

## FOCUS ON UNISIST PROGRAMMES

*This is the eighth instalment of this Feature. In the last two issues of the Annals it was not possible to accommodate this Feature as those issues were of a special nature. Hence, in this instalment, we are trying to cover most of the important news items from the vol. 3 of the Unisist Newsletter. - Ed.*

### UNISIST PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 1975/76

The eighteenth session of the General Conference of Unesco approved the Unisist Programme and Budget for 1975-76. As in the previous biennium, all activities are divided into five programme objectives:

#### 1. Improving tools of systems interconnexion

Activities within this section will concentrate on ways and means of developing compatibility between information systems. It is foreseen in this biennium that the Broad System of Ordering (BSO), serving as a switching mechanism between different classification schemes and thesauri, will be finalized and widely distributed.

#### 2. Improving of information transfer

Special attention will be paid to the establishment of a global data referral service in science and technology, a pilot data referral centre will be launched in co-operation with appropriate organizations and interested Member States.

#### 3. Training of specialized manpower

The Handbook on Information Systems and Services will be published. Several regional seminars and training courses will be organized... including two regional training courses for administrators and managers of information systems and services and a seminar on indexing techniques for participants from developing countries.

The establishment of training centres for information specialists in Member States will be

encouraged. Support will be given for training users in the effective application of scientific and technical information. The Manual for the Education and Training of Users will be tested and published in 1976.

#### 4. Development of scientific information policies and structures

The continuation of regional meetings in the field of information policies will be maintained. Studies, surveys and management reviews of main problem areas, such as legal and economic aspects of information transfer, at the national and international levels will be published.

#### 5. Assistance to Member States in the development of scientific and technical information infrastructure

Assistance in the form of short-term expert and staff missions will be provided to Member States, upon request, for the strengthening of national and regional scientific and technical information and documentation infrastructures, for advising on the design and establishment of national and regional information services and networks in science and technology, and for the training of information manpower.

The total Approved Budget for 1975-76 is composed as follows:

Regular Programme ..	\$ 1552 800
UNDP ..	\$ 850 000
Others ..	\$ 60 000
Total ..	\$ 2462 800

### UNISIST INFORMATION CENTRE ON BIBLIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

A Unisist Information Centre on Bibliographic Descriptions to maintain and update the UNISIST Reference Manual for Machine-Readable Bibliographic Descriptions is being created and will be located in, and partially funded by, The British Library and will form an integrated part thereof. It will operate for an initial period of three years.

The objectives of the Centre would be: to maintain the Reference Manual and to issue amendments; to co-ordinate activity within the field of bibliographic descriptions; to promote the use of the Reference Manual and to stimulate an awareness of its value; to make provision for suitable education and training in the use of the Manual; and to co-operate with other agencies of Unisist and with other bodies of similar concern, such as the IFLA UBC Office.

#### BROAD SYSTEM OF ORDERING

Following the comments of the Unisist Advisory Committee, the SRC (Subject-Field Reference Code) Working Group saw as the primary task the compilation of a structured or classified list of 'candidate subject-fields' for the SRC. After six months of work, two alternative SRC schemes were developed, reflecting two points of view within the FID Working Group. The two schemes have now been merged and revised by a three-man BSO editing/drafting panel (E J Coates, D. Simandl and G. A. Lloyd).

The new scheme contains some 2000 subject-fields in a structured arrangement at a minimum of two levels. It has approximately 670 subject-fields for Physical Sciences and Life Sciences including Agriculture and Medicine; 530 subject-fields for Technology; and 700-800 subject-fields for Social/Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and the Arts. Notation has not yet been applied, in accordance with the recommendation of the Unisist experts, who felt that too early an application of notation would unjustifiably influence the structure of the BSO.

The scheme is now ready for testing. The tests will take the form of field trials in which BSO will be used to tag samples of materials from such compilations as: the FID/NFAIS World Inventory of Abstracting and Indexing Services; indexes to machine-readable data base; and national directories of information sources.

It is hoped that information will be obtained from these trials on - completeness of coverage of BSO and appropriateness of depth for the intended purposes of BSO.

#### ISDS BULLETIN PUBLISHED

The International Centre of the International Serials Data System (ISDS) has announced the publication of the ISDS Bulletin. Its purpose is to list serial titles recently recorded by ISDS Centres. The printed records contain the essential ISDS data elements: ISSN; key-title and parallel titles; publisher; place of publication; country code; start date; abbreviated title; links.

The records are listed in ISSN order. Key titles and variant titles are listed in the alphabetical

title index. Both forms of title refer to the ISSN of the record. The Bulletin will also list amendments and corrections of serial records previously published, as well as cancelled ISSN. It will appear on a bi-monthly basis and will be cumulated yearly.

#### THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNISIST ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Paris, 5-9 May 1975

The Advisory Committee elected Professor A. Neelameghan (India) as Chairman, Mr. G. Fernandez de la Garza (Mexico) as Vice-Chairman and Dr. M. Day (U.S.A.) as Rapporteur.

The Committee discussed the current and proposed projects of the Unisist programme, such as: extension of the programme to social science information (proposed); periodic review of trends and requirements in scientific and technical information (proposed); the Broad System of Ordering; a feasibility study on an International Standards Information Network; a study on the design of a world referral network for science and technology; Unisist policy and programme in training specialized manpower; a feasibility study for an international clearing system on training programmes in the field of information; the Unisist programme for development of regional information policies; a study on financial, socio-economic and administrative aspects of information policy; a long-term policy research programme making use of scientific and technological information statistics (proposed); ongoing Unisist pilot projects; Unesco/UNDP projects administered by Unisist in developing countries and recently completed Unisist Guidelines.

The Advisory Committee endorsed the ongoing projects and encouraged the Secretariat to proceed with the proposed activities. The inclusion of social science information programmes within Unisist was considered as especially appropriate given the problems facing information systems in this field.

#### THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNISIST STEERING COMMITTEE, Paris, 13-17 October 1975

The Agenda included an examination of the current Unisist Programme and of the objectives and priorities for the future programme. Attending the session were delegations from Argentina, Belgium, the People's Republic of China, Ethiopia, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Peru, Sweden, Tanzania, Tunisia, USSR, United Kingdom, United States of America, Yugoslavia, the statutory representative of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), an observer from the Democratic Republic of Germany as well as representatives from IAEA, OAS, WHO and WIPO.

Mrs. I. Wesley-Tanaskovic (Yugoslavia), Chairman of the Steering Committee, presented a

report on the activities of the Bureau and Professor A. Neelameghan (India), Chairman of the Unisist Advisory Committee, informed on the second session of this Committee.

1. Inclusion of Social Sciences in the Unisist Programme

All delegates reaffirmed their support for the inclusion of the social sciences within Unisist and generally felt that the special problems associated with the social sciences did not present a restriction to incorporation but rather a challenge to be gradually overcome by social science specialists with time and experience. The Steering Committee endorsed the establishment of an Ad hoc Committee to advise the social sciences programme on its information activities and delegated to its Bureau the responsibility to advise on the membership and terms of reference of this committee and to assist in the organization of its work.

2. International Standards Information Network

The Committee endorsed the activity of Unisist in supporting a feasibility study for such a network, performed by ISO. Any continuing support from Unisist funds would be limited to assuring systematic coverage of information standards.

3. Terminology Activities

Unisist is providing a small subsidy for the publications of the Clearinghouse of IINTE in Poland in its work on a bibliography of thesauri. The INFOTERM Centre in Vienna on the other hand, is seeking with the help of Unisist to create a worldwide network of co-operating terminology centres and is providing a bibliography on standard terminology. The Steering Committee agreed that the current programme should be fully evaluated and the results submitted in a report to the Bureau for decision on the priority to be accorded to terminology activities in the future Unisist Programme.

4. Development of Manpower Resources

The Committee approved the plan to hold the second meeting of the Ad hoc Committee on Education and Training in May 1976. The agenda for this meeting will include an examination of evaluation reports on training activities; detailed discussion on the purposes of the education and training programme; development of a revised and simplified plan for a registry and clearing scheme on education and training programmes; and a proposal for setting up an inter-agency fellowships fund.

5. Activities in Information Policy

The Committee noted with satisfaction the growth of national focal points and emphasis on regional activities such as the first Unisist Conference on Regional Policy in South and Central Asia.

The Secretariat explained that developing countries should not be asked to disperse their limited resources by establishing many national structures or focal points, but that the Unisist Programme should be adapted to work with existing focal points and to assist them in their development. The first international meeting of managers of information systems and services is scheduled for Yugoslavia in April 1976 with a second to follow the next year in the Federal Republic of Germany. Concerning the conceptual aspects of the policy programme, the Secretariat noted that the results of studies on the economic and financial aspects of information policy would soon be available and that a modest programme on statistical indicators could soon be initiated.

6. Projects for Developing Countries

The Committee endorsed the report presented by the Secretariat on this activity, which ranges from pilot projects and advisory services under the Unesco regular budget to UNISIST executive services for some 15 national and regional projects financed under the United Nations Development Programme. It was explained that projects are designed to match the capabilities of the host countries, and that information techniques in countries which did not have the capacity to benefit from these techniques. The Steering Committee especially endorsed the proposed study on how information systems in developing countries contribute to the transfer and application of information.

7. Data Handling and Dissemination

The Committee endorsed the progress achieved so far in this field in collaboration with ICSU/CODATA; this co-operation was seen as a model for future co-operation between Unisist and non-governmental organizations. Completed achievements in this programme include studies on the accessibility and dissemination of data, the feasibility of a World Data Referral Centre and the relationship between secondary information services and data services, as well as a guide to the presentation of numerical data in the primary literature and a symposium on man-machine communications in scientific data handling. There was general support for the creation of a World Data Referral Centre, which would serve mainly to co-ordinate a network of national centres. Contributions will be sought from Member States, ICSU and other organizations, to be combined with UNISIST funds to launch this project.

8. Examination of the Objectives for the Future Unisist Programme

In introducing the proposed orientation for Unisist in the short term (1977-1978) and the medium term (1977-1982), Mr. Wysocki explained that the original five Unisist objectives had been recombined to yield four objectives valid for the

entire Unesco general information programme, and designed to promote:

1. Formulation of information policies and plan;
2. Establishment and application of methods, norms and standards;
3. Development of information infrastructures;
4. Training and education of professionals and users.

The third objective resulted from the combination of those covering development of national networks and improvement of the institutional components of the information transfer chain. Although none of the new objectives deals uniquely with problems of developing countries, these are to be given special consideration in all aspects of the future Unisist Programme.

The Steering Committee supported all four objectives and agreed that training and education activities and the development of information infrastructure should continue to be accorded high priority in the short and medium terms.