

WIPO



IPC/WG/1/2

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: June 11, 1999

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

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

IPC REVISION WORKING GROUP

First Session

Geneva, May 31 to June 11, 1999

REPORT

adopted by the Working Group

INTRODUCTION

1. The IPC Revision Working Group (hereinafter referred to as “the Working Group”) held its first session in Geneva from May 31 to June 11, 1999. The following members of the Working Group were represented at the session: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, African Intellectual Property Organisation (OAPI), European Patent Office (EPO) (18). Croatia and Slovenia were represented by observers. The list of participants appears as Annex A to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. M. Makarov, Head, International Patent Classification Section, Inter-Office Information Services and Operational Affairs Department, WIPO, who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director General.

OFFICERS

3. The Working Group unanimously elected Mr. A. Bruun (Sweden) as Chairman and Mr. H. Wongel (European Patent Office) as Vice-Chairman.
4. Mr. Makarov acted as Secretary of the session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Working Group unanimously adopted the agenda, which appears as Annex B to this report.

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS

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

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE IPC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

7. The Working Group noted an oral report by the International Bureau on the twenty-eighth session of the IPC Committee of Experts (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") (see document IPC/CE/28/5), at which session the Committee had decided to commence the reform of the IPC so as to convert it into a classification fully functioning in the electronic environment and agreed that, simultaneously with the reforming of the IPC, its revision should continue, on a limited scale, in order to accommodate therein changes necessitated by technological progress. The Working Group was informed that the Committee had introduced, to that end, a transitional shortened revision period which would cover the years 1999 to 2002, such that the eighth edition of the IPC would enter into force on January 1, 2003.
8. The Working Group further noted that, during the transitional period, the revision work should continue on the basis of the revision projects deferred from the previous revision period and that new revision requests could be accepted in the revision program only if they related to classification places covering new emerging technologies.

STATUS AND MANDATE OF THE IPC REVISION WORKING GROUP

9. The Working Group noted that its mandate included the revision of the IPC and the right to create subsidiary bodies which would receive instructions from, and would report to, the Working Group. According to the Committee's decision, a maximum of two weeks of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies could be held per year.

10. The Working Group noted that it had been authorised to consider new revision requests exercising, however, caution in deciding whether or not to accept a revision project in the program. The Working Group had also been empowered to widen the original scope of a revision project if needed.

IPC REVISION PROGRAM

General

11. The Working Group was informed that the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group had held its first session from May 25 to 28, 1999 (see document IPC/REF/1/2), at which session it had approved a list of long-term goals of the development of the IPC, started preparatory work on the tasks of the IPC reform and created a Task Force for conducting a study of possibilities for multiple classification in the IPC and a review of hybrid systems in the IPC aiming at their standardisation and converting of some indexing schemes into classification schemes.

12. The Working Group noted that the ongoing work on IPC reform should always be taken into consideration in the current revision of the IPC. It was indicated that, although the results which could be achieved in the course of the IPC reform were not known, general guidance provided by the Committee for conducting the reform gave a clear indication that, in the consideration of IPC revision projects, particular attention should be paid in the fields concerned to the possibility of multiple classification, the need for standardisation of the IPC structure, the creation of classification definitions and the provision of the additional explanatory material for the user.

13. Following the instruction given by the Committee to test a new revision procedure providing rapporteurs with the power of project leaders, the Working Group selected the following projects in three technical fields for evaluation of that procedure (the project leaders are indicated in brackets):

- mechanical field: projects C 278 (EP), C 325 (GB) and C 354 (DE);
- chemical field: projects C 337 (DE), C 363 (GB) and C 412 (ES/EP);
- electrical field: projects C 379 (GB), C 399 (EP) and C 410 (DE).

14. The Working Group agreed that, in further elaboration of the selected projects, flexible working methods should be implemented on the basis of the rapporteur's decisions on how to better organise discussions in the time periods between the sessions of the Working Group, for example, by requesting additional material or comments from participants in the project.

15. In order to provide careful planning of work at its sessions, the Working Group requested the International Bureau to indicate priority of revision projects included in the agenda for discussion. It was agreed that, as regards the second session of the Working Group, priority should be given in general to the projects discussed at the first session and to the other projects of the category C on the IPC revision program.

16. The Working Group discussed 47 pending IPC revision projects and approved amendments relating to those projects (see Annexes 1 to 30 to this report). The decisions of the Working Group in respect of those projects are listed in Annex C to this report, and further information with respect to some of these decisions is given in paragraph 18, below. A list indicating to which classes or subclasses amendments have been approved during the revision period appears as Annex D to this report.

17. The Working Group had before it, in particular, document PCIP/ SI/21/6 and the relevant project files, as well as letters containing documents submitted by industrial property offices, of which copies were distributed at the session.

IPC Revision Projects

18. The Working Group made the following observations, in addition to the decisions set forth in Annex C to this report, with respect to the IPC revision projects discussed:

Project C 278 (mechanical) – The EPO was invited to prepare a consolidated proposal taking account of the comments submitted so far.

Comments were invited on the proposal to be prepared, in particular, from the viewpoint of the desirability of multiple classification (product/process) in subclass B 32 B.

Project C 279 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on:

– the need for retaining precedence references in main group B 60 G 17/00 and associated precedence references in groups B 60 G 21/00 and 23/00, as proposed by the Rapporteur (see Annex 12 to the project file), in the light of the possible introduction of multiple classification in the field concerned and the comments submitted by Germany (see Annex 14 to the project file);

– whether group B 60 G 17/01 could be deleted, in view of the precedence reference contained in its title and new groups introduced in main group 17/00 (see Annex 1 to this report) and, if that were the case, where its subject matter could be transferred.

Project C 314 (chemical) – Comments were invited on:

– the overlap among main groups of subclass A 23 G in respect of the subject matter relating to the “cocoa products”, “chocolate” and “confectionery” and whether the said overlap should be used for multiple classification in subclass A 23 G or should be eliminated;

- where mixtures of confectionery and chocolate should be classified;
- whether the wording of the new group A 23 G 9/38 (see Annex 2 to this report) was correct and whether it would be desirable to create in main group 9/00 a separate subgroup relating to “dairy products”;
- the correctness of the wording of the new group A 23 G 9/50 (see the said Annex 2), in the light of its intended scope.

Project C 323 (chemical) – It was noted that subclass B 32 B, where the first place rule was applied, was included in the study of multiple classification to be carried out by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group, and that this project could provide useful material for the study.

Comments were invited on the alternatives indicated by the Rapporteur (see Annex 8 to the project file), namely, whether group 15/08 and similar groups in subclass B 32 B should be further subdivided or whether main group 27/00 could be used in combination with the said groups for multiple classification.

Project C 325 (mechanical) – The Working Group considered informative references proposed by the Rapporteur (see Annex 14 to the project file) and agreed that such references could represent a useful type of electronic data illustrating the contents of IPC entries, which would not constitute part of the IPC itself. Consequently, the Working Group requested offices preparing IPC revision proposals to always consider the need for informative references in the fields concerned, which should be included in the detailed proposals, presenting them as clearly distinctive from references defining the scope of IPC entries. To provide such distinction, the Working Group agreed on the temporary presentation thereof in the form of informative notes, provisionally worded as follows:

“Informative note

“References listed below indicate IPC places which could also be of interest when carrying out a search in respect of the subject matter covered by the preceding group or subclass.”

It was noted that the United Kingdom would submit such informative notes for the relevant groups in main group B 60 R 16/00.

Comments were invited on:

- the need for the second part of the amended title of group B 60 R 16/00 (see Annex 4 to this report);
- whether the proposed group B 60 R 16/0214 (see Annex 14 to the project file) should be created, in the light of its wording, hierarchical position and illustrating examples;

– the intended scope and the wording of the existing group B 60 R 16/04 and the need for creation of group 16/0232 (see the said Annex 14), in the light of its relationship to the former group.

Project C 336 (chemical) – It was decided to create the new subclass A 01 P which would be used only for secondary classification. The Working Group agreed that the scope of subclass A 01 P should correspond to the part of subclass A 01 N embracing main groups 25/00 to 65/00. To facilitate further discussion of the Project, the Working Group agreed to create first the classification scheme of subclass A 01 P at main group level, by including main groups basically following the rapporteur proposal (see Annex 12 to the project file) but in the order proposed for a similar scheme by the EPO (see Annex 7 to the project file), which was considered as more appropriate.

Comments were invited on (see Annex 6, relating to subclass A 01 P, to this report, unless otherwise indicated):

- whether the title of subclass A 01 P could be made more precise in the light of its agreed scope (see above);
- whether additional notes or references, similar to existing in subclass A 01 N, would be necessary to define more precisely the scope of subclass A 01 P;
- the correctness of the notes proposed by the Rapporteur (see Annex 12 to the project file) and whether subclass C 12 N should be added to the notes;
- whether subject matter of main groups 7/00 and 9/00 could be combined in one main group;
- whether the title of main group 13/00 was not too restrictive, in view of its intended scope;
- any possible overlap between main groups 15/00 and 21/00 and, if that were the case, could it be eliminated by introducing a note similar to Note (3) following the title of subclass A 01 N;
- the need for a separate main group 23/00 covering chemosterilants or whether they could be covered by other main groups of the subclass;
- whether the subdivision of subclass A 01 P was exhaustive or whether a residual main group should be created;
- the transfer of subject matter covered by group A 01 N 25/32 to subclass A 01 P and, in this regard, the desirability of subgroups covering antidotes in different main groups of subclass A 01 P or whether a separate main group for that subject matter should be created;
- whether a group covering “synergistic herbicides” should be created in main group 15/00;

– subgroups of the main groups proposed by the Rapporteur (see Annex 12 to the project file).

Project C 337 (chemical) – It was agreed that a borderline between subclasses A 21 D and A 23 L in respect of “doughs and dough products” should be specified.

Comments were invited on whether, to that effect, the Rapporteur’s proposal, the initial proposal by Germany or the proposal submitted by Sweden should be followed (see Annexes 11, 1 and 4 to the project file, respectively).

Project C 340 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on :

– how the borderline between subclasses A 45 C and A 45 F in respect of subject matter relating to “bags” could be clarified, taking into consideration the existing reference in the title of the latter subclass:

– whether the amended title of group A 45 C 3/00 (see Annex 7 to this report) covered its subgroups;

– whether the proposed groups A 45 C 5/03 to 5/037 (see Annex 9 to the project file) should be created;

– any possible overlap between the amended group A 45 C 13/02 and the existing group 5/12.

Project C 341 (mechanical) – The Working Group agreed to transfer this project for further discussions to the chemical part of the revision program. It was also agreed that a place in the IPC covering the subject matter in question would be needed.

Comments were invited on whether such place should be created in group A 61 K 49/00 or in subclass A 61 L and whether it should also cover the use of “electrically conductive gels and adhesives” in therapy.

Project C 342 (mechanical) – It was agreed that multiple classification according to measuring methods and to characteristics to be measured would be desirable in the field of blood diagnostics. The EPO was invited to prepare a consolidated proposal based on the proposals submitted so far (see Annexes 11 and 16 to the project file).

Comments were invited on the proposal to be prepared.

Project C 343 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on the relation of the proposed groups A 61 B 17/293, 17/295 and 17/336 (see Annex 8 to the project file) to the existing group 17/32 and the created group 10/023 (see Annex 8 to this report).

Project C 344 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on (see Annex 9, relating to subclass A 61 F, to this report, unless otherwise indicated):

- whether the wording of the new group 2/82 was readily understood, in view of the term “patency” contained therein;
- how the titles of subclass A 61 F and main group A 61 F 2/00 should be changed to include subject matter covered by group 2/82;
- whether the wording of the new group 2/84 was specific enough to avoid its overlap with the existing groups A 61 M 25/00 and 29/00;
- whether a reference to group A 61 M 25/00 would be necessary to introduce in the new group 2/96 in view of the possible overlap between those groups;
- the correctness of the hierarchical position of the proposed groups A 61 F 2/88 and 2/90 (see Annex 7 to the project file).

Project C 346 (mechanical) – It was noted that subclass B 02 C represents a function-oriented place and questioned, in this regard, whether the existing application groups 18/40 to 18/44 and 19/14, and the proposed groups 18/407 and 18/413 (see Annex 10 to the project file), were appropriate therein.

Comments were invited on whether those groups should be included in relevant application places of the IPC.

Project C 348 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on the correctness of the amended wording of group B 23 Q 11/10 (see Annex 10 to this report), in particular whether it should also include “Arrangements for cooling or lubricating tools or work”.

Project C 352 (chemical) – Comments were invited on the relation between the existing group B 41 M 5/40 and the new group B 41 M 5/50 (see Annex 11 to this report) and whether any references between those groups were needed.

The Rapporteur was invited to submit a set of informative references desirable in main group B 41 M 5/00, following the established form of presenting such references (see Project C 325, above).

Project C 353 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on:

- whether Notes (1) and (2) following the title of subclass B 60 J, which explain how to classify in that subclass in relation to subclass E 06 B, correspond to the general rules of classifying in function-oriented versus application places, described in paragraphs 53 and 59 of the Guide to the IPC, and whether those subclasses could be used as a model for the study of the possibility of multiple classification in function-oriented and application places, which would be carried out by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group;

– how those Notes could be clarified to avoid inconsistent classification in subclasses B 60 J and E 06 B, in particular whether they should be replaced by a new Note with the following wording:

“Windows, windscreens, non-fixed roofs, doors, or similar devices which are of general applicability, irrespective of whether described or claimed only for vehicles, are also classified in subclass E 06 B”.

Project C 354 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on the modified proposal submitted by Germany (see Annex 10 to the project file).

Project C 355 (mechanical) – A part of the Rapporteur’s proposal (see Annex 6 to the project file) was approved.

Comments were invited on (see Annex 13, relating to subclass B 60 T, to this report):

- the clarity of the wordings of the new groups 8/171 and 8/172;
- the interrelation of groups 8/172 and 8/174;
- a reference to the new group 8/175 that could be introduced in the existing group 28/16 and whether it should be an informative reference or a reference defining the scope.

Project C 361 (chemical) – This project was withdrawn at the session.

Project C 362 (chemical) – Comments were invited on the counter-proposal submitted by the EPO (see Annex 9 to the project file) and whether it was preferable to the initial proposal (see Annex 1 to the project file), taking into consideration the use of the last place rule in the proposal by the EPO.

Project C 363 (chemical) – Comments were invited on the initial proposal (see Annex 1 to the project file), in particular, on the desirability of the proposed indexing scheme, in the light of the counter-proposal submitted by Germany (see Annex 2 to the project file).

Project C 366 (mechanical) – Germany was invited to prepare a consolidated proposal based on the detailed proposals submitted so far;

Comments were invited on the proposal to be prepared.

Project C 368 (chemical) – The EPO was invited to prepare a consolidated proposal taking into account the proposals submitted so far.

Comments were invited on the proposal to be prepared.

Project C 369 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on the rapporteur report (see Annex 9 to the project file), in particular on points 1 and 2 of the Rapporteur's recommendations and on the detailed proposal submitted by the Rapporteur.

Project C 371 (mechanical) – Comments were invited on the rapporteur report (see Annex 11 to the project file), in particular, whether a complete revision of subclass F 23 B based on the proposals submitted by the EPO and Sweden should be undertaken or a restricted revision based on the initial proposal.

Project C 373 (electrical) – Comments were invited on:

– whether multiple classification should be used in the part of main group G 01 N 29/00 relating to groups 29/02 to 29/20 or whether parallel sets of new subdivisions should be introduced, as proposed by the EPO in its modified proposal (see Annex 7 to the project file) in groups 29/02 and 29/04. In relation therewith, whether the proposed indexing scheme should be created;

– the usefulness of the new group G 01 N 29/34 (see Annex 14 to this report), in view of its subdivisions, or whether its scope was exhausted by the said subdivisions;

– whether subdivision of new group G 01 N 29/44 was desirable, on the basis of the statistical data to be provided by the EPO. If that were the case, the Rapporteur was invited to provide such subdivision in line with the initial proposal (see Annex 1 to the project file).

Project C 375 (electrical) – The Rapporteur was invited to propose informative references (see Project C 325, above) relating to main groups G 01 R 1/00 and 11/00. The EPO was invited to propose a note after the title of subclass G 01 R, specifying the relation between main group 1/00 and the other main groups of the subclass, in order to eliminate the overlap between them.

Project C 378 (electrical) – Comments were invited on:

– whether the term “composite material” in the adopted group H 01 H 1/021 (see Annex 17 to this report) was sufficiently clear or whether a specific definition was needed. In the latter case, it should be specified whether the said term includes layered or coated materials;

– the need of precedence references in the approved groups H 01 H 1/023 and 1/025 to group 1/027, or whether multiple classification was preferable in those groups.

Project C 379 (electrical) – The Working Group agreed that a classification subdivision of the existing group H 01 H 13/70 was necessary in view of its file size. The Rapporteur was requested to review the project taking into account the possibility for multiple classification and its applicability also to the one-dot groups H 01 H 13/50 and 13/68. The indexing schedule proposed by the EPO (see Annex 10 to the project file) should be considered for the review of multiple classification.

Comments were invited on the proposal to be prepared.

Project C 380 (electrical) – Comments were invited on whether the amended wording of group H 01 H 23/00 (see Annex 18 to this report) was clear, in particular whether the use of both terms “tumbler” and “rocker” switches was redundant.

In view of the changes made to the titles of groups H 01 H 19/00 and 21/00, the Working Group agreed to transfer several subgroups of group 21/00 to main group 19/00.

Comments were invited on the correctness of this transfer and whether the deletion of these subgroups necessitated the creation of additional new groups under main group 19/00.

Project C 382 (electrical) – Comments were invited on (see Annex 19 to this report):

- the desirability of a note clarifying the contents of the approved group H 01 H 89/00 and on the wording of such a note;
- the approved wording of group H 01 H 89/00, its possible overlap with other groups in subclass H 01 H and whether it should be a residual group for combinations;
- the overlap of proposed groups H 01 H 89/02 and 89/04 (see Annex 1 to the project file) with other groups in subclass H 01 H, in the light of the comments submitted by France and Germany (see Annexes 5 and 6, respectively, to the project file).

Project C 391 (chemical) – It was noted that the Russian Federation would act as Rapporteur for this Project.

Comments were invited on the rapporteur proposal (see Annex 15 to the project file).

Project C 397 (electrical) – Comments were invited on:

- whether the “active triangulation” would be covered by subclass G 01 C, in view of the change of its title in the seventh edition of the IPC, in which case the creation of a specific group for that matter in subclass G 01 S would be undesirable;
- any possible overlap between subclass G 01 C and group G 02 B 7/32, in the light of the comments submitted by France (see Annex 5 to the project file), and, if that were the case, how to eliminate it.

Project C 398 (electrical) – The proposal submitted by Germany for the creation of a reference in the title of subclass G 06 F was withdrawn at the session.

Concerning the proposal submitted by Cuba for an introduction of a reference between classes C 13 and G 05, it was agreed that there was no need for such reference in the core layer of the IPC, however, more guidance for classifying control systems in the IPC should be in the future included in the informative layer.

Project C 399 (electrical) – The Rapporteur was invited to submit a set of informative references associated with the approved main group G 06 F 21/00 (see Annex 23 to this report). The EPO was invited to provide exemplifying patent documents illustrating the contents of the proposed groups G 06 F 2/02 and 2/10 (see Annex 6 to the project file) and to propose a more pertinent wording for those groups. Comments were invited on the proposal to be submitted.

Comments were also invited on whether the wording of the said group G 06 F 21/00 reflected its intended scope, in particular in respect of the expression “computer systems”.

Project C 401 (electrical) – Comments were invited on the correctness of the title of the approved group G 06 F 7/74 (see Annex 25 to this report), in particular whether the term “detecting” was appropriate in view of the scope of main group 7/00.

Project C 402 (electrical) – Comments were invited on (see Annex 26 to this report):

- the correctness of the wording of the approved groups G 06 F 7/499 and 7/533;
- whether the precedence references in the approved groups G 06 F 7/525 to 7/53 were appropriate in view of the possible multiple classification in this field;
- whether the reference approved in the new group G 06 F 7/57 to group 9/30 was necessary.

Project C 404 (electrical) – The Working Group noted that the proposed groups G 11 B 7/253 to 7/258 (see Annex 8 to the project file) overlapped. Comments were invited on whether this overlap should be eliminated by using precedence references or multiple classification could be applied. Comments were also invited on whether all those groups were needed.

Further comments were invited on the correctness of the wording of the approved groups G 11 B 7/247, 7/248 and 7/25 (see Annex 28 to this report), in particular whether the wording of group 7/25 should be “in the form of liquid crystals” as approved, or “containing liquid crystals”.

Finally, it was noted that the title of the proposed group G 11 B 7/257 should be corrected to “layers having properties involved ---”.

Project C 405 (electrical) – Comments were invited on the desirability of the proposed group G 11 B 17/059 (see Annex 7 to the project file), in view of its relation to other places in the IPC, in particular group G 06 K 13/00.

Project C 410 (electrical) – Comments were invited on the rapporteur report and the modified proposal submitted by Germany (see Annexes 11 and 10, respectively, to the project file).

DEVELOPMENT OF A GENERAL QUESTION AND ANSWER PAMPHLET ON THE APPLICATION OF THE IPC

19. The Working Group noted that the Committee had included in its work program the following Task of the IPC reform: "Develop a general question and answer pamphlet on the application of the IPC". The Working Group agreed that the said pamphlet should principally be addressed to non-initiated users of patent information and should contain basic introductory material, in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQ), for accessing the IPC.

20. The Working Group requested its members to collect available material relating to this Task, in time before its next session, and to submit it to the International Bureau and to the Rapporteur for the Task (United States of America). It was noted that, at the next session of the Working Group, a progress report on the elaboration of the Task would be made.

21. The International Bureau asked the members of the Working Group to make available to it also any training material on the use of the IPC which could be of interest in the elaboration of improved IPC training tools.

CREATION OF AN IPC ELECTRONIC FORUM

22. The International Bureau made a short demonstration of a new WIPO Internet site in the form of an electronic forum. This site would give the possibility to the offices to directly post their documents concerning revision projects to a specific page for each project. The documents would then be immediately available to all other offices without any further need to send them by e-mail, limiting the amount of documents "lost" because of e-mail system breakdown, incorrect e-mail address or absence of the receiving person.

23. It was agreed to proceed to a trial of this facility in the framework of a limited number of revision projects, namely projects C 340, C 375 and C 412.

24. The posted documents should be recorded in Word 6 or WP 6.1 formats. The possibility of free text should be used only for minor comments (e.g. clerical error corrections) which would not be part of the project file. It was noted that the International Bureau would still produce and send to the offices paper versions of all projects following the current practice. Furthermore, PDF documents would also be produced and made available on the Internet.

25. The International Bureau informed that, by July 15, 1999, the e-forum sites for the trial projects would be prepared. Offices would receive by e-mail from the International Bureau necessary instructions on the access and use of the e-forum, together with passwords provided.

26. The possibilities of a future more advanced electronic document management system were then discussed by the Working Group, centering on the following provisional list of requirements:

- (a) needed for meetings:
 - documents (in paper form for the foreseeable future). Each document should be provided in one definitive version and easily identifiable, e.g. by annex numbers;
- (b) needed between meetings:
 - (i) a project file/archive, containing:
 - official comments, rapporteur reports, etc.;
 - parts of reports relating to particular projects, such as adopted modifications and questions;
 - (ii) a forum for informal messages that are necessary for flexible processing of projects.

27. Finally, the importance of assigning adequate resources for the realization of the future document management system was stressed by the Working Group.

STATUS OF THE WORK

28. The Chairman assessed the status of the Tasks assigned to the Working Group and stated that 47 revision projects on the agenda of this session (see Annex B to this report), as well as the other Tasks before the Working Group had been satisfactorily dealt with. Of the revision projects dealt with, 16 related to the mechanical field, 13 to the chemical field and 18 to the electrical field. He pointed out that Annex C to this report gave the status of each revision project and brief information on actions to follow.

NEXT SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP

29. The Working Group discussed the request by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group to consider the feasibility of shortening its two-week session which is planned for the second half of 1999 and agreed that, although the ongoing work on the IPC reform was of paramount importance, it was also desirable to achieve, in 1999, significant progress in the IPC revision, especially because it was expected that, after the completion of the IPC revision program, the Working Group would be charged with the implementation of measures resulting from reform.

30. The Working Group agreed, consequently, that its second session could be shortened by one day so that extra time could be used for the second session of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group which could be held from November 15 to 22, 1999.

31. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to reserve the following dates for its second session:

November 23 to December 3, 1999.

32. The Working Group assessed the workload expected to be before it at its next session and agreed to devote the first two days of the first week to the chemical field, the remaining two days of that week to the electrical field and the second week to the mechanical field.

33. This report was unanimously adopted by the Working Group at its closing meeting on June 11, 1999.

[Annexes follow]