in producing complex information products of a professional quality on a continuing basis under improbable conditions

5. Solid well-financed, contracted projects (with others in the pipeline)

6. Strategically well-positioned for the emerging knowledge society

7. Solid computer base: paid-up hardware base (workstations, etc); appropriate software; good in-house expertise

8. Respected image amongst information users, web document readers, and participants at conferences where UIA personnel make presentations (often by invitation)

9. Respected relationship to professionals in the highly competitive meeting industry (Associate Members)

10. Substantial, appreciated, well-visited website -- strategically designed in relation to dynamic page serving in test mode

11. Ready to roll on innovative interactive, participative relationship with user-suppliers of information over the web

12. Good track record of de-centralized computer work (significantly positioned for any transition to editorial teleworking)

13. Credible, cutting edge opportunities (consonant with EU Fifth Framework for Research and Technology Development now shifting to “research which focuses on the social and economic problems which face society today”, and the like)

14. Operational implementation of innovative visual interfaces to respond the crises of meaning, overview and information overload characteristic of the information society and the UIA’s information in particular

15. Core preoccupation with highlighting and enabling relationships (hyperlinks) between initiatives crossing category boundaries, and the manner in which such patterns can be more meaningfully comprehended, that is remarkably consistent with a 21st century interpretation of what might otherwise be understood as a completely outdated name: Union of International Associations.

16. Demonstrated continuing ability to sustain the above, despite the challenges identified below

**B. Challenging features**

The UIA is in good shape. There are indeed challenging features to its current strategic opportunities. However a distinction should be made between:

- challenges to which a healthy organization should be expected to respond in a turbulent environment;
- challenges which are cause for reflection on the appropriateness of the current response; and
- challenges which call for a serious revision in the current approach.
Making these distinctions is itself a challenge to which reference is made in the American adage: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Despite its current success, UIA Secretariat operations remain fragile and vulnerable to inadvertent destabilization (as remarks on personnel indicate).
A particular concern is identifying which external parties should be considered as:

(a) competitors hostile to UIA aims and objectives  
(b) competitors seeking to duplicate UIA core activities or deprive it of resources  
(c) healthy competition where the UIA has adequate competitive advantage  
(d) competitors taking on marginal UIA roles that the UIA might usefully consider abandoning  
(e) complementary initiatives to be welcomed by the UIA, but not duplicating any of its programmes  
(f) potential partners for new initiatives

D. Evaluating future options

Within the above context, with its various positive and negative dimensions, the question is how to evaluate future proposals and projects. The response is strongly dependent on an understanding, or reframing, of the complex of roles through which the UIA is defined.

Implicit in all these documents is the challenge to the UIA of determining:

(g) what constitutes effective action in terms of its mandate;  
(h) the nature of its future unique significant contribution, in the light of its mandate;  
(i) when to avoid feasible projects – for which other bodies are competent – when these drain resources from strategically more significant UIA projects  
(j) when to avoid competing with other bodies that are more motivated to provide services the UIA is able to supply;  
(k) what financial concessions it wishes to make, at what cost, to those it deems in need of information services or other assistance;  
(l) what posture to adopt with respect to sponsorship arrangements which run the risk of detracting from the UIA’s image;  
(m) what effort to put into interacting with essentially indifferent IGOs operating short-term strategies insensitive to duplication of effort and wastage of scarce resources;  
(n) how to make best use of personnel, or to pay for additional personnel, in the light of a new pattern of requests.

As has been previously argued, it would seem that a prime clue to an appropriate response for the 21st century lies in a reinterpretation of the title of the “Union of International Associations

The uniquely significant contribution of the UIA for the future might therefore be described in terms of deriving coherence from patterns of transboundary associations. This focus is consistent with its long-established documentation function -- but provides the vital context that is relevant to the new need of many for coherence in a turbulent world. It distances the UIA from the tunnel vision preoccupation of many well-resourced emerging information initiatives -- with which the UIA would be foolish to compete. The art for the UIA is to strike a balance between provision of coherence, for which there is little funding, and facilitating specialized uses of its information at appropriate rates in order to sustain its activity.
XII. CONCLUSION

From a programmatic and resource-generating perspective, the UIA is in a highly successful period. This relies on a very competent and creative team of people who are highly motivated. However in these turbulent and uncertain times, and given the many stresses to which international teams are subject, the UIA program is vulnerable to destabilization. Some indications of this are already visible. The consequences of the GALE takeover, combined with the wider consequences of 11th September, call for caution.

Care needs to be taken to protect and consolidate what has already been achieved, works and offers promise for the future. New projects should be undertaken as a natural development of these (enhancing existing competences), rather than dissociated from them (requiring new competences).
Statistics on access to UIA websites

Static site


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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Average successful requests for pages per day:</td>
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<td>Redirected requests:</td>
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<td>Corrupt logfile lines:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data transferred:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average data transferred per day:</td>
<td>78.071 Mbytes</td>
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Analysed requests from Mon-24-Sep-2001 12:15 to Fri-28-Sep-2001 11:18 (4.0 days)

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<td>Average data transferred per day:</td>
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Dynamic site

User sessions since August 2000: 79,920

Pages provided since August 2000: 697,021

Registered users (active)

- last active 2000: 7818
- last active 2001: 7783
**Annex 4**

**Historical review of UIA collaboration with SAUR**

notably during the period of Jacques Raeymaeckers’ role as Secretary-General

The Union of International Associations (UIA) has been engaged in a range of documentation modes and initiatives since its origins in 1910 under the inspired leadership of the Belgians Paul Otlet and Nobel Prize winner Henri La Fontaine. It was in June 1973 that the UIA was first contacted by Klaus Saur suggesting a meeting to discuss mutual interests of UIA and Verlag Dokumentation München. The first visit seems to have taken place on 5th July 1974 and the follow-up was focused on distribution of UIA publications in Germany and a display at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 1974. As publishers, our relationship remained for a number of years one of publisher-distributor.

It was only in mid-1982 that UIA asked Klaus Saur whether he would be interested in publishing the Yearbook of International Organizations – following the UIA’s unsatisfactory experience publishing the 19th edition through the International Chamber of Commerce (Paris). Agreement was rapidly reached – with expansion from the single annual volume with ICC into a three-volume annual edition from the 20th edition in 1982, considerably increasing the number of pages. The two additional volumes were considered experimental, but sales justified their continuation thereafter. At the same time arrangements were made for K G Saur Verlag (KGS) to distribute the quarterly International Congress Calendar. Data for both publications was processed into film for many years via the UIA sub-contractor Computaprint (London) – later to become a subsidiary of Reed-Elsevier.

Another aspect of the UIA’s extraordinary relationship with Klaus Saur also became evident at that time. On leaving a meeting in Brussels, at which contractual details were finalized in 1982, he was asked whether he was aware of an earlier initiative resulting in the UIA publication in 1976, of the Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential. This had been jointly financed by Mankind 2000, directed by James Wellesley-Wesley with the participation of Robert Jungk – whom Klaus Saur knew well. Klaus took a copy of the Encyclopedia with him on the plane. The following morning he telephoned to propose that KGS produce a new edition.

This proposal led to the publication of a further three new editions of the Encyclopedia: the single volume 2nd edition in 1986, a two-volume 3rd edition in 1991, and a three-volume 4th edition in 1994-5. The extraordinary flexibility and flair of Klaus Saur was evident in the “evolution” of the 4th edition – initially conceived as a two-volume publication (“World Problems” and “Human Potential”). Late in the editorial work it was collectively, and suddenly, decided that a third volume of the Encyclopedia would be produced (on “Global Strategies” in response to the world problems). The editorial work on this volume was significantly funded by James Wellesley-Wesley once again. However, from a commercial point of view, it was clear that KGS was not making a fortune out of these unconventional publications. Indeed it is somewhat of a miracle that both KGS and UIA were prepared to tolerate projects that could only survive through “creative” financing – and the enthusiasm of both editorial and production teams.
The early success with the Yearbook encouraged Klaus to respond to UIA suggestions to produce a series of Guides to International Organizations. Four were produced in the period 1984-5: African International Organizations; Arab-Islamic International Organizations; International Organization Abbreviations and Addresses; and Intergovernmental Organization Directory. Klaus was right. They were not destined to be a success - but his willingness to experiment with the UIA remained undaunted.

The same period saw the publication of the first (and only) volume in a heroic new series to document the statutes of international nonprofit organizations. Volume 1 of the International Association Statutes Series appeared in 1984. The data capture was done in an extraordinary kamikaze operation by a group from the Institute of Cultural Affairs International (Brussels), who subsequently produced a three volume Directory of Rural Development (1985-8) through KGS.

Another venture was the publication of Who’s Who in International Organizations – of which the UIA had produced a mini-precursor in 1962. The 1st edition appeared in 1992; a second was to appear in 1995; the third in 2000 (in 3 volumes); a fourth is in preparation for 2002.

In parallel with these various paper products, the capacity of computers to totally transform editorial work and production operations became increasingly evident – and remained a continuing challenge. In mid-1985, UIA computer files dating from 1974 were transferred to an in-house network - one of the first in Belgium. This was to totally transform editorial work. The transformation was achieved with technical assistance from the Institute of Cultural Affairs. In 1986, the Yearbook post-editorial data processing at Computaprint (London) was received the Printing World Award of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office “for the most innovative application of computers to typesetting”.

These technical successes were a stimulus to the wonderfully flexible project dialogue with Klaus Saur, whether directly or through Manfred Link. The early 1990s was a period when the possibility of reference books on CDs was under very active review by many. There was much dialogue with Klaus and Manfred -- and with KG Saur Verlag partners in the USA who had experience with this technology.

Just as the Encyclopedia production had been used as the first test of computer editing and typesetting, it was used by the UIA to test CD technology – leading to the production by KGS of Encyclopedia Plus in 1995. Klaus manifested his qualities of patience in response to UIA insistence that a cut price variant be simultaneously marketed. Later in 1995 the first annual edition of the Yearbook appeared finally on CD in parallel with the book edition – with UIA supplying the master disk based on Folio software. Experiments were subsequently made with extension of the content into multilingual formats -- notably by including in 1996 the Annuaire des Organisations Internationales (translation funded by governments of francophone countries) as a substitute for a nonviable hardcopy edition (last published by UIA in 1979). These experiments were subsequently abandoned in favour of the English-only product with multilingual indexes -- but also including the Who’s Who in International Organizations. In 1996 the Yearbook was also extended to four volumes with the publication of the first edition of a Bibliographic Volume: International Organization Bibliography and resources
This period saw many transformations in the relationships between KGS, Bowker-Saur, Reed-Elsevier in which Klaus too a variety of roles. Ironically both UIA’s key subcontractors, Computaprint and Folio, became part of the Reed-Elsevier group. From 1996 however UIA no longer provided data for film production through Computaprint but through Microcomposition (Munchen) a sub-contractor of KGS that made use of the Revelation software central to UIA’s data management flexibility. These transformations have been followed in the autumn of 2000 by the sale of KGS by the Reed-Elesevier group to Thompson/Gale – a prime UIA competitor with respect to the Yearbook series. It has been the skills of Klaus that have ensured the continuity of the UIA relationship with KGS under these unique circumstances.

Vital to the stability of this productive relationship over such an extended period of time has been the unusual style of Klaus Saur – very much in the tradition of the creative publisher, attentive to quality, valuing editorial content, and respectful of editorial expertise and technical competence. This contrasts starkly with many conventional approaches to publishing where short-term financial margins and returns dominate most decisions. Ironically it is the qualitative partnership relationships – now that they have become rare – that are increasingly extolled by management gurus as the way of the future.

The fecundity of the relationship is further illustrated by the production of an International Biographical Dictionary of Religion (1994) that was extended and transformed into a World Guide to Religious and Spiritual Organizations (1996). This was followed by a World Guide to Logotypes, Emblems and Trademarks of International Organizations (1997) that represented the first joint excursion into image production and indexing – with a number of unusual features.

These more recent years also saw the emergence of the Internet, Web diffusion of information, and the many new challenges to producers and distributors of information faced with subsidized competition. Klaus was very canny, to use a Scottish term (possibly of German derivation), in his response. His long experience of the publishing world enabled him to avoid the traps into which many fell. For that the UIA is extremely grateful to him as it experimented independently from 1998 with web distribution of the Encyclopedia databases as a marketing entry point to the Yearbook.

In the light of these tests, it was therefore with the greatest prudence that Klaus finally agreed in 2000 to commence distribution of Yearbook Online in parallel with both the CD and book versions of the Yearbook. This has now made it possible to hyperlink together all the UIA database entries (organizations, problems, strategies, biographies; bibliographies, meetings, human development, values) within the Web environment. The arrangements between KGS and UIA in this respect could only be viable with the mutual confidence and trust of which Klaus has long proven to be the prime guarantor.

A new agreement in 2001 adds a statistical/graphics volume into the 38th edition of the Yearbook series (now to be 5 physical volumes) – the first addition since the arrangements began in 1982. This makes the total number of pages published through the UIA-KGS agreements enabled by Klaus Saur close to 120,000 -- bringing the total number of characters published close to one billion (depending on Manfred Link’s verification)! Truly a fruitful partnership of which Paul Otlet would have approved.
Annex 5

UIA Strategic Match with IST Fifth Framework Programme

Union of International Associations (http://www.uia.org)