Summary of Activities of the UIA Secretariat

In preparation for the UIA General Assembly (27-28 October 2005)

This report updates the report presented on the occasion of the UIA Bureau meeting (January 2005) as a closing activity report for 2004, following that prepared for the UIA Council meeting (October 2004, Document #2). The previous Summary of Activities (26 May 2004) was distributed in preparation for the June 2004 Council meeting (subsequently cancelled and replaced by an Informal Meeting). As input to the debate at the October 2005 General Assembly, it also summarizes information on some earlier items since the previous Assembly (October 2003).

In response to feedback, and in contrast with previous reports, the focus here is to minimize detail wherever possible. Given the circumstances however, the emphasis is on a level of frankness that seems necessary for healthy remedial action.

Financial situation

With the assistance of a monthly supplement from the UIA publisher, K G Saur Verlag, from July through December 2004, the cash flow crisis in 2004 was successfully avoided. From January 2005 through December 2005, the regular monthly editorial payments from Saur is being reduced by a corresponding amount to repay the 2004 supplement (which effectively constituted an interest free loan).

The consequences of the severe cost-cutting decisions made in 2004, and the publishing/pricing options chosen for 2005, have successfully ensured the ability to meet financial and contractual commitments through the months of 2005 as foreseen in the forecasts presented to the Council in October 2004.

As indicated to the UIA Council (and to the Bureau in January 2005), it would be a grave error to forget the dimensions of the crisis experienced in June-July 2004. Furthermore, as indicated in earlier reports, there are a variety of warning signals regarding the medium-term viability of UIA income in the highly volatile, rapidly evolving information market -- in which many old and new players are actively positioning themselves, notably with the aid of new internet search facilities that reduce the need for the basic products and services provided by the UIA.

The recovery process through 2005 and into 2006 is highly dependent on reducing costs and increasing revenues. Although costs have been severely reduced (even counter-productively, as noted below), the possibilities of increasing revenue have not taken form. Whilst extreme prudence has ensured that the UIA is currently operating within the scope of income generated, this mode does not allow for unexpected costs. It is expected that financial reserves will be exhausted by the end of December 2005.

Fundamentally the UIA faces the issue -- currently confronted by many bodies -- of the appropriate organization and strategy for the 21st century.

Office reorganization

The progressive consolidation of offices, agreed as a cost-cutting measure, has been completed with the abandonment of several offices in (40 rue Washington) and consolidation in 38 rue Washington. Thanks to MAI, furniture continued to be stored, at no cost, in spare rooms in 40 rue Washington through June 2005.
In order to achieve this consolidation, and sustain morale and image (with a view to centennial public relations), certain rooms have been refurbished (repainting and recarpeting) and have benefited from an extensive range of donated furniture. The process has involved discarding much unwanted/obsolete furniture, computer equipment, documents and stocks of marginal value. This process has been a healthy one for the general feel of the Secretariat and has been much welcomed by staff.

The process has however been quite unsatisfactory for the Secretary-General, on taking up his functions again in January 2005, since his was one of the offices sacrificed in the reorganization. This situation was further complicated by his access to secretarial assistance, given that the secretary of the Secretary-General was one of the people given notice in the cost cutting exercise.

A recent unusual storm that affected many in the Brussels area, flooded the cellars in which the UIA had accumulated certain stocks. These had to be discarded.

**Publication production and services**

The main UIA information products have been successfully produced and distributed under long-term contract with K G Saur Verlag (a subsidiary of Thomson Learning).

**Yearbook of International Organizations:** The 2005-6 book version is the 42nd edition and covers some 60,000 bodies and some 300,000 links between them, and some 350,000 links to countries of membership

- **Book version** (ca 8,000 pages):
  - Vol 2: *Geographical by secretariat and membership*: Delivered to Saur on schedule (June 2004, June 2005) ca 1,740 pages
  - Vol 3: *Subject*: Delivered to Saur on schedule (July 2004, July 2005), ca 1,856 pages
  - Vol 4: *Bibliographical*: Delivered to Saur on schedule (July 2004, July 2005), ca 628 pages
  - Vol 5: *Statistics and Patterns*: Delivered to Saur on schedule (November 2003); production terminated on schedule (November 2004), although considerable difficulties were subsequently experienced with the Saur printer due to poor communications regarding embedded fonts. In September 2005 production is underway. ca 433 pages

- **Online version:** Successfully switched to the new MySQL/PHP (database) structure in September 2004 without affecting subscribers.

- **CD-Rom version:** Delivered on schedule in November 2004 from the new MySQL database structure, rather than from that used since 1995 for this purpose; production underway for a new version in September 2005.

It should be noted that the contracts with K G Saur Verlag, were “rolled over” for another three years from January 2005, reflecting the confidence of the publisher in the viability of UIA products and services. This work is now variously coordinated between Jacqueline Nebel, Nancy Carfrae, Joel Fischer and Tomáš Fülöpp.
**International Congress Calendar:** The 2005 edition constitutes the 45th year of publication. Ca 1,200 pages / year covering ca 7,000 future events. The database holds ca. 214,773 past and future meetings.

- **Paper:** The quarterly editions were successfully produced on schedule in 2004. As from 2005, and as a significant cost-cutting measure, this has been primarily delivered online, with only an option of e-mail or paper delivery of PDF pages on a quarterly basis.

- **Online:** A major focus has been the switch to a new online facility and its integration with the organization profiles in the Yearbook database. This was successfully completed for demonstration to Associate Members in October 2004, who were offered free access through to the end of 2004.

Following discussion with Saur, it was agreed that UIA would continue to produce this product independently, but that Saur would act as non-exclusive distributor for the online service – which is integrated with the Yearbook Online facility. This sometimes means that users requiring access to both online services require separate subscriptions.

**Transnational Associations:** The quarterly issues were successfully produced on schedule in 2004. As from 2005, this product can be searched online with possible purchase of PDF pages. It has been delivered in 2005 by e-mail (PDF) or paper on a quarterly basis. This approach had been agreed as one of the significant cost reduction measures in the recovery programme. Current issues are now integrated online with 50 years of back copies – notably as a contribution to the centenary process. Following decisions of the Council, notably for budgetary reasons, it is expected that 2005 will be the last edition of the product in its current form.

**International Meeting Statistics:** This annual publication (ca 65 pages), primarily reserved for Associate Members, was produced on schedule in late July 2004 (for meetings up to 2003), and in August 2005 (for meetings up to 2004). Problems are increasingly apparent in this process due to the challenge of achieving adequate coverage. A PDF version is made available.

**Who’s Who in International Organizations:** The previous 3-volume edition (the fourth) was completed in 2003, totalling 1,400 pages. Saur has been calling for a new edition, at least for inclusion on the Yearbook CD-Rom and in the online subscription with which it is currently bundled. On the occasion of the March 2005 meeting with Saur, it was agreed to produce an updated version, even through the budget proposed was minimal. The compromise was to do what can be done within the budget in the first half of 2005 by outsourcing the work to Helena Smalikova from Delphi (Poprad, Slovakia) under the direction of Nancy Carfrae, who has completed the process (covering 21,013 profiles) for delivery in September 2005. The main challenge has been the conflict between this work, scheduled for completion in November, and the work on the Yearbook cycle.

**Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential:** It was agreed at the meeting with SAUR in March 2004, that although there was a market for a new (fifth) edition of this product (last produced in book form 1995 with 3,160 pages), the budget was such that it was not a viable proposition for the UIA. The data, updated under a European Commission programme (1997-2000) continues to be distributed freely on the web, integrated with access by users of Yearbook Online as an enhancement of that service. UIA emphasized its marketing value. Queries are periodically received regarding a new print edition and one UIA Full Member is tentatively negotiating with a third party regarding the possibility of funding a new edition in some way.
Statistical programme

The UIA has for the past several years been operating a three-part statistical programme:

- Tables for the LSE/UCLA Global Civil Society Yearbook
- International Meetings Statistics (for Associate Members)
- Statistical Volume of Yearbook of International Organizations

The overlaps and timing of these initiatives have made for a coherent annual programme that was successfully completed in 2004 with the external assistance of Helena Smalikova (trained in 2003 and 2004 by Nadia McLaren who initiated the pattern in 2001). Unfortunately the first item will not feature in the 2005 programme, due to budget cuts by LSE/UCLA, raising concerns about the coherence of the programme as a whole given its dependence on a higher degree of expertise and familiarity with a multitude of source data tables. Nadia McLaren continued to perform an oversight role in 2005 but has indicated she will not be available to do so in 2006. Nancy Carfrae has been performing this function for the statistical volume of the Yearbook in 2005.

Increasing proportions of this statistical information are now made available electronically, whether within online subscriptions, or as a free service.

Development of information services

A major upgrade of the in-house network server was successfully completed on 2 December 2004 -- with the exception of one unfortunately much-delayed facility to integrate UIA’s remote editors (Leuven; London; Poprad; and Louisville, USA) more effectively and reduce weekly data reconciliation costs. This feature, which should have been completed in January 2005, has proven technically impossible to bring about according to the original specifications due to particular legacy constraints (old workstations or database environments).

Online information services continue to be offered either freely or under subscription, as appropriate – with continuing effort to maximize access of international associations. A major focus has been the switch, ensured by Tomáš Fülöpp, to a MySQL/PHP (database) system notably featuring:

- increase in the stability of the service (to remedy constraints and progressive obsolescence under the old DOS-based service) and to reduce dependencies for future maintenance,
- integration of the Calendar database as a source of new income,
- integration of the historical series of Transnational Associations,
- integration of the organizational logos database to enhance organization profiles,
- provision of automatic geographical maps for membership and event information,
- provision of statistics by country, city, date on-the-fly,
- addition of administrative interfaces with automatic user statistics (requested by Saur/Gale for marketing user follow-up purposes).

Initially this has meant cessation of the network mapping service that has yet to be adapted to the new system. The changes now make it possible to implement remote online editing in 2005, notably in order to facilitate controlled access and input from profiled organizations – as a means of reducing the considerable postal costs to international organizations associated with paper questionnaires currently used to update the Yearbook. This remote editing facility is in a prototype phase in September 2005.
The online service was switched in September 2004 from an in-house facility to a remote (rack server) to improve performance and physical security. Unfortunately this facility was the subject of two major “denial of service attack” in December 2004. The necessary remedial action, with the aid of newly found external expertise, has resulted in a much more healthy configuration. However, these failures could not have come at a worse time in relation to end-of-year subscription renewals to the new services. They raise important issues regarding server facilities in the potentially dangerous and “unfriendly” internet environment of the 21st century.

In its role of improving marketing of the online service, SAUR has been concerned with the further development of the interface in order to conform to usage reporting standards now imposed by libraries to assess the value of their subscription. This issue had been the focus of SAUR concerns in 2004 in response to pressure from their marketing people (notably in the USA) and remained a priority in 2005.

Internally, the Secretariat is now making use of the well-known open source Wikipedia-style software for internal notes and procedures. This has also proven a useful means of gaining expertise with software that is liable to prove significant to UIA’s future information development.

**Project proposals**

The UIA has developed numerous projects in recent years. In the 2003-2004 period they included the following consortia project proposals coordinated by Nadia McLaren:

- **Global Knowledge Grid: A New Infrastructure for Understanding Globalization.** With Princeton University and Sydney University of Technology. Project proposal to the US National Science Foundation (refused September 2004)

- **CiviLynx: Gateway to Civil Society Organization Information** (Proposal to DG Information Society for a Demonstration Project in the framework of the eContent programme, Action Line 1: Improving access to and use of public sector information Subline 1.1: Cross-border information services based on public sector information)

- **Local Action Dynamics: Knowledge patterns for local, participatory implementation of the Lisbon Strategy LADY, 2003.** (The integrated project (IP) is EU Framework Programme 6’s instrument for objective-driven research. The IP LADY addresses the subject of collective knowledge for organisational transition.)

Whilst unsuccessful at the time, for a variety of reasons, this does not necessarily preclude their being resubmitted or recycled, although the opportunity to resubmit the Grid project in September 2005 was missed due to the current lack of clarity on strategic commitments and working arrangements.

**Project development framework:** A series of active discussions have taken place with a number of potential partners with regard to new project possibilities. This follows from agreement during the June 2004 meetings, confirmed at the UIA Council meeting in October 2004, that the possibility of attracting “investors” into new projects and partnerships should be explored. The key issue here is the nature of the interface with one, or more such investors:

- to protect the interests of all parties
- to make the project “attractive”, both to the UIA and to potential investors
- to appropriately distinguish between investors with primarily ethical as opposed to primarily commercial priorities, whether to include or to exclude the latter
- to ensure that contractual relationships with Saur are appropriately safeguarded
• to resist the tendency to reduce usage to simplistic research questions or any exploitation of addresses (that would erode confidence of organizations supplying the information)

The challenges are well illustrated by proposals made by others for collaboration with the UIA with regard to the conditions of use of its data. Typically NGOs and academic bodies consider it reasonable to request an extensive copy of the data, and unreasonable to be constrained in its use. They tend to view the UIA as a “public service”. On the other hand, licensing use of data, and the associated “intellectual property”, is now an active topic for many in the emerging information society – especially when the constraints on the copying of data are being reduced. A variant of this approach under consideration is the exploitation of UIA data under a suitable license – a form of outsourcing of project development.

Proposals discussed with SAUR: At the March 2005 meeting with SAUR, and following their encouragement for project proposals, the following items were discussed:

• **Historical Yearbook information**: UIA provided detailed figures on this project to digitize organization profiles from 1910) in the light of its project proposal to NSF through Princeton University in 2004. The possibilities were extensively discussed, but no concrete agreement was reached. SAUR argued that this proposal is an add on value to the online edition, which makes "Yearbook online" a deeper academic product, delivering historical profiles on the associations included. They saw no possibility of generating additional revenue from this investment through separate publications.

• **Logotypes**: SAUR is exploring the possibility of publishing a new edition of "World Guide to Logotypes, Emblems and Trademarks of International Organizations".

• **Public Interest Registry (PIR) interface**: The nature of possible collaboration with SAUR on this project was discussed (see below). SAUR agreed that only few of the members are potential real customers of "Yearbook online" and agreed to further discussions of an appropriate formula for use of Yearbook data

• **Extension of coverage to national organizations** UIA reported on the CiviLynx proposal developed in response to an EU call for proposals in 2003 (see above). This would have enabled access through the UIA to databases of national organizations, without any requirement that UIA maintain those national profiles. This was seen as a means of significantly extending the value of UIA online data. UIA indicated that it would continue to check technical possibilities of such an Interface to National Organization Databases

• **Extension of online search facilities**: The UIA highlighted to SAUR the relation between two possible approaches to extension of the online search facilities it offers:
  o Use of the URLs it holds on international organizations to manage (Google-like) searches of the websites of those bodies through the UIA interface.
  o Use of the GRID technology envisaged in the proposal made to NSF by Princeton University to pull together, from a number of (international organization) websites, pieces of information relevant to a single search query

• **Pay-per-view access possibilities** The possibility that users might pay only when they actually viewed information (as is increasingly the case on many journal websites) was discussed. SAUR expressed some interest in this formula but more thought by UIA is required.

• **Data licensing** This possibility for additional revenue was discussed. It is employed by SAUR with other products. It may have implications for the PIR possibility. The concern
for the UIA is whether this approach indeed offers a source of quick revenue whilst endangering the future income generating capacity of the UIA data.

SAUR requested that UIA consider its position towards their contacting existing data licensing customers and ask them if they are interested in licensing "Yearbook" data. SAUR has license contracts which specify what it is allowed to do with the data or not. A sample contract will be sent for UIA consideration, but probably all regularities of "Yearbook" data and customer needs have to be fixed according to the product.

Specific proposals: Four proposals have been actively considered by the Secretariat in 2005:

- **Glossary project:** Discussions with Europhil regarding the integration of the civil society glossary project into the range of UIA databases offered online, have reached a tentative positive conclusion (although the partners were not able to meet). Further action has been delayed until Europhil can assemble the necessary funding.

- **Employment database for NGOs:** There has been some interest in, and pressure on, the UIA to develop an organization jobs database and a conference industry jobs clearinghouse.

- **Development of a data licensing / data marketing programme:** As indicated above one of the most problematic issues faced by the UIA is how to reconcile:
  - Sustaining the exclusivity of the relationship with Saur that is defined by contract and ensures a guaranteed income
  - Marketing selected portions of that data to Associate Members as an exclusive prerogative
  - Ensuring (minimum or zero cost) access to that data by civil society bodies from whom it has been obtained and for whom its collection and dissemination is defined by the UIA statutes
  - Ensuring reasonable cost access by scholars whose research the UIA has statutory obligations to facilitate
  - Ensuring some measure of access to other bodies (eg consultancies) not covered by any of the above
  - Ensuring a degree of protection of UIA data assets (as intellectual property) which are vulnerable to being freely copied with no guarantee of income to UIA

In response to these dilemmas, and the income generation possibilities that they imply, an effort had been made to scope out an agreement for “marketing” the data under a variety of formulae. This proposal has been articulated by Nadia McLaren (as a consultant) as a necessary contractual rationalization of services that she has already very successfully performed for the Secretariat. This would empower her to act for the UIA in negotiating appropriate resource-generating arrangements, notably through new income streams. It has not yet proven possible to firm-up these arrangements because of the unresolved generic issues of principle which the President and Secretary-General would prefer to the General Assembly to address.

Although proposals of this type have been designed to cut through the fund raising / decision delay loop to respond to immediate financial challenges, they have been effectively placed on hold in anticipation of further discussion by the General Assembly.

- **Public Interest Registry (PIR):** As noted above (in the discussion with SAUR), this body, which manages the web .ORG domain, had formulated the desire to offer some limited portion of Yearbook entries of organizations (for some organizations only) at no cost (via their own website) to the .ORG community of web domain holders (6 million). The value
to the UIA would be the license fee for the service, and to both UIA and SAUR it would be the wider visibility offered to the UIA products. After lengthy preliminary discussion dating from 2003, it was agreed in September 2005 to empower Nadia McLaren to continue the negotiations with PIR with a view to an early decision. The proposal raises several issues, all of which may end up justifying abandonment of the project, despite the level of income that it may guarantee. They are: whether it makes UIA data assets vulnerable in ways which endanger them, how SAUR may respond to the proposal and its effects on the UIA contract with them, the nature of the contract with Nadia McLaren as an intermediary, and the nature of the contract with PIR.

- **Advertising revenue from online Calendar:** This is a radical proposal to change the primary source of revenue supporting the online *International Congress Calendar* from subscription income to advertising income. To be credible to advertisers (notably in the meetings industry), access to the facility has to be significantly increased to those organizing and attending meetings, and notably those providing the information for inclusion. This can be achieved by making the service freely available, although careful attention has to be given to the performance of servers to avoid alienating delays. Some may recall that the hardcopy version of the publication derived considerable income from advertising up to the early 1980s, an approach since abandoned because of the nature of the circulation of the publication. The proposed approach also helps to respond to the challenge of gathering meeting information by authorizing input or filtering unauthorized input. The viability of the project depends on ensuring coherent coordination of development of the Calendar and advertising subscriptions from the meetings industry (notably in relation to maintaining the Associate Membership subscription and the extended facilities offered under it). Originally intended for presentation at the UIA Associate Members meeting (early October 2005), further development has been postponed and made subject to approval of the business risk by the General Assembly and the contractual arrangements governing management of the process. The original timeline resulted in the development of a separate (and independently funded) online interface with advertising facilities. This proposal is strongly conditioned by the awareness of the amount of free online access to meeting information through a variety of services, and the risk of the early emergence of services that will completely undermine the current Calendar formula.

**UIA Meetings and Membership**

The Council meeting scheduled for June 2004 was postponed to enable the financial implications of the crisis to be reviewed. The Bureau met at that time to help clarify the steps to be taken. On the same occasion, an Informal Gathering was held with the participation of those Council members who had already made travel commitments and various people associated with the Secretariat. The meeting notably discussed both the strong possibility of liquidation of the UIA and the envisaged centennial celebration! A second such Informal Gathering was held in August. Documents relating to both were circulated to Council members.

Following the meetings in June 2004, there has in fact been very little comment by Full Members on the financial crisis and the possibilities of a successful recovery programme. Specific proposals for distinct recovery initiatives focused on fund-raising and new income have however been received from Gianni Tibaldi, Nadia McLaren, Jacques de Mévius and Mike Baker in their capacity as Full Members, and in the light of their respective external contacts. These have been pursued, or are in process of further discussion.

On the basis of their professional skills, and as Full Members, group process suggestions addressing the UIA institutional malaise have been separately made by Jon Jenkins (author of a
commissioned internal report on the UIA in 2001), Marilyn Mehlmann, Tim Casswell, and Peter Koenig, notably on the occasion of the June 2004 gathering. Their collective concern has however not yet evolved into a proposal for Council meetings. Those of Tim Casswell (coordinator of the Council working group on meeting methods) developed into the Informal Gathering in August 2004 (mentioned above), primarily for those most directly associated with the Secretariat.

Despite the financial crisis, the regular annual meeting of UIA Associate Members was held in Brussels (October 2004) and appropriately celebrated the many years of effort of Ghislaine de Coninck – with a song composed by Tim Casswell based on thematic phrases supplied by those present. The functions of Ghislaine de Coninck have now been taken over by Joel Fischer (now working from the USA) who is well-known as a speaker to many Associate Members. Following feedback from Associate Members, it was agreed to continue the annual meeting in October 2005 with Day 1 organized by Joel Fischer and with Day 2 organized by Marilyn Mehlmann (theme: Beyond wheelchairs: the changing face of conference hosting).

The Council meeting (originally scheduled for June 2004) was held in October 2004. A draft set of minutes was circulated on 15 November to Council members for comment -- with a view to their approval at the next Council meeting in 2005. No substantive comments have as yet been received.

Communications: Members, Council and Secretariat

In response to encouragement at the General Assembly in October 2003, several different approaches to the facilitation of communication between Full Members, Council Members and the Secretariat have been explored:

- **Forum I** (January 2004-July 2004): This was based on the popular open source TikiWki software, a comprehensive group communication and content management package combining forum, wiki, file repository, surveying, polling and FAQ features. The software was set up by Tomas Fulopp. User setup and coaching was provided by Nadia McLaren. A considerable number of UIA official documents, notes and reports were made available through this interface. Despite efforts to involve, UIA Council members and Full Members, together with the Secretariat employees and collaborators, the tool was experienced as too complex and progressively abandoned.

- **E-mail lists I** (July 2004-January 2005): The main tool used thereafter for communication with Council and Full Members was e-mail distribution lists. This gave rise to a very modest level of interchange between members.

- **Forum II** (May 2005-July 2005): This was based on the web’s most popular open source bulletin board package (phpBB), which is limited to forum features. The software was set up by Tomas Fulopp. User setup and coaching was provided by Anthony Judge. A particular concern was those included in particular e-mail communications but excluded from others, and the difficulty of maintaining any record over time for those who wished to access documents at a later time. This too was experienced as too complex by potential users and progressively abandoned by non-Secretariat users.

- **E-mail lists II** (July 2005-present): The main tool now used for communication with Council and Full Members continues to be e-mail distribution lists. This continues to give rise to a very modest level of interchange between members. The concern remains about those included in particular communications but inadvertently excluded from other communications.
The possible conclusions worth considering are that:

- There is relatively limited desire on the part of the majority of members to communicate with each other.
- Common forum packages do not correspond to the expertise and comfort level of those who are prepared to consider such communications.
- The issue of language remains a concern in an organization which makes use of both English and French.
- As an international organization whose members necessarily have difficulty in arranging face-to-face meetings, the UIA does not currently have the most useful communication vehicle through which to follow particular threads of interest.
- Consideration could also be given to the use of internet telephony facilities (Skype, Google) for smaller meetings, as notably explored by some at the Secretariat.
- The issue of Full Members (especially on the Council) without effective use of e-mail, remains a concern in terms of timely participation in decision-making and communications costs.
- Issues relating to the inadvertent non-transparency and exclusiveness of some communications based on e-mail rather than a forum, and the erosion of collective memory.

**Statutes**

As has been indicated, clarity from the Belgian Ministry of Justice regarding the required modifications to the statutes of all NGOs based in Belgium has been long in arriving. Finally, as indicated in separate communications, this information became available on 14 December 2004, notably with respect to the postponement of the deadline for conformity to 31 December 2005.

A particular challenge for the UIA is the process whereby these changes are debated and approved by its statutory bodies in 2005 – and the timing of their meetings to meet the deadline in the light of expected government administrative delays. Concerns have been expressed as to whether the modifications made should be minimal or should seek to recognize the operating reality and resources of an international organization like the UIA in a 21st century information environment. In particular the possibility of electronic participation and voting is under consideration.

An early draft of the proposed modifications to the 1986 Statutes, in the light of recommendations by Andre de Schutter during the October Council meeting, was distributed in March 2005 for consideration by Council members. Subsequently this “minimal” modification draft was redistributed with an “extended” modification draft in August 2005. Respondents indicated a strong preference for the minimal version with some additions. This is being recirculated for comment in September 2005.

**External relations**

**Intergovernmental organizations:** The main event has been publication of the Cardoso Report (Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations) in October 2004. As requested by the Council, a letter was addressed to the UN Secretary-General on 4 November 2004 drawing attention to the role of the UIA in respect to information collection on international associations – which originally justified its consultative relationship in 1951. There is a reasonable possibility that the implementation of some recommendations by the UN will, whether inadvertently or not, result in some destabilization of UIA activity – notably with respect to database services on international organizations.
Through a contract with the EU TACIS project, the UIA provided a keynote speaker (Allan Howard) for the opening of the Development of Civil Society EuropeAid Institution Building Partnership Programme (Kiev, 14 October 2004), the second intervention of this nature on behalf of UIA.

**Centenary preparations:** Initial contacts with the King Baudouin Foundation with a view to setting up a special account capable of receiving tax free donations proved unsuccessful – despite the preliminary information. A revised proposal, in the light of further feedback, will be submitted in 2005. As decided by the Council in October 2004, funds must be available before commitments to any centennial projects are made. However other matters relating to the centennial celebrations (Council document #9.6), notably the date, have yet to be clarified. Several other documents on the Centenary concept have been prepared by André Onkelinx and Marilyn Mehlmann.

**External meetings:**

- **Celebration of 75th Anniversary of FIIG:** Unfortunately it was not possible for the UIA to be represented at this event in 2004.

- **General Assembly of Centro Italiano per le associazioni Internazionali (Montecatini):** Unfortunately it was not possible for the UIA to be represented at this event in 2004, nor to participate in an envisaged colloquium on that occasion, despite the convention governing the relation of the UIA with the Centro.

- **Maison des Associations Internationales (MAI):** The UIA was duly represented at the Administrative Council meeting in 2004 on the modification of the statutes of this body -- of which the UIA is a founding member. The financial situation of the MAI, in which the UIA Secretariat is located, remains very precarious.

- **EFCT Summer School:** Joel Fischer was invited as a speaker at this event in Budapest in 2004. The UIA was well-represented at this event in 2005 by several Associate Members.

- **FAIB:** The UIA was represented at several meetings in 2004 held in relation to the change in the Belgian legislation relative to the statutes of international NGOs. The UIA continues to provide some internet connectivity and mail facilities for FAIB.

**Dissemination of excess stocks:** As previously indicated, the UIA annually has access to excess stocks of its books as printed by Saur that could be of benefit to certain reference libraries. The issue is how to strike a balance between distribution of such volumes to interested bodies, without jeopardizing possible sales and without incurring the extensive transportation (and customs) costs or any associated administrative costs. Nadia McLaren has undertaken an initiative in response to this potential. The Secretary-General has made provisional arrangements for the distribution of some volumes to developing countries in 2006.

**Strategy**

As has been previously noted, concerns have been expressed that the UIA lacks an explicit and effective strategy for the immediate future – despite many indicative proposals by the Secretariat to past Council and Bureau meetings. Appropriate clarification has been called for – notably to facilitate a coherent presentation to various parties for fund raising and other purposes.
It is however important to recall that the seeming lack of an explicit strategy ignores the degree to which UIA core operations are highly focused to sustain, on a long-term basis, a particular pattern of core revenue-generating services. This is strategy “by default” -- reflecting a pattern of decisions made over decades by the UIA’s statutory bodies. This is not a static strategy but one that has been obliged to evolve proactively in response to the evolution of the emerging knowledge society, its opportunities and constraints.

To assist in this debate, a number of documents were prepared for the Council meeting in October 2004 and the Bureau meeting of January 2005. Of particular concern however is whether the UIA has the collective will and resources to reform the existing structure in fundamental ways that would be an improvement on the present mode. Unfortunately Mike Baker, as coordinator of the Council working group on strategy, felt obliged to resign that role for lack of collective interest in this issue.

In considering any changes, it is important to recognize the strategic advantage that the UIA derives from the synergy between various information activities (organizations, meetings, biographies, problems, etc) as compared to other bodies which specialize in one or the other, often in a less comprehensive manner. It could be asserted that the UIA’s survival depends on these synergy effects.

Failure over recent years to address and resolve differences concerning the future UIA strategy has had, and continues to have, a cumulative effect that is undermining the capacity to engage with potential partners and act coherently in fulfilment of its potential in the emerging knowledge society. This “negative synergy” is extremely disempowering for those inspired by that potential.

There is an unfortunate failure to understand the nature of both the necessary strategic nimbleness and the need to sustain the momentum, enthusiasm and technical innovation that has been so vital to the evolution of UIA information products over the past decade. It is these subtle qualities that are now currently at risk.

**Presentation brochure**

The strategic deficiency is most evident in the challenge of producing a presentation brochure, notably to attract investors. Several initiatives by Council members (notably Marilyn Mehlmann and Peter Mettler), and on the part of the Secretariat (notably by Nancy Carfrae), have not yet resolved issues relating to the content of a brochure. The October 2004 Council meeting encouraged members to select and assemble texts for any such document according to need. The Bureau meeting in January 2005 devoted significant time to articulating a brochure from the above versions. This was subsequently distributed to Council members for appreciation. A particular associated marketing challenge lies in deciding on the quantities to be published and the use to which such a brochure is to be put.

However, without resolving the UIA’s current “identity crisis” – common to many bodies entering the information society of the 21st century -- it is difficult for any professional marketing (or fund-raising) approach to articulate a coherent profile or determine to whom it should be addressed. It is for this reason that the Secretariat has stressed marketing of UIA information products and services through its website – notably to benefit from the worldwide visibility it offers.

A more comprehensive brochure was prepared by the Secretariat in April 2005 which focused on information products and services. This has only been used very selectively in meetings to reinforce face-to-face contacts potentially linked to project work.
Research

The extent and nature of UIA research was a theme reviewed during the October 2004 Council meeting (Doc #5). At this stage research has several points of focus: documentation and classification (a preoccupation dating back to its foundation); statistics (as valued by the academic community and meetings industry); and bibliographic (as valued by the academic and NGO communities).

One consequence of the failure to resolve strategic dilemmas, and the role of the UIA in the wider pattern of international initiatives, has been a disinclination to take any position in relation to the dramatic challenges of the times – and their profound implications for assumptions about the future of the rule of law. Any critical research perspective concerning civil society is consequently left to those who benefit from the more basic research undertaken by the UIA, or to UIA collaborators working outside the UIA framework.

In the case of Anthony Judge, for example, papers posted on the web, in the period since 2003, include:

- Humour and Play-Fullness: essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity
- Playfully Changing the Prevailing Climate of Opinion: Climate change as focal metaphor of effective global governance
- Meta-challenges of the Future for Networking through Think-tanks
- Being Positive Avoiding Negativity: management challenge -- positive vs negative
- Future World Council Creation: reflections of an ancient futurist
- Dynamically Gated Conceptual Communities: emergent patterns of isolation within knowledge society
- Recent Breakthroughs in Civil Society Research: Reactive vs Proactive Exploration of Opportunities and Alternatives?
- Animating the Representation of Europe
- Practicalities of Participatory Democracy with International Institutions: Attitudinal, Quantitative and Qualitative Challenges
- Framing NGOs in the Market for Change: comment on the report by SustainAbility
- Global Civil Society: strategic comments on the path ahead
- Tank-thoughts from Think-tanks: constraining metaphors on developing global governance

Human resources

As a whole, 2004-5 has been an exceptionally difficult period for those associated directly with the Secretariat. Briefly stated this has involved adjustments to retirement of key long-term personnel (Geneviève Devillé, Ghislaine de Coninck), illnesses and their consequences (André Onkelinx, Anthony Judge, Cécile Denet), relocation (Joel Fischer), redistribution of roles, cost-cutting terminations (Paul Ghils, Nicole Maes), necessary new engagements and training (Helena Smalikova, Christine Chantraine, Leslie Selvais). Ensuring normal operations in a period of crisis has been rendered especially difficult because of the shifting availability of human resources, notably over the holiday periods.

As agreed by the Bureau in June 2004, Anthony Judge performed the role of Secretary-General ad interim during the period when André Onkelinx was constrained by family matters. He resigned this function at the Bureau meeting in January 2005 due to differences in appreciation of the nature of the appropriate response to the financial crisis. André Onkelinx then agreed to take up the function again until the end of his mandate in October 2005. Cécile Denet successfully took over the functions of Geneviève Devillé as Assistant Secretary-General responsible for administrative and financial questions.
It is appropriate to note the vital role of non-staff members in sustaining the viability of UIA programmes. Jacqueline Nebel provides continuing guidance on the Yearbook, despite her status as an independent contractor retiree. Joel Fischer has converted to an independent status working from the USA (on the Yearbook, Associate Members, some system maintenance, and non-standard inquiry processing). As an independent consultant, the transitional assistance during 2004-5 of Nadia McLaren with respect to UIA financial reporting, statistics and online development of the Calendar has been most valuable. Consolidation of the role of Helena Smalikova working from Slovakia as an outsourced “employee” will hopefully safeguard the statistical programme. Christian Sylvestre continues to provide assistance each year in the final production of the CD-Rom version of the Yearbook. It is notable that all of these people are non-Belgians, reflecting the constraints in practice on long-term employment of non-Belgians by the UIA.

The positive support of staff and non-staff through the recent months has been a significant factor in the healthy response to the financial crisis – especially given the recognized need to sacrifice an accepted end of year bonus. The role of Tim Casswell in addressing the issue of staff commitment and expertise in a series of encounters in 2004 has been significant and much appreciated. It resulted in a more regular series of staff gatherings in 2004 – themselves valued, although not continued after February 2005.

Core Secretariat operations are indeed carried out satisfactorily – however under-staffed and under-resourced by other standards (and only funded to minimum legal requirements). Unlike intergovernmental organizations like the UN or OECD, staff interests are not protected by any trade union. It should be emphasized, as has been stated in earlier reports, that staff levels and competencies are basically inadequate for the range of operations that have to be undertaken beyond those core tasks – especially at the current levels of remuneration and benefits imposed by current revenue (and profit margins on the products sold). Although healthy, Secretariat operations are vulnerable and fragile -- and with only very limited skills backup in the event of absence (for whatever reason). The continuing crisis in financing and decision-making has further eroded staff capacity, morale and goodwill in ways that may not be readily apparent but which it would be a mistake to ignore.

Whilst the question of human resources is normally treated separately from statutory and financial reporting, it is vital to recognize the extent to which functioning of the UIA has been, and continues to be, dependent on an unusual degree of goodwill, whether on the part of staff, Full Members, or others. An extensive analysis has been made of this dimension (in an internal Secretariat report in 2005), with a view to reflecting some aspects in the balance sheet.