



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

Section on Government Information and Official Publications

Annual Report 1994-1995

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Standing Committee and Section Membership

The Standing Committee has 11 members from six countries, plus one corresponding member and one observer. There are 88 IFLA members registered for the Section.

Projects

Anglophone African Seminar

The first Anglophone African Seminar on Government Information and Official Publications was successfully held at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, 15-18 December 1994. It was a joint project of the Section with the Regional Section on Africa and co-sponsored by UNESCO and NCLIS (US National Commission on Library and Information Science). The 33 participants came from 13 countries, including four United Nations system institutions and one NGO. Twenty-seven speakers took part in eight panels over the four days. The keynote overview speech was given by J.B. Ojiambo of the Faculty of Information Sciences at Moi University in Kenya. Stanley Made, University Librarian at the University of Zimbabwe arranged a local tour, and together with Kay Raseroka (Botswana), Chair of the Regional Section for Africa, did much for making the seminar a reality. The seminar was one of an ongoing series initiated by the Section. In this way it hopes to act as a catalyst in improving all aspects of government publications librarianship throughout the world. The seminars discuss major issues, develop recommendations, and encourage networking for action between librarians, library institutions, library associations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and governments. The seminars raise awareness of problems and issues, provide a forum for cooperative work, and stimulate new approaches to deep-seated structural problems. The great potential benefits of using appropriate information technologies such as CD-ROMs are addressed. The Zimbabwe Seminar held panel discussion on regional institutions' reports; public

access to documents and archives for national development; acquisitions, collection development and maintenance issues; education and training needs; United Nations systems information; development organizations' information; African regional organizations' information; and networking libraries, archives and museums and the role of library and information organizations. Fourteen resolutions were adopted for further action. Most were addressed to the IFLA Sections, but some were adopted to propose action to various regional institutions, including the Organization for African Unity, the UN Economic Commission for Africa Library, the US Library of Congress Nairobi Office, and the revival of an African association of library and information science schools. The IFLA Core Programmes for ALP and PAC were also addressed. Generic recommendations were made to African library schools, African library associations, African libraries, as well as to all IGOs and NGOs working in Africa. Petrina G. Amonoo, Chief Librarian at the UN Economic Commission for Africa is editing the papers for publication by the IFLA UAP Core Programme.

Seminar for Russia and Eastern Europe

Plans are underway for the first seminar for Russia and Eastern Europe, to be held at the Russian State Library in Moscow in 1997. The working group consists of Johannes Metz (Germany), Siegfried Detemple (Germany), Tanya Ershova (Russia) and Al Kagan.

Seminar for Arabic-speaking Librarians

Tahani El-Erian, Head of the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, had proposed a seminar for Arabic-speaking librarians. The Arab League was prepared to give funding and have the seminar held in their Center in Cairo, in March or April 1998. Alternative locations could be the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Amman or the new library in Alexandria. A Working Group to develop this seminar was set up, consisting of Frank Kirkwood and Tahani El-Erian.

GIOPS Directory Update

The Section plans to update the 1993 GIOPS *Directory of Government Documents Specialists*. Its scope is intended to be a selective source for research contacts.

Publications

Proceedings of the Seminar on Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, 1991

Ana Flavia Fonseca reported that the proceedings had been edited and would be published by the World Bank.

Future Conferences

Beijing 1996

The programme will offer three speakers on human right issues.

Copenhagen 1997

The Section will offer a session on government statistics.

Istanbul Meeting

The Section's open session on "*UN-50: Fifty Years of United Nations Publishing Activities*" was well attended. The special video on "*Once Upon a Time: The United Nations*" had been attended by about 100 persons and had elicited positive feedback at the United Nations exhibition stand.

Papers presented

Government Information in a World of Change
by **STEVEN D. ZINK**

Abstract:

The widespread application of information technology encourages diversity, decentralization, and autonomy. Nearing ubiquitous use of such technology is turning centuries of worldwide scarcity of information into accelerating hyperabundance. While facing relentless budget shortfalls, government agencies are scrambling to adopt information technology solutions to address nagging accountability concerns, particularly in the areas of information management and dissemination. As a consequence, the identification, acquisition, bibliographic control, servicing, housing and even the formats of official information products are undergoing unprecedented changes. These changes portend a sweeping impact on government information collections, as well as the traditional functions of government information professionals. Such professionals will need to play a greater role in user facilitation and in the development of alliances with other information entities. They also must secure an understanding of the practices of numerous newly emerging information professions, which are an outgrowth of the full blooming of the information age. The impact of these changes is not limited to the world's wealthiest countries. Open architecture, international standards, and relatively low cost characterize CD-ROM and the Internet, two of the most prominent technologies in this tsunami of change.

Fifty Years of United Nations Publishing Activities
by **PATRICE PIGUET**

Abstract:

In addition to recalling 50 years of United Nations publishing activities, this paper provides an overview of the programme in order to encourage the use of United Nations publications for research purposes as well as for the study of the Organization's principles and purposes. The year 1995 marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The publishing activities of the organization, however, reach back to the League of Nations and even farther than that. The United Nations publishes for a purpose, not a market. The paper demonstrates the importance of some United Nations publications to specialized readerships as well as to the interested public. It explains the concepts and process of the publishing activities and provides an overview of the publications programme and of the bodies and programmes which generate the media output. The United Nations microfiche, CD-ROM and online publishing programmes are also described. A chronological listing of 50 milestone publications, one for every year of the Organization's existence, conclude the paper.

Information Services of the International Labor Organization: A 75-Year History
by **ELEANOR G. FRIERSON, JOELLE KARGUL-MACCABEZ and SUE LUZY**

Abstract:

This paper outlines the historical development of the International Labor Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the UN, focusing on the role and functions of its network of information services worldwide. The ILO's mission is the promotion of democracy, the fight against poverty and the protection of working people everywhere. Information gathering, publishing and dissemination have been prime activities of the ILO since its inception in 1919. To this end, the ILO Central Library plays an important role in the development of information standards and tools which can be used not only by the ILO's own information services, but also by information managers in ministries of labor and in employers' and workers' organizations in the ILO's 171 Member States. The paper describes the setting up of the International Labor Information System (ILIS) to promote information exchange, and the ILIS Referral System which gives access to many ILO-produced databases, and closes with a summary of recent trends, such as the move toward interlibrary cooperation within the UN system, in particular the standardization of bibliographic data and improvement of electronic systems for sharing library data.

A Chronological Perspective of the United Nations Office at Geneva Library (1919-1995)
by **NINA KRIZ LENEMAN**

Abstract:

This chronology was originally prepared in honor of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations and the 75th anniversary of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Library, which was founded as the League of Nations Library. This chronological perspective (1919-1995) is meant as a tribute to the UNOG Library which has served for the last 76 years as "a centre of international research" and "an instrument of international understanding". The UNOG Library is the "institutional memory of the League of Nations and the United Nations" and as such has a leading cultural role to play within the United Nations system. It is involved in the preparation of bibliographies, publications, CD-ROMs, audio CDs, videos and other productions that retrace United Nations historical legacies and in the organization of commemorative exhibitions in its Museum of the League of Nations and the History of International Organizations. The UNOG Library is generally recognized as being one of the leading social science libraries of Europe on account of its valuable collections in the fields of international economics, law, political science, statistics, and social questions. In contrast with its established traditional role, the UNOG Library has also forged ahead during the last few years to become a vibrant information and media centre. It offers modern technological facilities that enable its user community to access CD-ROMs, audio CDs, documentation on optical disks, videos, online database hosts and Internet resources, and has itself become active in the creation of many innovative new products.

Fifty Years of Publishing in FAO
by **KEITH RICHMOND and JANE WU**

Abstract:

For 50 years the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has been disseminating information on agriculture, nutrition, fisheries and forestry. Whereas in the past this output has been in the form of printed books and periodicals, the advent of new technology has brought in significant changes in the way that FAO's publishing is carried out. There are already clear indications about how this could develop in the future, as the full potential of the

electronic revolution is realized. This paper examines FAO's publishing history during the past half century and attempts to look towards the future. In particular, it outlines the special efforts that an international agency such as FAO has to make to ensure that its published material reaches the hands of those who need it most in developing countries.