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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION
(IPC UNION)**

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

**Thirty-Third Session
Geneva, October 2 to 10, 2003**

REPORT

adopted by the Committee of Experts

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee of Experts of the IPC Union (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) held its thirty-third session in Geneva from October 2 to 10, 2003. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session: Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom, United States of America (26). The African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO), the Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) and the European Patent Office (EPO) were also represented. The list of participants appears as Annex I to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. S. de Vries (Netherlands), Chair of the Committee. Mr. F. Gurry, Assistant Director General, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director General of WIPO.

OFFICERS

3. Mr. M. Makarov (WIPO) acted as Secretary of the session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Committee unanimously adopted the agenda, which appears as Annex II to this report.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS

5. As decided by the Governing Bodies of WIPO at their tenth series of meetings held from September 24 to October 2, 1979 (see document AB/X/32, paragraphs 51 and 52), the report of this session reflects only the conclusions of the Committee (decisions, recommendations, opinions, etc.) and does not, in particular, reflect the statements made by any participant, except where a reservation in relation to any specific conclusion of the Committee was expressed or repeated after the conclusion was reached.

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE IPC UNION

6. The Committee noted an oral report by the Secretariat on the twenty-first session of the Assembly of the IPC Union (see documents IPC/A/21/1 and IPC/A/21/2), held from September 22 to October 1, 2003, at which session the Assembly had reviewed the IPC reform progress report prepared by the International Bureau. The said progress report outlined principal results achieved in the process of the reform since 1999.

7. The Committee was informed that the Assembly had taken note of the IPC reform progress report and expressed support and appreciation of the work done by the Committee and the International Bureau in the course of the reform. The Committee noted that the Member States of the IPC Union at its Assembly had underlined the importance of IPC reform and expressed the wish for the timely publication of the reformed IPC.

REPORT ON THE NINTH MEETING OF THE TRILATERAL WORKING GROUP ON CLASSIFICATION

8. The Delegation of the EPO reported on the ninth meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification, held in Tokyo, at the Japan Patent Office (JPO), from September 8 to 12, 2003. The Delegation explained that the main purposes of the meeting were to discuss the progress in Harmony projects, to finalize the document on the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the reformed IPC and to consider pending issues of IPC reform.

9. The Delegation indicated that the Harmony project list currently contained 29 projects and it was expected that the comparison of the respective classification reorganization plans at the end of 2003 would allow extension of the list of projects.

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC

10. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/33/2, containing amendments to the IPC approved by the IPC Revision Working Group, and its Supplement 1, containing comments on those amendments submitted by Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Patent Office.

11. The Committee adopted a number of amendments to the IPC which appear in the Technical Annexes 1 to 23 to this report. Annex X to this report lists the classes and subclasses for which the Committee has adopted amendments during the current revision period and Annex XI to this report lists the classes and subclasses to which the technical annexes pertain.

Observations Relating to the Amendments Considered

12. When considering the amendments proposed under Project C 386, the Committee agreed that useful conclusions and proposals emanating from definition projects should, in some cases, be incorporated in the classification scheme. In that respect, it was noted that the IPC Revision Working Group had agreed that those conclusions and proposals should be collected by the rapporteurs into a separate annex to the respective project file. In conclusion, the Committee requested the IPC Revision Working Group to establish a procedure for considering such proposals in view of their incorporation in the scheme of the IPC.

13. Concerning Project C 412, it was decided that Notes (3) and (4) after A61K 8/00, adopted at the thirty-second session of the Committee (see Annex 5 to document IPC/CE/32/12), should be reconsidered by the IPC Revision Working Group in view of a contradiction between them, in light of the ongoing hybrid project H 003 and taking into account similar notes after group A61K 31/00.

14. When considering the amendments proposed under Project C 371, the Committee noted the existence of several precedence references between certain subgroups within subclass F23B which were unnecessary in view of the first place priority rule in that subclass. Although the IPC Revision Working Group had approved these references as an additional help to the users, it was decided not to adopt them, since the future electronic version of the IPC would display, in its hierarchical view, the selected group, its hierarchically superior groups and all groups at the same hierarchical level.

15. Furthermore, it was noted that the regular numbering system of main groups which had been applied left little space for insertion of new main groups in the future in accordance with the standardized sequence of main groups. It was therefore decided to apply the sequence 10/00, 20/00, ...90/00 for numbering of the adopted main groups. A similar sequence leaving as much free space as possible should be applied in the other new or substantially revised subclasses where the first place priority rule is introduced. However, the Committee considered that this numbering system could have limitations in the future and that a general policy for numbering groups in the IPC should be elaborated during the eighth revision period.

TREATMENT OF THE HYBRID SYSTEMS IN THE IPC

16. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/33/3, containing recommendations made by the IPC Revision Working Group with regard to separate indexing schemes and a cumulative table showing all separate indexing schemes in the IPC.

17. The Committee of Experts adopted the recommendations by the IPC Revision Working Group. The decisions of the Committee in respect of each separate indexing scheme are shown in Annex III to this report.

18. The Committee noted that the IPC Revision Working Group would complete consideration of the hybrid systems including double-purpose schemes at its next session to be held in November/December, 2003, and then forward recommendations thereof to the next session of the Committee for adoption.

19. The Committee was informed that the International Bureau had posted the amendments to the IPC resulting from the recommendations with regard to separate indexing schemes to the IPC e-forum, taking into account changes to the IPC during the current revision period, in order to allow offices to check those amendments.

20. The Committee authorized the International Bureau to introduce in the IPC amendments resulting from its decisions to abolish or to retain separate indexing schemes where no other substantial amendments to the IPC were involved. With respect to the substantial amendments resulting from the decisions made, for example, conversion of indexing schemes into classification schemes, the Committee indicated that those amendments should be submitted to the Committee at its next session for adoption.

CONTENTS OF THE CORE LEVEL OF THE REFORMED IPC

21. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/33/4, containing a summary of the decisions already taken by the Committee and its working groups on the distribution of groups between the core and advanced levels, and on its Supplement 1 containing statistical data and proposals submitted by the EPO relating to the said distribution of the groups introduced in the seventh edition of the IPC.

22. The Committee adopted the rearrangement of groups approved by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group in the first place and last place rule areas and in classes C07 and C08. The rearrangements approved by the IPC Revision Working Group in order to avoid references in core level groups to advanced level groups were also adopted. The International Bureau was authorized to make any further minor adjustments of the distribution of groups between the core and advanced levels in order to achieve compatibility of the two levels.

23. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the EPO for collecting the statistical data relating to the groups introduced in the seventh edition of the IPC and adopted, with correction of an obvious error, the distribution of these groups between the core and advanced levels as proposed by the EPO.

24. In respect of the new groups adopted during the current revision period, it was decided, as a principle, to include in the core level only new main groups and one-dot groups. However, the rapporteurs on revision projects were invited to check the applicability of this rule in their projects and to propose changes if necessary. These proposed changes should be posted to the corresponding project on the e-forum by November 10, 2003. The IPC Revision Working Group was invited to take the final decision on the distribution of the groups created for IPC-8 (2005) at its next session.

25. The International Bureau was invited to implement the complete distribution of the IPC between the core and advanced levels and to make it available on the IBIS website by February 2004. The IPC Revision Working Group was requested to consider how the correctness of the structure of the core level could be checked and to propose a procedure therefor at its next, tenth session.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THE REVISION OF THE ADVANCED LEVEL OF THE REFORMED IPC

26. The Committee recalled that at its thirtieth session, held in February 2001, it had agreed that revision of the advanced level of the reformed IPC should be provided through an accelerated procedure and that a special subcommittee within the IPC Union supervising revision of the advanced level should be established. The Committee had also agreed that the membership in the Special Subcommittee should be determined by the volume of patent collections being reclassified by respective offices and that an industrial property office could be elected to the Special Subcommittee if it assumed responsibility to undertake at least 20% of the total reclassification work with respect to the PCT minimum documentation. The Committee had decided that the International Bureau of WIPO should also be a member of the Special Subcommittee.

27. The Committee considered the figures relating to the size of the PCT minimum documentation, which had been prepared on the basis of the WIPO Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation and given in the Annex to document IPC/CE/33/5. The Committee noted that the established criterion of 20% of the size of the PCT minimum documentation would correspond to approximately 4,920,000 documents.

28. The Committee noted that the Trilateral Offices, namely, the European Patent Office, the Japan Patent Office and the United States Patent and Trademark Office, had indicated that they would provide the resources that would be required for revision of the advanced level and for the corresponding reclassification of the PCT minimum documentation. The Committee also noted that the patent collections to be reclassified by those offices, as followed from the figures given in the Annex to document IPC/CE/33/5, had a size exceeding the established criterion of 20% of the size of the PCT minimum documentation and that patent collections of no other office satisfied to this criterion.

29. In view of above considerations, the Committee agreed that members of the Special Subcommittee for the revision of the advanced level of the IPC, for the period 2005-2008, would be the European Patent Office, the Japan Patent Office, the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the International Bureau of WIPO. The Committee confirmed its decision taken at its thirtieth session that the composition of the Special Subcommittee would be reconsidered every three years.

30. The Committee also agreed to the following rules of procedure of the Special Subcommittee:

- The Special Subcommittee should deliver reports to the Committee of Experts on the work carried out at least once a year;
- the Special Subcommittee should evaluate revision requests for the advanced level to ensure that they comply with the revision policy and the revision criteria laid down by the Committee of Experts, determine the need for them and their priority, and take decisions with regard to the discussion of the proposed amendments;
- The Special Subcommittee should conduct its work using electronic communication whenever possible.

WAYS AND MEANS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRENCH VERSION OF THE ADVANCED LEVEL OF THE REFORMED IPC

31. Discussions were based on project file IPC/R 16/00 Rev.7, Annex 14, containing a proposal, submitted by France, concerned with the establishment of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC.

32. The Committee recalled that, according to the Strasbourg Agreement, the Classification shall be established in the English and French languages, both texts being equally authentic. The Committee also noted that both, the English and the French versions of the IPC, should be available at the time of entry into force of the amendments to the IPC.

33. The Committee realized that, in view of the approved accelerated procedure for the revision of the advanced level and the expected large volume of amendments to the advanced level, the resources available in industrial property offices having French as a working language were not sufficient to cope with the increased translation workload. The Committee agreed therefore that a new procedure should be put into place for the preparation of the French version of the advanced level.

34. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the International Bureau could assume the responsibility for the translation into French of amendments to the advanced level. The Secretariat explained that the WIPO Office of the PCT had a large staff of qualified translators who were responsible for producing significant amounts of translation into French of abstracts of PCT applications, as well as of international preliminary examination reports, and had the necessary expertise for producing French technical texts. The Secretariat also indicated that the work of the translators would be supported by a computer-assisted translation system developed under the CLAIMS Project.

35. The Committee agreed that the translation of the amendments to the advanced level of the IPC would be ensured by the International Bureau. However, the Committee indicated that as one of the authentic versions of the international classification, the French version of the advanced level should be established under the supervision of member States of the IPC Union.

36. In this regard, the Committee agreed with the proposal by France to create a subcommittee with the task of supervising the French version of the advanced level. The Committee noted that the European Patent Office, the National Institute of Industrial Property of France (INPI) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property had expressed the wish to become members of that Subcommittee. The Committee agreed that those offices, as well as the International Bureau, should be members of the Subcommittee on the French version of the advanced level.

37. The Committee agreed that the membership in the Subcommittee on the French Version should be open to other industrial property offices having French as a working language and that the composition of the Subcommittee should be reconsidered by the Committee of Experts when necessary.

38. The Committee adopted the following mandate for the Subcommittee on the French Version:

- to ensure that the French version of the amendments to the advanced level was in conformity with the English version;
- to verify the correctness of the terminology used in the French version;
- to issue general instructions for the preparation of the French version; and
- to take initiatives for correcting possible errors in the French version.

39. The Committee agreed that the Subcommittee on the French Version should conduct its work using electronic communication whenever possible.

40. On the basis of the above decisions, the Committee adopted a procedure for the establishment of the French version of the advanced level as disclosed in new paragraphs 40 to 46 introduced in the document “Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC” adopted at the thirty-second session of the Committee (see Annex V to document IPC/32/12).

41. The updated document “Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC,” also containing amendments to paragraphs 14 and 15 thereof as X-notations would not be used in the framework of the reformed IPC, is reproduced in Annex IV to this report.

REVISION OF THE GUIDE TO THE IPC

42. The Committee noted that the Task Force on the Revision of the Guide to the IPC had held its third meeting in Geneva on September 29 and 30, and October 1 and 6, 2003, at which meeting the Task Force had completed the English version of the new Guide.

43. Having considered in detail the completed English version, the Committee accepted the contents of the said version subject to possible amendments which could result from the French version of the new Guide, for example, in respect of terminology. In view of the absence of the French version, the Committee was not in a position to adopt the revised Guide to the IPC and decided to proceed to the adoption of the Guide at its next session, when the French version would be available, without further discussing the contents of the Guide in substance.

44. The Committee requested the International Bureau to make available the French version of the new Guide in November 2003 and to publish the English version in the project file IPC/R 17/01.

45. The Committee adopted the recommendation of the Task Force on the Revision of the Guide to the IPC, made at its second meeting in Paris, that the Guide should be revised in three-year cycles corresponding to revision cycles of the core level. Offices should propose amendments in the course of these cycles, in particular on the basis of results of IPC revision, definition and maintenance projects. Proposals for amendments to the Guide could be treated in the form of projects following a procedure similar to the one used for IPC revision projects. It was agreed to consider such a procedure at the beginning of the next IPC revision period.

46. Furthermore, the following two recommendations of the Task Force made at its Geneva meeting were adopted:

the relationship between the terms “subject of invention” and “inventive thing,” and similar expressions, should be investigated in the framework of the revision of the Guide at the next revision period;

guidelines for searching, using the data of the MCD, should be elaborated in time for the entry into force of the reformed IPC.

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING WHERE TO CLASSIFY PATENT DOCUMENTS

47. The Committee realized that, in view of many substantial changes introduced in the Guide to the IPC by the Task Force on the Revision of the Guide at its third meeting, the Guidelines for Determining Where to Classify Patent Documents should be reconsidered in conformity with the contents of the relevant parts of the final version of the Guide to the IPC (see paragraph 43, above). The Committee agreed that the Guidelines would be discussed at its next session.

48. The Committee requested the United States of America to submit a modified version of the Guidelines for Determining Where to Classify Patent Documents by November 15, 2003. Comments on the modified version were invited by December 15, 2003, and the final version of the Guidelines by the United States of America by January 15, 2004.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE REFORMED IPC

49. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/33/6 Suppl.1, containing the latest version of the Concept of Operations for the Reformed IPC (CONOPS), and IPC/CE/33/6 Suppl.2, containing additional proposals by the EPO and Germany.

50. In introducing the documents, the Delegation of the EPO explained that certain simplifications had been made in respect of CONOPS' procedures. In particular, the propagation of the classification data would not be limited, but would be carried out completely for all family members, also outside the PCT minimum documentation, and also to all successive publications. However, offices would be allowed to submit specific classification data for national family documents or for the successive publications. Those classification data would overrule the propagated data.

51. Following detailed discussion, significant changes were made to the text of CONOPS, mainly aimed at the clarification of the text. Certain new matter was also introduced in CONOPS following additional proposals by the EPO disclosed in document IPC/CE/33/6 Suppl.2.

52. The Committee adopted the text of CONOPS as given in Annex V to this report. At the request of some Delegations and in view of the late preparation of the French version of CONOPS and substantial changes to the English version made at the session, the Committee agreed that publication of the final report on this session could be postponed by approximately two weeks so as to allow offices having French as a working language to verify the correctness of the French text of CONOPS.

53. The Committee decided that the Master Classification Database (MCD) would contain only the latest version of classification data and that offices could keep the original classification data in their own databases.

54. The Committee agreed that offices intending to deliver to the MCD the IPC 2005 data for the backfile of their patent collections should submit such data by June 2004, in view of the general planning for preparing the 2005 data in the MCD. Although the new version of WIPO Standard ST.8 ("Standard Recording of IPC Symbols on Machine-Readable Records") would enter into force on January 1, 2005, the Committee recommended to the above offices to use the new version of Standard ST.8 when recording the IPC 2005 data for the backfile of their collections. Offices which would not be able to use the new version of this Standard should at least include the indicators for the IPC 2005 data provided by the new version of the Standard in positions 28 (Classification level, core or advanced) and 30 (Classification value, invention or non-invention information). Offices are allowed to give general information on these indicators, for example, that all symbols are advanced level symbols and all relate to invention information. The MCD should create the corresponding indicators during the loading of the data.

55. The Delegation of the EPO informed the Committee that, at the request of offices, the EPO could deliver to them the reclassification data of their patent documents propagated from their patent family members in the PCT minimum documentation.

56. The Delegation of Spain informed the Committee that the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office would reclassify its complete patent collection according to the next edition of the IPC.

57. The Committee requested the International Bureau to make CONOPS available on the WIPO IPC website as soon as possible so that it could serve for timely providing necessary information to offices in order to allow them to accommodate their internal systems to various aspects of the reformed IPC.

58. The Committee accepted, with gratitude, an offer of the Delegation of the United States of America to prepare a Glossary of terms for facilitating the understanding and use of CONOPS and requested the United States of America to submit the draft of the Glossary by November 15, 2003. Comments on the draft were invited by December 15, 2003, and the final version of the Glossary by the United States of America by January 15, 2004. The Committee noted that the French version of the Glossary would be prepared by the International Bureau.

59. The Committee decided to include in CONOPS an annex describing various types of patent families as defined in the WIPO *Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation*, on the understanding that upon preparation of the Glossary of terms this annex could be transferred to the Glossary.

USE OF THE REFORMED IPC

60. The Committee noted that Circular IPC 107 with a questionnaire had been sent by the International Bureau to members and observers of the Committee, as well as to States not members of the IPC Union but applying the IPC for classification of their published documents. The purpose of the questionnaire was to survey industrial property offices about their intentions to apply either the core or advanced level of the reformed IPC and about their plans and ability to carry out reclassification of their national collections according to amendments to the IPC. The Committee noted a summary of replies to the questionnaire which was published in Annex II to document IPC/CE/33/7 and also reproduced in Annex VI to this report.

61. The Committee, in particular, paid attention to the information given in the summary of replies that 21 offices out of 49 offices which had submitted replies intended to use the core level of the reformed IPC and that 24 offices intended to carry out reclassification of their published documents.

62. The Committee noted the usefulness of this information with regard to the search of patent documents using the reformed IPC and in connection with the functioning of the Master Classification Database.

63. The Committee requested its members to submit replies to the questionnaire if they had not yet done so, and invited the International Bureau to continue collecting replies from countries using the IPC in order to prepare an updated survey on the use of the reformed IPC for the next session of the Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF IPC REFORM

64. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/33/8 relating to the implementation in the IPC of the following two tasks: “Introduction of Illustrating Chemical Formulae in the Electronic Layer of the IPC” and “Checking of Notes and References in the Reformed IPC” and describing the work conducted by the IPC Revision Working Group on those tasks.

65. The Committee agreed to consider these tasks as completed and expressed its gratitude to the IPC Revision Working Group for the excellent work carried out.

66. The Committee noted that introduction of other collections of chemical formulae and graphic illustrations in the electronic layer of the IPC could be continued in the next IPC revision period.

67. Furthermore, the Committee adopted the minor amendments to the IPC and the rearrangements of groups between the core and advanced levels emanating from the completion of the second task. It was agreed to authorize the International Bureau to make any further minor adjustments, if necessary, in order to achieve compatibility between the two levels which adjustments should be considered as minor amendments to the IPC, and to make them available on the IBIS website.

IPC REFORM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

68. In view of the progress of several tasks of IPC reform, the Committee updated the IPC Reform Implementation Plan, as shown in Annex VII to this report.

IPC SYSTEMATIC MAINTENANCE PROCEDURE

69. The Committee considered Annex 12 to project file IPC/R 19/02, containing a rapporteur report prepared by Sweden on Task 19 relating to the elaboration of the IPC systematic maintenance procedure. The “Goals of the Maintenance,” “General Problems” and the “Procedure for Maintenance” contained in that Annex were adopted with some editorial amendments, and appear as Annex VIII to this report.

70. The Committee requested the IPC Revision Working Group to start implementation of the systematic maintenance procedure at an appropriate time when resources for carrying out the maintenance of the IPC were available.

71. The Committee expressed its thanks to Sweden for having proposed and elaborated a new procedure relating to the development of the IPC, which could significantly increase the quality of the Classification.

TRAINING IN THE USE OF THE IPC

72. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/33/10 containing, in its Annex, a program of updating of the existing IPC training and explanatory material for the use of the IPC and of elaboration of new material for this purpose, which could be implemented in the framework of Task No. 13 on the IPC reform program entitled "Improvement of IPC Training by Providing Modern Training Techniques".

73. The Committee basically adopted the conclusions and proposals made by the International Bureau in the document.

74. The Committee noted that a Task Force on updating and revising IPC training examples had been created by the Revision Working Group at its ninth session and that the Task Force would commence its work, based on amendments introduced in the IPC in the course of its reform and revision, at the beginning of 2004.

75. The Committee was informed that the updated IPC training examples would finally be available on the WIPO IPC website in the form of IPC interactive tutorials which were being prepared under the CLAIMS Project and that the preparation of the tutorials which would include hyperlinks to the IPC would be completed by the end of 2003.

76. Regarding the existing IPC training and explanatory material collected in the WIPO *Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation*, the Committee agreed to discontinue the publication of the *Introductory Manual to the International Patent Classification*, as well as the publication of *Guidelines for the Organization of Search Files Based on the International Patent Classification*, of which the rich information material relating to the use of the IPC for search purposes, patent and non-patent literature and patent search files, could be used in other IPC-related publications.

77. In respect of updating the existing IPC training and explanatory material for further promoting the use of the IPC, as well as elaboration of new material for the same purpose, the Committee underlined the importance of publication of such material for promoting broader use of the IPC, especially with regard to IPC reform.

78. Having noted that the above tasks would be basically carried out by the International Bureau, the Committee agreed to invite its members and observers to actively participate, and to assist the International Bureau, in the preparation of such material. The Committee requested its members to collect, as far as possible, available IPC training material or other useful IPC-related material, appropriate for the training in the use of the IPC, and to make that material available to the International Bureau. The Committee also encouraged close cooperation between the International Bureau and offices concerned on this matter.

79. The Delegation of the United States of America noted the usefulness of the computer-based training part of CLAIMS Project, but stated that the United States Patent and Trademark Office would likely require more extensive computer-based training tools because of its large number of examiners with little experience using the IPC.

80. The Committee expressed the wish to be periodically informed of the progress in the updating and elaboration of the IPC training and teaching material.

CLAIMS PROJECT

81. The Secretariat made a presentation of the current status of the CLAIMS Project and explained developments that took place in each of the four tracks of the project since the last session of the Committee, in February 2003. The Secretariat also provided additional explanations regarding the project, responding to questions of delegates.

82. A live demonstration of the computer-assisted translation system was arranged for interested Delegations.

83. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the progress of the CLAIMS Project and indicated, in particular, the importance of the timely development of computer tools for supporting IPC revision and reform, IPC tutorials and computer-assistance translation of the IPC.

84. The Secretariat requested members and observers of the Committee to provide feedback with regard to computer-assisted categorizers and IPC tutorials in order to receive comments on these IT products and proposals for their improvement.

85. Detailed information on the current status of the CLAIMS Project, presented by the Secretariat, is given in Annex IX to this report.

NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

86. The Committee noted the tentative date of its next session:

Geneva, March 1 to 5, 2004.

THANKS TO MR. PAUWELS AND MR. SAIFER

87. On the occasion of Mr. Pauwels' (EPO) and Mr. Saifer's (United States of America) last participation in a session of the Committee of Experts as they will soon take retirement, the Committee and the International Bureau thanked them and expressed high appreciation of their excellent contribution to the development of the IPC, especially in the period of its reform, both as Representatives of their Offices and as Chairmen of various IPC bodies. The Committee and the International Bureau wished them a long and very happy retirement.

88. This report was unanimously adopted by the Committee at its closing meeting on October 10, 2003.

[Annexes follow]