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GENEVA

**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION
(IPC UNION)****AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP****Eighth Session
Geneva, November 4 to 8, 2002**

REPORT

adopted by the Working Group

INTRODUCTION

1. The ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group (hereinafter referred to as “the Working Group”) held its eighth session in Geneva from November 4 to 8, 2002. The following members of the Working Group were represented at the session: Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, European Patent Office (EPO) (22). The Patent Documentation Group was represented by an observer. The list of participants appears as Annex I to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. R. Saifer (United States of America), Chair of the Working Group.

OFFICERS

3. Mr. Makarov acted as Secretary of the session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Working Group 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 Working Group (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 Working Group was expressed or repeated after the conclusion was reached.

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

6. The Delegation of the EPO reported on the seventh meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification, held in Washington, D.C. from September 23 to 27, 2002. The Delegation explained that the main purposes of the meeting were to develop in detail the procedures for the HARMONY projects, to discuss further development of the Concept of Operations for the advanced level of the reformed IPC, to discuss the pending items for the reformed IPC and to define a trilateral position on the approach for the traditional knowledge in the IPC.

7. The report on the seventh meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification is reproduced in Annex III to this report.

REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE REVISION OF THE GUIDE TO THE IPC

8. The Working Group heard an oral report by the Secretariat on the meeting of the Task Force on the revision of the Guide to the IPC, held in Stockholm from October 7 to 11, 2002. The Working Group noted that the Task Force had considered and approved eight out of 13 chapters contained in the revised Guide and completed the Glossary of terms for the reformed IPC. The Working Group expressed its appreciation for the work carried out by the Task Force and its gratitude to the Swedish Patent and Registration Office for hosting the meeting.

9. The Working Group agreed with the recommendation of the Task Force that a second meeting of the Task Force would be necessary for the completion of the revision of the Guide and accepted, with gratitude, an invitation made by the Delegation of France to host the meeting of the Task Force at the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI), Paris. The Working Group noted that the second meeting of the Task Force would be held in April 2003.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION; ELABORATION OF RULES FOR MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATION IN THE IPC

10. Discussions were based on Annex 41 to project file IPC/R 4/99 Rev.11 containing the rapporteur report on standardization of notes prescribing multi-aspect classification, prepared by the International Bureau. The Working Group agreed that two types of the standardized wording for notes specifying multi-aspect classification should be identified, respectively, for obligatory and non-obligatory classification. Having considered and discussed the proposal of the Rapporteur, the Working Group approved the following templates for notes on obligatory and non-obligatory classification:

– Obligatory: “Subject matter,” when it is determined to be invention information, must also be classified in...

– Non-obligatory: “Subject matter,” which is considered of interest for search purposes, may also be classified in...

11. The Working Group agreed to submit the above templates to the IPC Committee of Experts for adoption and to request the Committee that the IPC Revision Working Group should apply the templates in the IPC maintenance procedure. The Working Group indicated that the notes should be used exactly as worded in the templates, whenever possible, and adjusted as necessary only when the exact wording of the templates does not apply.

12. Finally, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts to consider Task No. 4 on its program completed.

ELABORATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE CREATION, MAINTENANCE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE MASTER CLASSIFICATION DATABASE

Presentation of Classification Symbols on the Front Page of Patent Documents

13. The Working Group recalled its tentative decision, taken at the seventh session of the Working Group, in May 2002, to introduce a new presentation of classification symbols on the front page of patent documents where classification symbols should be presented in a tabular form and using a graphic technique for explaining the meaning of classification symbols (see document IPC/REF/7/3, paragraphs 37 to 41). The Working Group also recalled its request to the members of the Working Group to verify the applicability of the new presentation of classification symbols with respective administrative services of their offices.

14. During the discussion, the majority of members of the Working Group declared that they expected no problems in using the new presentation of classification symbols.

15. Referring to a possible lack of space on the front page for long tabular lists of classification symbols, indicated by some Delegations, the Working Group agreed that the presentation of classification symbols in two columns was admissible. The Working Group confirmed that classification symbols and indexing codes should be presented in the following order in the tabular form:

- (1) classification symbols representing invention information;
- (2) classification symbols representing additional information;
- (3) indexing codes.

16. The Working Group recognized that, although the new presentation of classification symbols using a graphic technique was not complex, some training of classifiers would be necessary to carry out and invited its members to provide such training in preparation for the next edition of the IPC. Also, internal procedures within each office should be developed to ensure that the proper designations (invention information, additional information, core level symbols, advanced level symbols) would translate into appropriate fonts for publication.

17. Finally, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts to adopt the new presentation of classification symbols on the front page of patent documents.

18. The Working Group recalled that a new version of WIPO Standard ST.8 (“Standard Recording of IPC Symbols on Machine-Readable Records”) was under consideration by the Standards and Documentation Working Group of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies and expressed the opinion that classification experts, together with experts on standardization, should be included in delegations of industrial property offices for participation in the forthcoming session of the Standard and Documentation Working Group so as to ensure a comprehensive discussion of the new version of Standard ST.8.

Master Classification Database (MCD)

19. Discussions were based on the paper submitted by the EPO providing a global survey of rules, procedures and actions which would be implemented in the MCD (see project file IPC/R 8/99 Rev.13, Annex 59). The Delegation of the EPO explained the contents of the paper and gave explanations to issues raised during the discussion. The Delegation indicated that proposed rules and procedures would be incorporated during the rebuild of the DOCd.b. in 2003.

20. The Working Group noted, in particular, the following:

- the MCD will comprise the basic bibliographic data of patent documents;
- the MCD will contain documents at all publication levels;
- the reclassification procedure in the MCD will be implemented only for documents at the first publication level;

- the MCD will be able to deliver reclassification lists to offices wishing to carry out reclassification of their national patent documents belonging to the core or to the advanced level;
- the MCD will delete advanced level symbols when they are not updated by offices after advanced level changes.

21. Generally supporting the proposed rules, procedures and actions, the Working Group, however, expressed the opinion that, in view of consequences that the creation of the MCD would have for many industrial offices in the world, those rules, procedures and actions should be further studied and invited its members to submit comments on the paper by the EPO, by December 15, 2002.

22. The Working Group agreed that the paper by the EPO should serve as a basis for the preparation of the Concept of Operations for the reformed IPC and requested the EPO to prepare, in cooperation with the International Bureau, the draft of the Concept of Operations (classification and reclassification part) for consideration by the IPC Committee of Experts, by February 1, 2003, so as to ensure the approval of basic rules, procedures and actions for the functioning of the MCD on time for their implementation in the new DOCd.b.

23. The Working Group agreed that there was a need for an additional letter in the revised Standard ST.8, namely, the letter V for use in the position 44 of the proposed new ST.8. This would allow offices to make changes in classification symbols, not falling under the categories “original” or “reclassified.” The EPO was requested to inform the Standing Committee on Information Technologies of this addition.

Reclassification Rules in the Master Classification Database (MCD)

24. The Working Group considered the paper by the EPO relating to the reclassification process in the reformed IPC (see project file IPC/R 8/99 Rev.13, Annex 57) and discussed in detail proposed rules for the reclassification procedure and the propagation of the reclassification data in the MCD. The Working Group noted that those rules were necessary for the proper functioning of the MCD.

25. With the exception of one rule, the Working Group approved the proposed rules and agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts their adoption.

26. The approved rules are reproduced in Annex IV to this report.

IMPROVEMENT OF IPC TRAINING BY PROVIDING MODERN TRAINING TECHNIQUES

27. The Working Group considered a document prepared by the International Bureau on “Improvement of IPC Training by Providing Modern Training Techniques” (see project file IPC/R 13/99) and basically approved the conclusions made by the International Bureau in the document. The Working Group invited comments and new training materials from offices for the purpose of improvement of the IPC training techniques.

28. Having discussed the need for review of the training examples in order to reflect the results of IPC reform, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the Committee of Experts to create a Task Force for this purpose.

29. The Working Group also agreed that it is extremely important to implement the comprehensive delivery of the information on IPC reform to the IPC users for their training in the use of the new Classification and recommended that plans for training the staff in industrial property offices be elaborated.

DETERMINATION OF THE MOST APPROPRIATE CONTENTS OF THE CORE LEVEL OF THE REFORMED IPC

30. The Working Group considered a paper by the International Bureau, which was made available at the session, concerning the distribution of IPC groups in last place rule areas and first place rule areas, with the exception of classes C 07 and C 08. The Working Group noted that the rearrangement of groups in those areas had been made on the basis of the principle of majority, which meant that, for each hierarchical level it had been determined whether the majority of groups belonged to the core or to the advanced level and all other groups had been moved to the level of majority.

31. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the above-mentioned procedure resulted in approximately 180 groups moved to the core level and 410 groups moved to the advanced level.

32. The Working Group approved the work carried out by the International Bureau.

33. The Working Group also considered a paper by the EPO concerning the distribution of IPC groups in classes C 07 and C 08 (see project file IPC/R 14/00 Rev.9, Annex 28). The Working Group noted an algorithm used by the EPO for calculating the numbers of non-PCT minimum documents in main groups of those classes and the quantitative criteria used in the study by the EPO. The Working Group also noted that, according to this study, only a few main groups in areas of classes C 07 and C 08 contain a significant number of non-PCT minimum documents.

34. Having applied also other criteria, such as the number of subgroups in main groups, importance of the IPC as a search tool in a given field and difficulties in using a detailed IPC scheme for non-experts in the field, the Working Group identified the following main groups in classes C 07 and C 08, which one-dot subgroups should also belong to the core level: C 07 C 51/00, C 07 K 14/00, C 07 K 16/00, C 08 F 2/00, C 08 J 3/00, C 08 J 5/00.

35. The Working Group requested the International Bureau to carry out rearrangement of groups in the last place rule and first place rule areas resulting from the above studies by the International Bureau and the EPO and make the results available on the IBIS Web site of WIPO. The International Bureau was also requested to provide, on the IBIS Web site, the possibility of displaying, in easily accessible form, only the core level of the reformed IPC.

36. The Working Group agreed that offices could propose corrections to the distribution of groups between the core and the advanced level in particular areas, if inappropriate distribution is discovered, for example, as regards the correctness of the structure of the IPC at the core level.

37. Finally, the Working Group agreed that quantitative criteria should also be applied to the distribution between the core and the advanced level of new groups created in the seventh edition of the IPC and introduced in the current revision period. The Delegation of the EPO informed the Working Group that the statistics for most of those groups would be available in 2003.

STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A SIMPLIFIED SET OF RULES IN THE IPC

Guidelines for Determining Where to Classify Patent Documents

38. Discussions were based on the rapporteur report submitted by the United States of America and made available at the session, containing the draft Guidelines for determining where to classify patent documents.

39. The Working Group considered the Guidelines in detail and made substantial changes to its text, but, in view of the lack of time, was not in a position to finalize the Guidelines. It was particularly recognized that the sections "INCLUSIVENESS OF GROUPS," "UNIVERSAL PROCEDURE FOR LOCATING A SUBCLASS" and "BEST-FIT SELECTION RULE" need more work. The draft Guidelines as amended by the Working Group is reproduced in Annex V to this report.

40. The Working Group instructed the Task Force on the revision of the Guide to the IPC to finalize the Guidelines in connection with the consideration of the relevant parts of the Guide, at its second meeting to be held in April 2003.

41. In order to facilitate the completion of the Guidelines, the Working Group invited its members to submit comments on the draft Guidelines, as published in the said Annex V, by February 15, 2003, and requested the United States of America to submit the rapporteur report by April 1, 2003.

Creation of Subclasses and Main Groups for Residual Subject Matter

42. The Working Group considered the rapporteur report submitted by the United States of America and made available at the session, containing a proposal on the systematic introduction in IPC subclasses of residual main groups, where these groups are not present.

43. The following remarks were made concerning this proposal:

- existing residual main groups should be investigated with regard to their real coverage, taking into account subject matter which could be implicitly covered;

– in subclasses whose scope is exhausted by existing main groups, the creation of residual main groups could lead to confusion for the user.

44. Since the existing X-notation practice did not work in a satisfactory manner, the Working Group approved the proposal and agreed on the following procedure for the introduction of residual main groups:

(a) checking of subclasses with residual main groups in respect of their scope and wordings.

(b) identification of subclasses where the main groups exhaust the scope.

(c) introduction of residual main groups in subclasses not covered by items (a) and (b), above.

45. The Working Group also agreed that residual main groups should have a standard number 99/00, wherever possible.

46. In view of the significant work that the introduction of residual main groups throughout the IPC would require and the very high workload of the IPC Revision Working Group, the Working Group agreed that this project could not be implemented in the next edition of the IPC and recommended to the IPC Committee of Experts to carry out the systematic introduction of residual main groups in IPC subclasses after the year 2005.

47. As a partial solution of the problem of the residual subject matter in the IPC, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts the immediate implementation in the IPC of the proposal by the EPO to create, in each section of the IPC, a class (with respective subclass and main group) for the residual subject matter in the given section. The Working Group indicated that these residual places should be periodically reviewed in order to collect material for the revision of the IPC.

48. The Working Group agreed that those residual classes should have a standard number 99 and elaborated titles of such residual classes, subclasses and main groups as exemplified by section A:

A 99 Subject matter not otherwise provided for in this section

A 99 Z Subject matter not otherwise provided for in this section

A 99 Z 99/00 Subject matter not otherwise provided for in this section.

49. The Working Group also agreed on the standard note following the title of a residual subclass:

“This subclass covers subject matter that (a) is not provided for, but is most closely related to, the subject matter covered by the subclasses of this section, and (b) is not explicitly covered by any subclass of another section.”

50. The Working Group indicated that classification definitions should be created for such residual subclasses and main groups and that a special example section should be introduced in the definitions to provide additional guidance for the user.

51. The Working Group instructed the Task Force on the revision of the Guide to the IPC to reconsider the application of X-notations, in view of the recommended creation of residual classes in each section of the IPC, and to investigate the possibility of abolishing the practice of X-notations.

52. In order to collect sufficient material for the study by the Task Force, comments on this matter were invited by March 15, 2003.

53. It was noted that the reference to X-notations should not be deleted during the revision of Standard ST.8 and that the Standing Committee on Information Technologies should be informed about it.

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

54. The Working Group considered a background paper prepared by the International Bureau (see project file IPC/R 16/00 Rev.2, Annex 7) in which two approaches to the establishment of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC were described, namely:

- (a) outsourcing the translation of amendments to the advanced level to external contractors; and
- (b) the elaboration of computer-assisted translation tools.

55. The Secretariat indicated that, in respect of approach (a) necessary funds had been requested for the biennium 2004-2005 and, in respect of approach (b) testing of computer-assisted translation tools had been started in the framework of WIPO CLAIMS project.

56. The Working Group supported the approaches under consideration by the International Bureau and underlined the need in timely achieving progress in the study with regard to ways and means for the establishment of the French version.

57. The Working Group agreed that a detailed procedure for the preparation of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC should be prepared and included in the Concept of Operations for the reformed IPC. The Working Group also expressed the opinion that a special body for the supervision and approval of the amendments to the French version should be created.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE REFORMED IPC

58. The Working Group considered and approved the English version of the Glossary of Terms completed by the Task Force on the revision of the Guide to the IPC, which is reproduced in Annex VI to this report. The Working Group noted that the Glossary contains the terms already approved by the Working Group at its seventh session, some of them slightly amended, and several new terms approved by the Task Force.

59. The Working Group authorized the Task Force on the revision of the Guide to decide on the manner in which the Glossary would be incorporated into the Guide and to make relevant amendments to the list of terms or their definitions, if needed.

60. The Working Group provisionally approved the French version of the Glossary prepared by the International Bureau, which appears as Annex VI to the French version of this report. The members of the Working Group were invited to submit, by March 31, 2003, comments on the provisional French version which should finally be approved by the Task Force on the revision of the Guide at its next meeting in April 2003.

ELABORATION OF AN IPC SYSTEMATIC MAINTENANCE PROCEDURE

61. Discussions were based on the rapporteur report on Task No. 19 prepared by Sweden (see project file IPC/R 19/02, Annex 10). The Working Group provisionally approved, with some amendments, the part of this report under the heading "Procedure for Maintenance of the IPC," which is reproduced in Annex VII to this report.

62. The Working Group invited comments, by May 1, 2003, on this procedure, in particular on its paragraph 5 concerning the Maintenance Task Force and on whether the creation of classification definitions should be part of the maintenance procedure.

63. The Working Group also invited comments, by the same date, on the parts of the said Annex 10 under the headings "The Goals of the Maintenance Procedure" and "General Problems that Should be Given Attention During Systematic Maintenance."

64. Sweden was invited to submit, by September 1, 2003, the rapporteur report with a consolidated proposal including the parts relating to the "Procedure for Maintenance," "Goals of the Maintenance" and the "General Problems."

IPC REFORM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

65. The Working Group noted that the IPC Reform Implementation Plan was updated according to the results of this session and appears as Annex VIII to this report.

IPC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IBIS; CLAIMS PROJECT

66. The International Bureau gave a quick status report on the CLAIMS project. The mindmap of the presentation is available at the URL <http://www.wipo.int/ibis/temp/trees/ibisframeset.html>. The status report summarized the work done since the opening of the IBIS system on the Web in December 2001. At the beginning of 2002, the following operations were carried out:

- two independent technical assessments were done on the IBIS publishing framework (by-products: Ibis beta3 and Ibis beta4 running under Cocoon 1.8);
- the IPC in intelligent PDF (fully hyperlinked with subclass and class level splitting in English and French) was delivered;
- spikes “mock-ups” were developed to handle the IPC training examples;
- beta5 version of IBIS was developed (merging the best ideas of the previous beta versions, optimized for quicker operations with offline preprocessing, migrating the system to Cocoon 2.0);
- national versions were demonstrated using the XML publishing framework and various beta versions (German and Spanish versions);
- a Spanish clone of IBIS beta5 was developed;
- the outpointers resulting from the core/advanced level separation were demonstrated.

67. The work under CLAIMS Phase 1 started in September 2002. Using a methodology inspired by the Rapid Application Development (RAD) some 20 RAD Tasks have been handled at this point. The following deliverables are available as the result of the operations:

- IPC Catchword Index in XML, integrated into the IBIS environment using the existing publishing framework (IPC 7, English and French);
- the German *Stich- und Schlagwörterverzeichnis* converted to XML (IPC 7, German and English);
- a list of discrepancies between the English and French official Catchword Indexes was presented;
- a literature survey was compiled, the public version of which was made available to the IPC community at the URL www.wipo.int/ibis/temp/survey;
- several parallel deep interviews were organized with the in-house users of the project to finalize the scoping of the various subprojects (patent categorization; computer-assisted translation using translation memories; support given to the creation and revision of definitions).

68. Several deliverables are expected in the near future:

- data revision system based upon MS-Word to accelerate the revision of the chemical formulae;
- data entry system based upon MS-Word to support the XML structuring of definitions and integration of the definitions to IBIS;
- final version of the proposal for the training sets needed to train the categorizer programs.

69. Several spikes are under development (problem and solution demonstrations):

- generation of reverse IPC data to support the creation of definitions;
- translation of compilations files using translation memories.

70. The Secretariat emphasized that, in respect of the most important subproject (automatic categorization), the state-of-the-art industry solutions have their own limitations. Now all the efforts are concentrated on the creation of the training sets and benchmarks needed for the academic community to experiment with the most recent classification algorithms. Until now the feedback received from the university and academic communities is very favorable and promising.

STATUS OF THE IPC REFORM PROGRAM FOR THE YEAR 2002

71. The Working Group reviewed the tasks included in the IPC reform program and noted the work which remained to be done with respect to those tasks. The status of tasks is shown in Annex IX to this report.

NEXT SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP

72. The Working Group noted that the IPC Committee of Experts would consider at its next session, from February 24 to 28, 2003, a proposal to abolish the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group and to increase the number of annual meetings of the Committee.

73. This report was unanimously adopted by the Working Group at its closing meeting on November 8, 2002.

[Annexes follow]