

Summary of Activities *Etat des activités de l'UAI*

(prepared for the UIA Council meeting, 2004)

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I. Publications and information services

Issues involving the relationship with K S Saur Verlag are covered in a separate note on a review meeting with them (see *Summary of SAUR – UIA Meeting* (Brussels, 17-18 March))

1. Yearbook of International Organizations

Book: The publication cycle continues normally. Volume 1 was completed on schedule and despatched to SAUR on 31 March 2004; Volume 2 (geographical) was despatched on 30 April 2004; Volume 3 (subjects) is in process and will be despatched on 12 May 2004; Volume 4 (bibliographical) has been completed and despatched in May 2004 (earlier than usual, because of the relocation of Joel Fischer); Volume 5 (statistics and visualization) will be despatched in October 2004.

As indicated to the previous Council meeting, this cycle has been distinguished by the adjustment in the editorial team with the decreasing involvement of Jacqueline Nebel (approaching retirement) and the increasing responsibility of Nancy Carfrae for the production process (notably for Volumes 2 and 3), the relocation of Joel Fischer (responsible for general editorial and production issues and for Volume 4) to the USA.

The special challenges relating to the statistical volume (Volume 5) are discussed below.

CD-ROM: The production processes for the 10th edition (2004) will not be initiated until July-August 2004. A concern remains regarding the inclusion of now-outdated biographical information in the portion of the CD containing the 4th edition of the *Who's Who in International Organizations* (2003).

The CD incorporates all organization descriptions in English from the 2003–2004 book version and additional bodies of secondary interest. . As agreed with SAUR, the CR will, for the first time, include also PDF and image files from Volume 5 of the Yearbook, although, because of established publishing schedule, it has to be last year's edition. Concerns remain regarding the copy security features on this product, despite continuing discussions with SAUR.

Online: As indicated in the previous report, continuing interchange with SAUR (and through them with THOMPSON-GALE) has resulted to many improvements in the access facilities to this version. UN agencies continue to form a significant part of the subscribers. Access to the *Who's Who in International Organizations* is part of the subscription.

As noted in the report on the meeting with SAUR, the online format is recognized to be of growing importance in comparison with the book version. As a result of agreement with SAUR, the images from the UIA's *World Guide to Logotypes* (1997) were included in the online organization profiles as a further means of enhancing the quality of the service (and organizations keep sending us new and updated logos that enrich this collection).

New issues and developments relating to the future of online access (notably those discussed with SAUR) are discussed below with respect to transforming the UIA database.

2. International Congress Calendar

Book: The cycle of four quarterly volumes continues normally, with the first of the 44th edition published in 2003 under the continuing supervision of Regine Toussaint.

As indicated in the previous report, concerns remain regarding the coverage of this publication (due to the proliferation of information on the web) and the ability to process the available information (especially from the web) with the editorial resources available. Interaction between YB and Calendar staff remains high as information is shared back and forth, increasingly with regard to information concerning web resources on NGOs. Challenges remain in that the Calendar is necessarily focused on more detailed information regarding the future, whereas the Yearbook is more focused on general information about past meeting series. These have had considerable impact on steps to rationalize production (see below)..

Online: As previously indicated, the online version has not yet been activated under subscription because of a combination of technical problems (notably the challenge of closer integration of the Calendar data with the distinct format of Yearbook data on events identified in organization profiles) and the unsatisfactory nature of the business model to ensure its viability.

These difficulties are expected to be resolved with the switch to a different database software as discussed below.

There is an active demand for this facility and it therefore represents a useful source of future revenue. It is planned to be activated, in some form, in time for the October 2004 Associate Members meeting

3. Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential

Book: As indicated previously, no current plans in relation to this publication, last produced in 1994-5. Once again, in March 2004, SAUR would be prepared to publish it as hardcopy but would then require cessation of the free distribution over the web, which plays such an important marketing role in relation to the Yearbook. Additionally the amount offered by SAUR would barely compensate for the formatting of the data into hardcopy form, namely without enabling any development of the data. It would also constitute a drain on scarce staff resources.

Online: The related databases (problems, strategies, values, human development, etc) are very actively used as a free complement to subscriber access to the data on international organizations (as such they conform to the provisions of Article 3 of the UIA statutes). They are recognized by SAUR as being of value to marketing the organization information. Unfortunately, despite occasional intervention by Nadia McLaren (last responsible for editorial work on these databases under the INFP2000 1997-2000 contract), the data is slowly becoming obsolete in the absence of any systematic updating of it.

Access to these databases is expected to improve with the switch to a new database format (see below).

4. Who's Who in International Organizations

Book: As indicated previously, editorial work on the 4th edition was successfully completed by Nancy Carfrae in November 2002 and the volume was published in January 2003. It is not expected that a new edition will be prepared before 2005.

This matter was the subject of extensive discussion which is reflected in the separate report (see *Summary of SAUR – UIA Meeting* (Brussels, 17-18 Mars). the current suggestion is that work on a future edition be initiated in January 2005.

CD-ROM: The available updated information was incorporated into the Yearbook CD-ROM (8th edition) and into the current 2003 (9th edition).

Online: The updated information forms part of the standard subscription to Yearbook Online. As noted above, this information is now dated.

5. Republication of UIA historical publications

The work (partially outsourced to Delphi in Slovakia) of providing electronic copies of major series of historical UIA publications is now virtually complete. The aim has been to make them accessible through a common web interface format, which is now operational and has been extended to cover current edition of *Transnational Associations* (see report below). This work is seen as a core contribution to the UIA's centennial celebrations.

The publications made available in this way are:

UIA journal: All versions of the UIA periodical (*La Vie Internationale* 1912-21; *Bulletin des associations internationales*, 1943-44; *Bulletin mensuel de l'Union des*

Associations Internationales, 1951-53; *International Associations*, 1954-76; *Transnational Associations*, 1977-2001) have now been scanned into image form – totalling some 35,000 pages, and converted into text format using the OCR process. This resulted into a vast collection of Word and PDF documents. In parallel, on the website there is a new system that allows searching and browsing all scanned articles (almost 4000) by author, year, issue, title and theme. PDF file of any issue can be purchased using the same web interface

Links to individual articles in past issues of *Transnational Associations* will be provided from the online bibliography of research papers that forms part of Volume 4 of the Yearbook.

UIA Yearbooks: SAUR is now advertising an online version of the UIA's historical *Annuaire de la Vie Internationale* (1905-1911; 5,000 pages). These may be placed on CD-ROM in the future. Currently they are in Word format and merit conversion to PDF format as indicated above.

Marketing via Saur: As indicated previously, discussions with SAUR had indicated some interest in marketing this facility, possibly in conjunction with online access to the Yearbook. It may prove more appropriate to allow SAUR to market the product -- but to treat it as a UIA product. The possibility of marketing a CD-ROM of back issues of *Transnational Associations* is also under consideration. The approach to be taken will be affected by the scope of any future contract for the publication of *Transnational Associations* (see below).

This matter has been discussed, and continues to be discussed (see *Summary of SAUR – UIA Meeting* (Brussels, 17-18 March))

6. Transnational Associations (quarterly)

Hardcopy version: The issues relating to the hardcopy version of this publication are considered in a separate report.

Online version: Current editions of *Transnational Associations* are now integrated into the database of all (historical) back issues of *Transnational Associations* (see above). This provides for access (free search, purchase of any issue) and is also designed to permit printing of paper versions. Subscribers not desiring a hardcopy version are sent an electronic copy from the online version.

Despite considerable interest of SAUR in marketing this product, both in paper and electronic form (see *Summary of SAUR – UIA Meeting* (Brussels, 17-18 March)), SAUR eventually declined to pursue the matter, primarily because of the economics of journal paper production. SAUR's involvement in marketing the online version may however be the subject of further discussion.

7. Multimedia products

As indicated previously, following the production for demonstration purposes, poster-size maps (of networks of organizations, problems, strategies, etc) are now generated from the online facility. Further work on these products is now envisaged

in relation to a new marketing approach. The main focus of such work is currently with respect to Volume 5.

These facilities could play a key part in the UIA's participation in some future international meetings. The hiring of a new part-time assistant may help to advance this possibility.

8. Statistics projects

Over the past three years, the UIA has invested in progressive rationalization of the statistical data it has published during the 20th century, whether in the Yearbook itself or in articles in *Transnational Associations*. Data in the Yearbook tables over that period has been incorporated into Excel tables. Work remains to be done on early statistical studies (pre-1980) published in *Transnational Associations*.

At present the UIA has three **annual** statistical projects:

(a) **London School of Economics:** February-May: a contract with the Centre for Civil Society of the London School of Economics for production of selected tables on NGOs in their *Global Civil Society Yearbook*. As noted below, the timing of this work has proved to be extremely inconvenient in relation to the UIA Yearbook production cycle because they continue to depend in part on data generated for the version of Volume 1 in production.

(b) **Associate Members:** June-August: the production of *International Meeting Statistics* for Associate Members

(c) **UIA Yearbook:** August-October: the principal section of Volume 5 of the *Yearbook of International Organizations* (as indicated above).

The contents of these three projects overlap. Producing them has raised issues about UIA's ability to undertake this work annually, notably as a consequence of progressive reduction in involvement of Nadia McLaren who has rationalized their production during 2001 and 2002 (as well as integrating scattered statistical data from past decades), and trained and supervised persons subsequently charged with the work as outsourced to Delphi (Slovakia). In contrast to other reference projects, the new formats required by these products call for extensive use of software packages (Excel notably and Adobe PDF) to achieve the quality of graphics output and the adaptation to stringent printing formats.

At this point in the transition process, under the guidance of Nadia McLaren, the vast majority of the work is being undertaken for 2004 by outsourcing it to the Slovakian company (Delphi). However despite satisfactory results, there remains concern about the continuity of the operation in the absence of Nadia McLaren.

The statistics programme is significant because of the importance of its results to the academic and conference industry world, as well as to SAUR in its contractual relations with UIA.

9. Website and database access

Considerable work continues to be done to improve the look, feel, organization, navigation, currency and integration of the UIA's static and dynamic websites – notably in relation to the needs of online subscribers and the new facilities (historical publications, etc). This is important in developing the image of the UIA on the web, notably as it affects UIA ability to market its publications and services.

As indicated above, the subscription online access service to the Yearbook is being positioned by SAUR as an important complement to the hardcopy and CD-ROM versions. The free databases (problems, strategies, etc) integrated with it continue to be conceived as an important marketing tool.

Unfortunately some essential work has had to be delayed because of demands on the time of Tomas Fülöpp. This situation has now been partially (but only temporarily) alleviated by hiring a part-time person to reduce other demands on his time.

Regular update procedures have now been standardized.

Concern has been expressed to SAUR regarding the continuing demands on UIA staff time (in the person of Tomas Fülöpp) in handling special connection problems of subscribers but especially adjusting the usage statistics (which may well be counter-productive to some sales), access features and user friendliness to facilitate the task of THOMPSON-GALE sales personnel. It is clear however that many changes are appropriate in response to the increasing standardization of facilities within the wider online environment. GALE currently obtains 30 percent of its revenue from online services – possibly a future expectation in relation to UIA.

Constraints on the further development of this facility, and its integration with the working in-house databases, have necessitated the switch to a new software infrastructure (as discussed below).

10. Requests for information

The Secretariat continues to receive numerous e-mail demands for information. Some of these take the form of requests from Associate Members for which the extraction can be charged. Others involve much time by various staff members, which is justified under the heading of public relations services. The quality of UIA response is now expected to improve as a result of hiring a part-time person to handle this process.

As discussed previously, the UIA is in an awkward situation in seeking to strike a balance between free or discounted distribution of such information (notably to academic researchers and NGOs in the light of the UIA statutory mandate), commercially-rated distribution (notably to commercial bodies and consultancies acting for them), and refusal of such requests (notably to bodies liable to set up competing database and publication services).

Demands may be for:

- mail address labels
- e-mail addresses
- organization profiles
- reproduction of statistical tables

- data sets from which statistical tables are generated
- specially configured data sets (eg links between organizations)

Independently of the question of exploitation of the data, a key concern for the UIA is to avoid excessive “spamming” of international organizations (long overloaded by unsolicited requests), both in their interest and in UIA’s interests (to avoid prejudicing the UIA’s ability to solicit information from them for the Yearbook). The UIA’s current conservative policy has been justified by the rate of reply to its questionnaires but it was one factor in the failure of UIA to garner support for its bid for the .ORG domain in 2002. A major concern is any implication that the UIA becomes identified as a source of spam to international organizations. Recent discussions in the online publishing community have proven the UIA conservative approach to be valid. Additionally, savvy commercial operators realize that spamming potential clients is not in their interest

II. UIA partnerships and cooperation

1. **UN:** No new developments are reported relating to the UIA’s consultative relationship or to CONGO. The Secretariat has been informed concerning the new high-level UN panel that is reviewing the relationships between the UN and Civil Society.

The specialized agencies and units of the UN which had subscribed to the UIA online service in 2002 (as a result of the initiative of SAUR) have renewed their subscription for 2004.

2. **UNESCO:** Discussions with the Secretariat, in association with the 6-year review of the UIA’s consultative relationships, had opened the possibility of a more fruitful interaction. In an increasingly difficult international context, this has not yet materialized. As yet the possibility of concrete collaboration has not become evident.
3. **European Commission:** The Secretariat has made two proposals, developed by Nadia McLaren, to the EU within the EU’s Sixth Framework. this has been done despite previously explained uncertainties with regard to:
 - the budgetary commitment to proposal preparation,
 - the lengthy time cycle before any response is forthcoming,
 - the administrative work if successful, and
 - the strong possibility of having to act as banker in anticipation of receipt of funds.

This cycle involves a degree of long-term commitment which it is difficult to guarantee at this time, notably with the relocation of those who may be named as responsible parties within such proposals.

The project proposals are discussed separately below.

4. **London School of Economics (LSE):** This collaboration has so far resulted in production of tables in the 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 editions of the LSE’s *Global Civil Society Yearbook*. This income remains financially important for the viability of the statistics initiative as a whole.

Work on this annual project has been complicated by:

- the process of transferring responsibility to Delphi (Slovakia) under the decreasing supervision of Nadia McLaren
- the move of the director of the LSE project to a California-based university (UCLA), with the requirement that contractual relationships be developed with a US-based entity under conditions where the UIA would be at a severe disadvantage in case of contractual disagreements
- the switch from a clear arrangement with LSE to an arrangement between UIA and a trilateral consortium (LSE, UCLA and Sage Publications)
- the considerable delays in payment from the USA (transferred through LSE), destabilizing UIA finances, and necessitating threats of a formal debt collection process and a subsequent need to formalize legally the arrangements between the parties
- extension of the data demands to include elements to figure in a UCLA-based thesis and in the 2005 *Global Civil Society Yearbook*

These complications have severely eroded the level of trust between the UIA and the LSE group.

5. **Public Interest Registry (PIR):** Following the failure of UIA to win the bid for management of the .ORG web domain, the winning group (Internet Society) formed, as they had proposed, an NGO called Public Interest Registry to manage .ORG. Nadia McLaren, in her personal capacity, was proposed by Verisign as a member of the PIR .ORG Advisory Council. As indicated previously, the President-CEO of PIR visited the UIA but discussions have not resulted in concrete proposals for collaboration or contractual work.

6. **Strategy with respect to IGOs**

Unfortunately the Council, at its last meeting, did not have time to deal with this matter on its agenda.

7. **Developing project-related partnerships**

The project proposals described below necessarily also involve potential working partnerships

III. **Project proposals awaiting funding approval**

Periodically the UIA has sought funding through different international agencies. It was notably successful with respect to the EU's Fifth Framework INFO2000 programme (1997-2000). It succeeded in getting approval for funding, after evaluation, under the World Bank InfoDev programme (2001), but funds had been diverted to other priorities. It has not been successful with respect to several other proposals made within the EU Fifth Framework programme. Proposals currently submitted and awaiting evaluation are:

1. **LADY (Local Action Dynamics: Knowledge patterns for local, participatory implementation of the Lisbon Strategy):** This 72-page project proposal, prepared by Nadia McLaren, was submitted in December 2003 to the EU within the Sixth Framework by the UIA as lead agency. It involves the participation of

bodies in the following countries: **Belgium** (European Partners for the Environment), Ireland (Ballymun Regeneration), **Hungary** (Regional Environment Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)), **Italy** (Associazione Sette Colli of Pari, Pari Center for New Learning, Associazione EFA Etica, Finanza, Ambiente), **Netherlands** (Women in Europe for a Common Future, Imaginal Training, European Collaborative for Communities of Practice), **Sweden** (University of Gothenburg, Fenixgruppen, Sustainable Robertfors, Kvinnoforum – Women's Forum), **UK** (New Economics Foundation, Community Intelligence, Creative Connection Consultants, Project CHAIN - Community Health Alliances through Integrated Networks).

The objectives of LADY are: to reach an improved understanding of how learning takes place and competence is enhanced in communities (residential, municipal or work-place) working to implement all or part of the Lisbon Strategy; to support a number of projects (Case Studies) to raise ambition levels and competence, including issues of gender and inclusion; to identify patterns underlying successful (and less successful) projects; to condense key learnings into a set of models, methods and tools designed to enhance the success of new projects; to develop training materials and a training programme to disseminate the new knowledge; to document and inform about the results in innovative and effective ways, including the perspective of policy-makers; to establish a Network of researchers and practitioners.

Unfortunately, due to delays in obtaining information to complete the submission, the project was not accepted and possibilities of resubmitting it in 2004 are being sought.

2. **CiviLynx (Gateway to Civil Society Information):** This 65-page project proposal, prepared by Nadia McLaren, was submitted in May 2004 to the eContent program of the EU within the Sixth Framework by the UIA as lead agency. It is submitted under eContent Action Line 1: Improving access to and use of public sector information (Subline 1.1: Cross-border information services based on public sector information)

This demonstration project provides an Internet gateway to the multiplicity of datasets relating to civil society organizations (CSOs) across Europe and elsewhere. It is resource for one-stop access to information on CSOs, of any type, location or area of activity. The focus is on content constituting public sector information (PSI).

The content base is the existing digital content of the Union of International Associations (UIA), a Brussels-based publisher of information on global civil society. UIA's unique world-class datasets on international organizations, together with its enabling philosophy, architecture and historical content, will be integrate with other public information sources on civil society organizations (CSOs at international, national and local levels) to provide a convenient, user-friendly gateway format on the Internet.

The project will demonstrate the design of a user interface, data aggregation system and collaborating partner group that will respond most effectively to the evolving confusion of both CSO content sources and technical opportunities. It will automatically identify, using advanced intelligent agent algorithms, relevant

query links to national and specialized datasets in the public domain.

It involves the participation with UIA of: Fenixgruppen Ekonomisk Förening (Sweden) and Delphi Slovakia s.r.o (Slovakia). UIA's logical partner in this initiative, SAUR was unable to comply with the deadline and the reporting requirements but provided a strong letter of support.

3. **GRID (Global Knowledge Grid: A New Infrastructure for Understanding Globalization):** This 50-page project proposal was submitted for funding in April 2004 to a US foundation involves a partnership between UIA, a major US university, the University of Technology (Sydney) and Netmap Analytics. It arises from brief collaboration between UIA and Netmap Analytics in the 1990s. The US university is the lead agency. The aim of the project is to provide a framework for the interrogation of a variety of databases using a new technology – and the possible visual presentation of the results as illustrated by UIA's work with Netmap. The advantage to the UIA of the project would be the digitization of all previous editions of the *Yearbook of International Organizations* in order to permit diachronic analysis. The results of the submission will be known in October 2004.

In order to coordinate the UIA's contribution to the project proposal, and the UIA's participation, Nadia McLaren and Tomas Fülöpp were hosted for a working meeting in the USA..

IV. International conferences

1. **Annual Meeting of UIA Associate Members**

This meeting was held as scheduled on 6-7 October 2003 in Brussels. The theme was: International Meetings Industry in the light of the current global situation.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 2004.

2. **Annual Meeting of the UIA Executive Council**

This meeting, scheduled for June 2004, represents a shift in periodicity decided at the meeting of the General Assembly in October 2003.

The budgeted costs (including associated personnel costs) of the annual statutory meetings, over recent years have been: 2001: 24,906€; 2002: 28,552€; 2003: 27,228€

3. **Institut Royal des Relations Internationales (Belgium):** Following several rounds of discussions, the collaboration of the UIA with IRRI in the organization of a colloquium in Brussels in October is under review.
4. **Eurovisioning Conference:** Nadia McLaren and Anthony Judge were invited to make presentations to the Eurovisioning Conference: Redesigning Europe in the Third Millennium: a new sustainable vision of democracy (Budapest, 15-17 May 2004)

This may have follow-ups in relation to UIA's multimedia visualization possibilities.

5. **European Federation of Conference Towns** (Summer School, Budapest, August-September). Following a pattern initiated in 1998, Joel Fischer will be making an invited presentation to this EFCT event.
6. **Asia-Pacific Incentive and Meetings Expo** (Melbourne, February 2005): Tentative plans are being made for the invited participation of Joel Fischer to this event.
7. **Other conference industry events**: With Joel Fischer's relocation to the USA, it is probable that he may attend North American meetings industry events there.
8. **Other international relations conferences**: With Joel Fischer's relocation to the USA, it is probable that he may attend North American academic (PolSci/IR) events there.
9. **World Summit on the Information Society** Consideration is being given to participation at the Tunis 2005 portion of this event (of which the first part was held in Geneva in 2003)

V. Congress Department and Related Services

This is the subject of a separate report by Ghislaine de Coninck.

With her forthcoming retirement, aspects of her role touching directly on Associate Members will be progressively taken over by Joel Fischer, working remotely.

VI. Marketing

It should be recalled that two main approaches to marketing are taken by the UIA:

- via SAUR/Gale: The UIA benefits from the marketing machine of these specialists in international reference books, including their web marketing

- via UIA websites: The UIA **static** website has over recent years been the prime marketing tool for UIA publications and services, as well providing descriptive and informative materials. Links to the SAUR website are provided where appropriate. The **dynamic** website has the merit of being potentially detectable by search engines covering every range of human activity identified in those databases.

The continuing concern for further development of UIA external relation, notably in relation to marketing, resulted in the engagement in 2003 of a part-time person to assist in this process, whether via the web or by other means. This engagement was not a success and has been terminated.

It is within this context that a new paper brochure, descriptive of the UIA, is being prepared on the initiative of the Council. Progress on this matter is described in a separate report.

VII. Computer-related infrastructure issues

1. **Network server:** It is important to recognize the degree of dependence of most members of UIA staff on the satisfactory operation of the system – in addition to the fact that most of the UIA’s data assets are held on it (despite various backup strategies). As indicated in previous reports, the UIA’s central computer equipment and software have been aging beyond the point of reasonable maintenance (and beyond the recommendations of good practice), and have been proving increasingly vulnerable to severe breakdowns – of which several have been navigated successfully, thanks to efforts of Joel Fischer. In April 2003, the most severe breakdown was directly associated with the very high level of dust resulting from work on the building housing the UIA offices.

As a consequence, and following a meeting with SAUR, new hardware and software was installed in June 2003 to provide a more robust system and to increase levels of security (and backup) in an increasingly virus and hacker prone environment.

2. **Remote working:** An important objective has been to open access to more editors working at a distance (using virtual private network technology, VPN) and to eliminate the current weekly costs of file transfer (between London, Leuven and Brussels). This should increase flexibility in relation to personnel options. SAUR agreed to participate extensively in the financing of this acquisition.

Separately software has been purchased to improve the user interface for editors, notably those working at a distance, and especially in order to reduce their learning/training time. This will however require further work.

With the advance in computer telecommunications, the UIA has switched its internet access from its original (more expensive) leased computer line to a faster and cheaper SDSL line.

3. **Database software:** As noted earlier, the UIA is faced with the need to move beyond the constraints of the Revelation software that it has been using (with upgrades) since 1985. Despite significant success in adapting this software to the needs of web interactivity and delivery of information, the constraints of the software/hardware mix (in part due to UIA’s multi-generational machines), and the costs of licensing, have encouraged switching to open source software (increasingly Linux-based).

For these reasons the UIA is transforming access to its databases to PHP/MySQL software. Initially this is being done for external access to its online databases (specifically of interest to SAUR). This process is now well advanced and should permit implementation of *Calendar Online* for the Associate Members meeting in October 2004.

Subsequently this will be extended to the in-house databases used for daily editing – notably to ensure compatibility. Revelation will however continue to be used for production of publications until there is justification for eliminating any copying back into an “obsolete” format for this purpose.

4. **Web servers:** The UIA makes use of a number of “servers”:

LAN server: This is the Novell server for in-house daily database editing and was the

subject of the major crash in 2003.

"Static server": This refers to the server maintained elsewhere on the UIA's Internet Service Provider's facility (at Zaventem). It is used for the basic UIA website.

"Online server": This Windows-based server is based at the Secretariat and is used to make available the information from its databases, whether freely or for subscribers. It is expected to be phased out and replaced by *Linux I* later in 2004.

Linux server I: This is used for indexing and other applications, which would otherwise increase the load on the "online server". It is housed in the Secretariat.

Linux server II: This recently acquired server is used as a local web server, especially for the transformed database applications, initially in a development mode. It is housed in the Secretariat.

5. **Security**: The above developments open the possibility of both increasing the security levels for the dynamic web server (located in-house) and relocating the static web server (housed outside Brussels) back to the UIA offices. Although the latter could reduce costs, it would also reduce physical security and therefore is currently not envisaged.
6. **Transfer to "rack servers"**: There is continuing concern with regard to the ability to maintain the range of Secretariat-based servers in operation in the event of breakdowns or other problems from which the UIA has been somewhat insulated whilst Joel Fischer was based at the Secretariat. One alternative is to transfer the range of applications to a "rack server", namely to have the servers maintained elsewhere – now that costs for such services are decreasing rapidly. This option is being explored. It would allow remote configuration or intervention, by any qualified member of staff, in the event of server problems
7. **Challenge of the Internet**: The Council requested a report on this topic. A summary report on the UIA Web Strategy was provided in anticipation of the previous Council meeting.

VIII. Budget and administration

1. Personnel

(a) Loss of operational staff : This problem has been detailed in reports to previous Council meetings. In the current period this has been significantly evident, notably with respect to a combination of factors: scheduled retirements, a spate of severe health-related absences, and relocation. It is especially problematic in relation to editorial operations, use of information systems to process data productively, and maintenance/development of the computer infrastructure.

The process of personnel replacement is especially problematic. It is especially aggravated with respect to the training/learning period regarding editorial operations, the increasing complexity of information systems, and the ability to exploit this knowledge in response to external demands and to project opportunities.

(b) Loss of administrative and personnel functions : This has proven especially problematic in the past year, notably with the departure of Genevieve Deville and the reduced capacity of Cecile Denet, her scheduled replacement.

(c) Issues relating to the marketing and public relations functions : This is a long-term issue for which unsatisfactory partial remedies continue to be found – despite the need for a consistent, long-term function informed by a good working knowledge of the UIA facilities and service possibilities.

(d) Working conditions: Issues relating to staff salaries that were the subject of a collective letter at the end of 2001, were indicated during 2002 as possibly concealing a dangerous level of disaffection – in addition to a perceptible malaise. This was confirmed in a collective written communication from personnel in December 2002, despite initiatives taken to review the salary scale. A bonus was given for 2002 and for 2003, but other questions associated with this review are not yet resolved. They raise the issue of what level of future increase the UIA can give in the light of its reserves and the general economic uncertainty.

(e) Compromises and developments: There are questions of staff “discipline” (eroded by demotivating salary issues) and the variety of loose compromise contractual formula currently required. These issues are partially related to general trends in society towards a different style of less formal working relationship under a variety of formulae. The Secretariat benefits from a mix of full and part-time collaborators, some purely voluntary, some defining their work in a traditional manner with due recompense, and some working on a largely voluntary basis (although partially recompensed financially at a purely symbolic level). Some are located at the Secretariat, some work from other locations. The situation is further complicated by the interface in a non-profit organization between “voluntary” and “remunerated” work, notably in the case of personnel committed to responding to the challenges of the organization. Faced with deadlines and shortage of personnel, problems are created with formulae permitting personnel to recuperate hours worked (and holidays not taken) at a later period. The challenge is how to best harness the commitment of personnel of necessary competence under conditions that may easily encourage demotivation. Given the contractual relations necessary under Belgian law, the UIA is notably severely constrained in its ability to reduce the number of Secretariat personnel when faced with budgetary challenges or the need to restructure in response to new opportunities.

The operating context of the UIA, affecting the conditions of personnel, have been detailed in a separate document entitled: *Stratégies de gestion utilisées jusqu'à présent par l'UAI pour assurer son équilibre budgétaire*

2. Finances

As has been indicated in a communication from the Secretary-General, the UIA experienced an unusual level of deficit for the end of 2003. It is expected that this deficit will accumulate for the end of 2004.

The explanation for the deficit and the actions taken (or possible) in response to it are detailed in a separate report (*Financial Deficit of UIA (2003-2004) Contributing Factors and Remedial Action*)

Whilst it is appropriate to note that the Council does not need to formally approve the balance sheet and income and expenditure (which is the role of the General Assembly last held in October 2003), every effort will be made to provide further

analyses of the financial condition of the UIA -- notably as it enters the more challenging end of year period.

3. Statut juridique

La nouvelle loi belge sur les associations internationales est entrée en vigueur le 1er juillet 2003. Elle oblige l'UAI - d'ici environ 5 ans - à modifier ses statuts pour supprimer l'obligation d'avoir dans son conseil un membre de nationalité belge. Rappelons ici que M. De Schutter, membre du Conseil de l'UAI, s'est très activement employé à suivre les débats autour de ce projet de loi tant à la Chambre qu'au Sénat, et à intervenir chaque fois que c'était possible au bénéfice des associations internationales. Il a également, régulièrement, tenu au courant, par l'intermédiaire de la FAIB, les associations dont le siège se trouve à Bruxelles.

La question d'un statut européen des associations préoccupe certaines instances européennes qui organisent les débats. M. De Schutter a représenté l'UAI à une réunion organisée par le Conseil de l'Europe à Strasbourg.

4. Office space: Maison des Associations Internationales (MAI)

Major alterations to the building by the owners have resulted in considerable inconvenience to tenants. As previously indicated, the high level of dust was directly responsible for aggravating the condition of the UIA's network server, to the point that it had to be replaced. The future status of the building remains unclear as further work is undertaken. It is difficult to avoid the impression that when the current works are completed the rent will be increased (as already intimated) and that the owners may seek to allocate it to other purposes. The Secretariat may therefore be faced with the prospect of having to move in the medium term.

To reduce rental costs, the UIA has decided to renounce three offices in 40 rue Washington and to consolidate personnel in other space in 38 rue Washington

The Secretariat is faced with long-postponed issues of general office decor, appropriate furniture, storage – especially as they affect UIA image, personnel and efficiency. With the planned consolidation of office space, and in order to maintain an appropriate standard for purposes of reception, a modest effort is being made in re-carpeting and re-painting certain spaces.

The Secretariat has received a further donation of quality furniture.

5. Secretariat support of UIA Full Member communications

As agreed at the UIA General Assembly, the Secretariat (through Tomas Fülöpp and with the assistance of Nadia McLaren) developed and implemented an open-source electronic communication facility. This became operational in January 2004 offering a wide range of options, notably the ability to store documents relating to former UIA statutory meetings – many of which have now been made available in this way. It was specifically designed to support communication amongst both the UIA Council Working Groups and with other UIA Full Members.

This facility has not been successfully used for reasons that will no doubt be the subject of discussion at the next Council meeting.

IX. Strategic issues affecting execution and development of activities

The following points have been the subject of different documents presented to the Council in the past (notably that articulated in *Proposed UIA Web-oriented Development Pathway*, 2003):

- (a) Issues relating to the wider economic downturn and the tendency towards recession, as it further impacts on constrained library budgets as the prime source of UIA revenue. Although SAUR results continue to be surprisingly positive, it is vital to recognize the constraints of **dependence on book sales** in the medium-term future and the nature of UIA's possible evolution and viability in the web environment of a knowledge society. The current deficit points to the urgency of such reflection.
- (b) Issues relating to any dependency on the **THOMPSON-GALE strategy** through SAUR in the light of recent experience and despite positive impressions.
- (c) Issues relating to Secretariat **personnel and the necessary skills** and training required to ensure continuity in the operation of UIA information processing systems -- and in the effective response to demands and opportunities
- (d) Issues relating to UIA **decision-making and strategy-defining capacity** -- notably through the Council -- and with respect to rapidly evolving situations in which the Secretariat is obliged to take rapid responsibility for initiatives that require more understanding of the technical and publishing challenges and opportunities than is feasible for the Council.
- (e) Issues relating to the capacity of the Secretariat to fulfil longer-term **contractual commitments** implicit in current projects or in multi-year projects currently envisaged. These are primarily associated with the mix of personnel skills and the costs of acquiring any temporary assistance, maintaining continuity, and the necessary supervision.
- (f) Issues relating to the UIA capacity for **self-evaluation in response to new operating contexts** in support of identification of new strategic initiatives and the termination of initiatives that are marginally viable.
- (g) Issues relating to **competition** (if only for resources) from other bodies in the areas of competence of UIA and to policy regarding *free / discount / full / extraordinary pricing* of data requested from the UIA. This is notably of importance in relation to the evolution of "**civil society**" -- and the various actors taking a significant role in this.
- (h) Issues concerning relationships with **intergovernmental organizations** (notably the much-challenged UN system of agencies seeking its own pattern of reform) -- a scheduled matter which the Council has been unable to address in recent meetings.
- (i) Issues relating to the **image and visibility** of the UIA and of its initiatives in an information environment increasingly populated by a plethora of initiatives seeking

attention.

(j) Issues relating to UIA capacity to take and **articulate a coherent position** in response to fundamental changes in the international community and its mode of operation (as signalled by globalization, democratic deficit, military intervention, disruption of international law, and “perks” and corruption at the highest level). This challenge is especially problematic given the UIA’s long-term apolitical approach to the range of organizations and issues and its assumption relating to the merits of internationalization and internal institutions.

(k) The nature of the **transformation of the form and mode of operation** of the UIA (currently governed by statutes essentially based on the mid-20th century understanding corresponding to their date of formulation) in response to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century