



1964

Proceedings of International Meetings

Analysis of a bibliography

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Introduction

The following summary analysis is based on [Bibliography of Proceedings of International Meetings held in 1958](#) which has just been published by the Union of International Associations.

The bibliography contained 1587 reports produced in connection with 1161 meetings on all subjects. Material was included in the bibliography on the basis of the following criteria :

Proceedings: official report and/or working papers. Where these have not been located or published reference has been made to summary reports in periodicals. Every effort was made to provide a reference to some material descriptive of the meeting.

International: a meeting involving representatives of three or more countries where the participants are considered to be present on an equal basis and not as foreign guests at a national meeting. (Information on the proceedings of national meetings of this type is in principle covered by the national bibliographical and library services of the country concerned and thus does not fall within the scope of this bibliography.)

Meeting : conferences, congresses, symposia, roundtables, conventions, assemblies, etc. of international governmental and nongovernmental organizations together with the international meetings organized by national organizations. This includes the specialist and technical meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. Reports of meetings of the principle administrative and consultative bodies of the larger organizations have been included as many are fairly substantial volumes of more than internal interest.

Subject: material has been included under all subject headings.

Classification of Material

Descriptions of reports are classified according to the opening date of the meeting to which they refer. The bibliography includes three indexes: Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) number, subject, author and organization responsible for meeting.

Analysis of Material

The material was analysed in two operations :

Operation I: A. Meetings were broken down into three groups	
Conference Congress Convention Convegno etc.	i.e. large general meetings in principle open to all interested parties and whose object is the discussion of a particular subject or range of subjects. Here referred to as 'conference'.
Symposium Colloquium Roundtable Seminar Study Committee Meeting etc.	i.e. specialist meetings in principle limited to a restricted group and/or by invitation and whose object is the discussion of a particular subject. Here referred to as 'symposium'.
Assembly Plenary Meeting	i.e. meeting held to regulate the internal functions of a particular

Administrative bodies	organization and to prepare and discuss future programmes of action. Here referred to as 'administrative'.
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As indicated above the groups will be referred to in the following text by their main members (i.e. as 'conference', 'symposium', 'administrative').

The placing of meetings in each group based simply on the title of the resulting report is not very satisfactory. Overlapping of the groups was bound to occur because the words themselves do not have precise definitions in practice. This is particularly true of the French word 'congrès' which may imply either a meeting of purely administrative character or one at which technical material is to be presented. In many cases it was possible to avoid this difficulty by referring to the contents of the report.

B. Organizations and bodies responsible for the meetings were broken down into three groups :

- International inter-governmental organizations or sponsors;
- International non-governmental organizations or sponsors;
- National non-governmental organizations or sponsors ;

The second and third groupings were further split up on the basis of the manner in which the report was published :

- Commercial publishing house;
- Sponsoring organization;
- National committee (in the case of NGOs) ;
- Review of the organization;
- Review of some other body.

C. In each case account was taken of the number of publications and translations per meeting. Publication is to be considered in this case as meaning bibliographical entry- this conceals the fact that in some cases a number of publications produced in connection with the same meeting have been included in the same entry. It also conceals the cases where the main report is merely an article (included for lack of fuller information or in cases where the main report is not easily obtainable) though this is to a certain extent shown up by the second analysis.

D. In some cases where positive indication was obtained stating that no report was available or that the report was restricted to members only an entry was included to this effect. The number of these cases was noted in the analysis.

E. For each group 'conference', 'symposium' and 'administrative' where the meeting formed part of a series of meetings (annual, biennial, etc.) the number of the meeting in its series was noted (i.e. 1st meeting; 2nd-5th meeting; 6th-10th 11th-15th; above 15th). The frequency of these meetings was also noted.

Operation II: A. The bibliographical material was broken down into five groups	
National reports Preparatory documents Documents issued during meeting	i.e. material issued preparatory to the meeting and for discussion during the meeting.
Minutes Final Acts Official records Resolutions Procès verbaux Comptes rendus Summary reports	i.e. material produced as a record of the meeting; reports resulting from the conclusions of the meeting as a whole. Here referred to as 'report'.
Proceedings Acts Transactions Text of reports Summary records + documents	i.e. technical material forming the basis for discussion. Here referred to as 'proceedings'.
Abstracts Summaries of communications	
Miscellaneous Programmes Review articles	i.e. material included for lack of anything better.

As indicated above the two main groups will be referred to in the following text by their main member (i.e. as 'report', 'proceedings') Where material falling into different groups was available for the same meeting this was included under the most appropriate heading. Translations were not included except where they were published by different bodies.

B. The material was split up according to date of publication by year as indicated in the entry ie. 1957, 1958, 1963. 1957 was included to cover, those cases where the preparatory material was published before the meeting.

Undated material was considered as having been published in 1958 - the year of the meeting.

C. The material was also split up on the basis of the number of pages per meeting (i.e. 1-20 pages; 21-50; 51-100; 101-200; 201-300; 301-500; 501-700; 701-900; above 901; unpagged).

Results

A. Meetings

As the first analysis was done month by month it was possible to plot the information summarized in Table I.

	Intergovernmental sponsors	Non-governmental sponsors	National sponsors	Total
Conferences . . .	53	395	120	568
Symposia	148	121	141	410
Administrative	104	79	-	183
Total	305	595	261	1,161

The graph showed minima in each case (i.e. 'conference', 'symposium', and 'administrative') for the meetings sponsored by the three types of organization considered (IGO, NGO, national). The minima occurred in the period December-February and less markedly around the month of August. The maximum in June-July and September-October occur for all meetings but the September-October is most marked in the case of the NGO conferences (August 52; September 100; October 29). This effect is well known and has been remarked on in previous issues of International Associations. It is due to the attempt to organize meetings in the tourist season and at the same time to avoid interfering with the holiday period (IGO meetings show a minimum in August).

B. Reports

The distribution of the reports is shown in Table II. A distinction has been made between 'single' reports (1 report per meeting) and 'multiple' reports (several reports and/or translations per meeting).

ces' were either of the information type such as the United Nations conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy or convened under inter-governmental auspices to regulate such difficulties as the production of wheat, coffee, etc. This difficulty did not arise in the case of the NGOs where a distinction is usually made in the report between the business meeting and the technical meeting proper. It is for this reason that there are so few purely 'administrative' reports under the NGO section.

C. Translations

30 % of the IGO reports listed were translations, generally English, French or Spanish. This figure is almost certainly not representa-

	Intergovernmental Sponsors		Non-Governmental Sponsors		National Sponsors		Totals	
	Single Reports	Multiple Reports/ No of Meetings	Single Reports	Multiple Reports/ No of Meetings	Multiple Reports/ No of Meetings	Single Reports	Meetings	Reports
Conferences	31	67/22	318	198/77	106	36/14	568	756
Symposia	75	195/73	106	30/15	137	8/4	410	551
Administrative	61	125/43	66	28/13	-	-	183	280
Totals./	167	387/138	490	256/105	243	44/18	-	-
Meetings	305		595		267		1,161	-
Reports	554		746		287		1,587	

The reason for the greater number of IGO 'administrative' reports in comparison with the 'conference' section is due to the fact that most intergovernmental conferences are in fact plenary assemblies. It is only in the cases where the 'conference' was convened expressly to consider the technical material presented and not to formulate internal policy on the basis of the material that the meeting was considered to be an intergovernmental 'conference'. In practice this meant that the 'confereptive of the true situation as in most cases it

was only considered necessary to include the English or the French versions of IGO reports -many United Nations reports are published in four or more languages.

5 % of the NGO reports listed were translations. By contrast much NGO material contained bilingual text or communications in several languages (generally English, French, German, Italian or Spanish).

2 % of the 'national' reports listed were translations. Here again material was often given in the language of the contributor but in many cases the material was translated into the language of the country concerned.

D. Publishers

Table III shows by whom the material was published for the three types of meeting.

	Intergovernmental sponsors	Non-Governmental Sponsors					National Sponsors			
		Commercial Publisher	NGO	National Committee	Journal		Commercial Publisher	National Committee	Journal	
					NGO	Other			National Commit.	Other
Conferences	98	114	206	85	71	40	43	79	11	9
Symposia	270	29	48	15	28	16	35	74	17	19
Administrative ..	186	2	53	5	31	3	-	-	-	-
Totals	554	145	307	105	130	59	78	153	28	28

It can be seen that :

- IGOs publish their own material. No separate column was made for commercial publishers in this case. NATO's Advisory Group on Aeronautical Research and Development (AGARD) publishes part of its AGARDograph series through a commercial publisher and is practically the only exception.
- NGOs have 20 % of their material published by commercial publishers; 58 % is published by the NGOs themselves or through their journals; 13 % through their national committees (i.e. the organizers of the meeting).

In the case of the nationally sponsored meetings 27 % of the material passes through the hands of the commercial publishers; 62 % is published by the organizations themselves.

E. Series

Analysis of the meetings forming part of a series produced the results shown in Table IV.

Number of Meeting	1	2-5	6-10	11-15	15+	Total in Series	Total Meetings	Series as % of Total
% Conference Series	12.6	39.7	22.1	12.1	13.4	411	578	71
% Symposia Series	22.7	50.6	17.5	5.8	3.2	151	392	38.5
% Administrative Series	4.4	24.0	25.3	14.5	31.6	155	191	81
				Total		717	1,161	61.7

71 % of the 'conferences'; 38.5 % of the 'symposia' and 81 % of the 'administrative meetings' formed part of a series; 62 % of the meetings as a whole formed part of a series.

The meetings in a series were split up into the number of the meeting in the series (i.e. 1st meeting; 2nd-5th meeting; etc.) and represented as a percentage of the total series meetings for each group ('conference', 'symposia', 'administrative') . This was plotted (see Graph I).

Interesting points are the considerably higher proportion of new 'symposia' series starting and the fact that the established series are not very long (only 3.2 % of the meetings go above the 15th).

The proportion of new 'administrative' meetings is small (4.4 %) and presumably corresponds to the number of new organizations holding their first plenary meeting. The curve as a whole is much flatter tailing off slowly (31.6 % of the meetings go above the 15th). This long tail off is due to the rapidity with which the 'administrative' meetings reach the higher numbers as a result of their greater frequency.

Number of reports .	171	178	180	214	125	154	67	38	80	75
No of Reports X Average No of Pages	26,400 (basis 50 p.)		67,800		61,600	40,200	30,400	80,000- (1000p)		

I. Date of publication

It is important to distinguish between the various types of material in indicating the date of publication. The length of the report has also to be taken into account. Plots have therefore been made of number of reports versus year of publication for various total numbers of pages. This has been done for the two main types of material 'Reports' and 'Proceedings', (see Graphs III and IV).

'Reports': most of the 'reports' (97 %) were published in the year in which the meeting was held or in the following year. Publication falls off rapidly thereafter as would be expected since from the practical point of view the record of the meeting must generally be available for consideration at the following meeting. 77 % of the minutes are in the range 1-100 pages.

'Proceedings': the majority of proceedings less than 100 pages (79 %) were published in the year of the meeting. For the other page groups there is a maximum corresponding to the year following the meeting. Due to the greater number of publications with a higher number of pages the number of publications produced from three to four years after the year of the meeting is higher. In 1963 for example 6 195S 'proceedings' were published-all in the higher page range.

In order to show the variation in the number of reports produced with date of publication a plot of percentage of total reports published versus year of publication for both the 'reports' and the 'proceedings' has been made see Graph V), This summarizes Graphs III and IV.

Coverage of Bibliography

A rough check on the card file on the 1958 meetings showed 1350 cards before information arising from bibliographical research was added to it. Reports were located for 730 of these cards and information that no report was available was obtained from the organizers of 30 meetings. The remaining 590 meetings were broken down according to Table I. (see Table VIII).

Table VIII: Meetings for which reports were not located				
	Intergovernmental sponsors	Non-governmental sponsors	National sponsors	Total
Conferences . .	12	227	83	322
Symposia	23	97	17	137
Administrative .	33	95		128
Total	68	419	100	587

The main reasons for reports not being located in these cases are as follows,

- i. no reply to requests for information
- ii. no current address located
- iii. not located in bibliographies or libraries consulted
- iv. no report-meeting too small, 'rally' type, private, etc.
- v. out of print, etc.

An estimate on the basis of the type of meeting involved is that 20-30 % resulted in reports of other than internal nature.

The bibliographical search itself led to information on reports resulting from a further 430 meetings.

Conclusion

The main points arising from this analysis are :

- i. the small proportion of material published through the commercial publishing houses
- ii. the high proportion of meetings forming part of series - although the reports for a given series are very often published by the different national bodies organizing the

meeting iii. 99.6 % reports resulting from the 1958 meetings located were published by 1963.

The presentation of the reports requires a comment. Many organizers publishing their own seem to assume that the report will not eventually find its way into a library. Efforts have been made in the past to suggest a standard form of presentation but it does seem important to include the name and date of the meeting giving rise to the report together with the names of the various bodies responsible for its organization. (For details of some of the problems in this field see 'The proceedings of meetings: their identification and cataloguing' by N Joyce Chamberlayne and Henry Coblaux, CERN, Geneva in *Revue internationale de la documentation*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 46-49).

Table IX: Division of reports by subject (based on UDC)					
U.D.C. Number	Subject	% Total	U.D.C. Number	Subject	% Total
0	Generalities ; Documentation . .	4.7	5		9.9
1	Philosophy ; Morals	1.8	6	Applied Sciences	-
2	Religion	2.8	61	Medicine	14.8
3		0.5	62	Engineering Technology	7.2
31	Statistics	0.9	63/64	Agriculture ; Domestic Science .	6.3
32	Political Sciences.	2.6	65	Communications ; Transport . .	5.1
33	Political Economy ; Economics .	10.7	66	Chemical Industries	3.0
34	Law	6.3	67/68	Manufactures	2.1
35		2.8	69	Building Industry	0.4
36	Social Relief; Welfare	2.8	Total 6		39.0
37	Education	6.8	7	Arts ; Entertainment ; Sport . . .	3.5
38	Communications ; Trade	2.1	8		1.1
39	Feminism	0.9	9	History ; Geography	0.9
Total 3		35.8			100.2
4	Philology ; Linguistics	0.7			

Although much of the material forms part of a series the analysis itself can only give a general idea of the situation for a particular year. The grouping of the meetings is not very satisfactory. It might be more fruitful to split up the meetings on the basis of what they sought to accomplish)



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