

WIPO



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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

PLENARY First Session

Geneva, June 22 to 25, 1998

REPORT

adopted by the SCIT Plenary at its second session

INTRODUCTION

1. The Standing Committee on Information Technologies (“the SCIT”) held its first Plenary (“SCIT Plenary”) session in Geneva from June 22 to 25, 1998.
2. The following States members of WIPO and/or the Paris Union were represented at the meeting: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Ukraine, and Viet Nam (70).
3. Representatives of the Benelux Trademark Office (BBM), the European Communities (EC), the Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO), the European Patent Office (EPO), the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) and the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO) (6) took part in the meeting in a member capacity.

4. Representatives of the following organizations took part in the meeting in an observer capacity: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Labour Organization (ILO), League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization of African Unity (OAU), Arab Society for the Protection of Industrial Property (ASPIP), Association for the International Collective Management of Audiovisual Works (AGICOA), Ibero-Latin American Federation of Performers (FILAIE), International Association for the Protection of Industrial Property (AIPPI), International Federation of Industrial Property Attorneys (FICPI), International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA), International Federation of Translators (FIT), International League of Competition Law (LIDC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Publishers Association (IPA), International Writers Guild (IWG), Max-Planck-Institute for Foreign and International Patent, Copyright and Competition Law (MPI), Patent Documentation Group (PDG), Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) and World Association Newspapers (WAN) (23). The list of participants appears in Annex I to this report.

5. The session was opened by Mr. Y. Takagi, Director, Inter-Office Information Services Department, WIPO.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

6. The SCIT Plenary unanimously elected Dr. R. A. Mashelkar (India) as Chair and Mr. P. Back (United Kingdom) and Mr. D. Tagliani (Argentina) as Vice-Chairs.

7. Mr. Y. Takagi acted as Secretary of the session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

8. The SCIT Plenary unanimously adopted the agenda, which appears as Annex II to this report.

REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE MEMBER STATES OF WIPO CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT)

(Document A/32/3)

9. The International Bureau reported to the SCIT Plenary about discussions and decisions concerning the establishment of the SCIT at the above-mentioned Assemblies held in March 1998.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS BY THE CHAIR

10. The Chair presented a written draft Summary of Discussions (document SCIT/1/6 Prov.) reflecting the major topics covered and conclusions reached by the Plenary. A revised version of the text of this document, reflecting all comments on the draft summary received from the participants at the conclusion of the meeting, has been produced by the Secretariat and is recorded in paragraphs 11 to 28, below.

SPECIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE AND WORKING METHODS

(Document SCIT/1/2)

11. The Plenary discussed Special Rules of Procedure and Working Methods of the SCIT on the basis of documents A/32/3 and SCIT/1/2, and, with certain amendments, adopted them as contained in Annex III to this report and further agreed to the following:

(a) in the light of limited resources available to small intellectual property offices, particularly in developing countries, the Plenary considered it important to avoid the proliferation of working groups and Task Forces; in view of this, the number of working groups should be kept to a minimum and the present structure of the three Working Groups should be reviewed after their first session, taking into account the result of the first session, and the possibility of integrating the Information Security Working Group into the Information Infrastructure Working Group that the Delegation from the European Patent Office proposed. The Plenary also agreed to review the duration of the Working Groups (one week) in the future, taking into account their workload and financial considerations;

(b) to assist the participation of delegations from developing countries and certain countries in Europe and Asia, subject to the availability of financial resources of WIPO, WIPO should invite at the expense of WIPO those delegations to participate in both the Plenary and Working Groups;

(c) the SCIT should not only deal with matters concerning the global information network, but also with other matters concerning information technologies useful to intellectual property offices;

(d) that the adoption of the draft report by electronic communication after the meeting be tested for the first meeting of the Working Groups in November 1998; the Plenary requested the Secretariat to install the necessary facilities to achieve this and report the result of the trial to the second session of the Plenary to assess it for further action (this draft report will be adopted at the second session of the Plenary);

(e) taking note of the request from many delegations that the services for all the six languages should be provided in interpretation and documentation, the question of languages would be revisited at a future meeting of the Plenary in the light of any decision taken by the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO on that issue;

(f) decisions by the SCIT meetings should be taken on a consensus basis to the extent possible;

(g) the report about the activities undertaken by the SCIT should be presented to the WIPO General Assembly and Assemblies of the Unions concerned in order to ensure coordination with other WIPO bodies and to enable the Assemblies to effectively supervise the activities undertaken by the SCIT.

OBSERVERS

12. The Plenary agreed to grant observer status to the Regional Information Technology & Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) and further confirmed that, in line with the General Rules of Procedure, any State which, while not a Member of WIPO, is a member of the United Nations or of any of the United Nations specialized agencies, may be represented by observers.

POLICIES OF THE SCIT AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WORKING GROUPS

(Document SCIT/1/3)

13. The Plenary agreed with the following policy of the SCIT:

(a) to discuss issues, facilitate coordination and provide guidance concerning the implementation of the WIPO global information network (hereinafter referred to as the “WIPONET”), the provision of intellectual property information services on this network through Intellectual Property Digital Libraries (hereinafter referred to as the “IPDL”) and other projects using the WIPONET;

(b) to address issues pertinent to the provision of intellectual property information (including secured data) services through the IPDLs and other projects using the WIPONET, and, where necessary, coordinate policies (such as information dissemination policy) to facilitate such services, in particular, through WIPONET;

(c) to deal with problems arising in transition to the full operation and use of the WIPONET, including the use of various on-line systems as well as other data carriers;

(d) to provide intellectual property offices, particularly in developing countries, with technical assistance to facilitate the generation of intellectual property data and the effective use of information technology in their computerization projects and efficient use of the WIPONET;

(e) to formulate recommendations and policies regarding the proposed network and related matters and, where appropriate, submit them for approval to the WIPO General Assembly and Assemblies of the Unions concerned.

14. The Plenary considered the proposed instructions to the SCIT Working Groups as contained in document SCIT/1/3 and agreed on their main mandates as follows:

Information Infrastructure Working Group (IIWG)

(a) The IIWG should review the progress made concerning the deployment of the WIPONET, formulate policies related to the network, make relevant recommendations, and propose projects concerning information systems useful to intellectual property offices. The IIWG should pay particular attention to the needs of developing countries, especially in matters concerning the transition from non-networked data carriers and human resources development. The IIWG should also deal with technical requirements of the WIPONET for undertaking activities regarding the WIPO Worldwide Academy.

Standards and Documentation Working Group (SDWG)

(b) The SDWG should address matters regarding the generation of intellectual property data suitable for inclusion in IPDLs, as well as access to and dissemination of intellectual property information. To this end, the IPDL concept should be used as a vehicle to coordinate, as much as possible, information dissemination policies of Member States and the International Bureau. The SDWG should elaborate new standards, where necessary, and promote the use of existing standards regarding intellectual property data and documentation. Recent developments in information technology, in particular Internet-based technology, are supported by open systems and non-proprietary technology and standards so as to stimulate more competition-driven growth and innovation. In establishing new and revising existing standards the following principles should be applied:

(i) Any standards to be elaborated within the scope of the SDWG should, to the greatest extent possible, apply provisions of existing industry standards (*de facto* standards) supported by open systems and the so-called Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products. This means that when drafting recommendations and standards, specific provisions and amendments for use of such standards in the field of intellectual property should be limited to those that are essential to ensuring effective use;

(ii) WIPO Standards covering provisions relevant to documentation aspects of intellectual property should be dealt with by the SDWG whenever a need arises for their updating or maintenance.

Information Security Working Group (ISWG)

(c) The ISWG should discuss technical issues in relation to the exchange of data, and to undertake pilot projects, associated with the IPDL program and using the WIPONET, in the areas of electronic filing, the exchange of priority documents for the examination of patent applications, and other planned activities of electronic commerce. In particular, the potential of electronic commerce is so high that Member States should take advantage of the availability of suitable state-of-the-art information technology through WIPONET and the IPDL program.

The ISWG should also provide an opportunity to intellectual property offices to share the experience of offices advanced in this area and work on the following points of technical cooperation:

(i) technical cooperation to Member States to assist them in their use of network infrastructure and tools for electronic commerce;

(ii) coordination between the electronic commerce activities of WIPO and the Member States from technical viewpoints (e.g., adoption of the necessary tools, possible adoption of general technical guidelines for electronic commerce in the intellectual property area);

(iii) pilot projects using electronic commerce tools for the provision of intellectual property information.

15. The International Bureau was requested to ensure the coordination of the activities among all three Working Groups. The Plenary noted that the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents agreed to discuss the Patent Law Treaty (PLT) issues concerning electronic filing and the use of information technology in close coordination with the SCIT.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WIPO GLOBAL INFORMATION NETWORK

(Document SCIT/1/4)

16. The Plenary generally agreed with the proposal in document SCIT/1/4 to establish WIPONET and authorized the International Bureau to issue an international tender. However, the Plenary underlined the importance of careful and thorough prior assessment of requirements and the need for discussions and consultation with Member States when drawing up the Request for Proposals (RFP; the tender document) and agreed to set up a new Task Force to assist WIPO in the work and to assign the following task to the Task Force:

“Assist the International Bureau in preparing the Request for Proposals for the Global Information Network including, in particular,

- (a) the assessment of technical requirements to provide network services for the intellectual property offices in the light of their existing information infrastructure determined through a technical inventory;
- (b) establishment of technical requirements for data exchange between intellectual property offices, including the exchange of unpublished data, by means of a survey of the needs of the intellectual property offices for such exchange.”

17. The Task Force will consist of technical experts and will start working as soon as its membership is determined. The Plenary requested the Secretariat to send out a circular letter requesting members of the SCIT to nominate experts for inclusion in the Task Force (the deadline for reply was set as the end of July).

18. The Task Force would operate from its initiation until the first meeting of the IIWG in November 1998, when an extension or otherwise of its term would be reviewed.

19. The Plenary took note of the joint proposal submitted by Japan and the United States of America and considered it to be a useful input for consideration when preparing the basic design for WIPONET.

20. The Plenary agreed to the following revised timelines;

<i>Action</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Tender Issued	end November 1998	Tender refers the full WIPONET RFP.
Tender Closing Date	end January 1999	All Tender bids due at WIPO.
Tender Awarded	March 1999	Successful bidder will be notified of acceptance and will commence implementation.
Deployment Begins	April 1999	First connectivity will be established with a Member State office.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DIGITAL LIBRARIES PROJECT
(Document SCIT/1/5)

21. After a demonstration of a first prototype of the IPDL given by the Secretariat, the Plenary approved the contents of document SCIT/1/5 and agreed to request the International Bureau to undertake further pilot projects with a view to expanding of the functionality and content coverage of the WIPO IPDL. The Plenary requested member countries to submit proposals regarding further areas of work and their possible participation in the IPDL project to the Secretariat for consideration at the first session of the Working Group, to be held in November 1998.

22. Proposals put forward by members included:

(i) extension in the coverage of PCT data (backfile and full text of the international applications) and provision of databases of other intellectual property data (trademarks, designs, etc.);

(ii) inclusion of databases and IPDL user interfaces in languages other than those in the current prototype (English and French);

(iii) assistance to be provided to developing countries to create their national databases including indigenous and traditional knowledge databases for inclusion in the IPDL project;

(iv) investigation of the technical possibilities for searching across and linkages between intellectual property databases accessible via the Internet.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

23. The Plenary noted with gratitude progress reports presented by the United Kingdom, the European Patent Office, Japan, Singapore and the International Bureau on the MIPLEX Project, the Trilateral Network, the DIPS Project, the Exchange of Priority Documents, the IPDL in Japan and the status of computerization at the Singapore Registry of Trade Marks and Patents, as well as on PCT projects, the MAPS system and SCIT documentation on the WIPO Web site, respectively.

FUTURE WORK AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SCIT WORK PROGRAM

24. The Plenary established the SCIT work program as contained in Annex IV, after taking into account a list of pending tasks and projects of the PCIPI that the PCIPI Executive Coordination Committee recommended the SCIT Plenary to include in the SCIT work program.

25. The Plenary agreed to assign Tasks No. 27 and 28 to the Task Force that was set up for Task No. 35, as the consideration of standards and technical requirements for the exchange of procedural information was necessary when designing the network.

26. The Plenary noted that the Secretariat would prepare for the Working Groups a list of Tasks grouped according to the ultimate objectives of those tasks and, in this context, also noted the proposal from the Delegation of Japan that Tasks No. 24, 26, 29, 30 and 33 should be regarded as information dissemination projects which could be immediately undertaken.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

27. The Delegation of the United States of America stated that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office would make (a) the full text and images of the two million patents dating back to 1976, and (b) the text and images of 1,800,000 trademarks and 300,000 pending trademark registrations from the late 1800s to the present, available free to the public on the Internet beginning with trademark text in August 1998, patent text and trademark images in November 1998, and patent images in March 1999.

NEXT MEETINGS

28. The Plenary noted that the following dates were reserved for the next meetings of the Plenary and the Working Groups;

First session of the Working Groups	November 16 to 20, 1998
Second session of the Plenary	February 8 to 12, 1999.

29. This report was unanimously adopted by the SCIT Plenary at its second session on February 8, 1999.

[Annexes follow]