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GENEVA

**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION
(IPC UNION)****COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS****Thirty-Second Session
Geneva, February 24 to 28, 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-second session in Geneva from February 24 to 28, 2003. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session: Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom, United States of America (24). India and Morocco were represented by observers. The European Patent Office (EPO) was also represented. The list of participants appears as Annex I to this report.

2. The session was opened by Mr. M. Makarov, Deputy Director, Office of the PCT (Patent Cooperation Treaty), WIPO, who welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director General of WIPO.

OFFICERS

3. The Committee unanimously elected Mr. S. de Vries (Netherlands) as Chair and Mrs. N. Beauchemin (Canada) and Mrs. V. Maksimova (Russian Federation) as Vice-Chairs.
4. Mr. M. Makarov (WIPO) acted as Secretary of the session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. Having made some changes to the draft agenda, the Committee unanimously adopted the agenda, which appears as Annex II to this report.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS

6. 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 EIGHTH MEETING OF THE TRILATERAL WORKING GROUP ON CLASSIFICATION

7. The Delegation of the EPO reported on the eighth meeting of the Trilateral Working Group on Classification, held in Munich, EPO, from January 27 to 31, 2003. The Delegation explained that the main purposes of the meeting were to discuss the progress in Harmony projects and to specify more in detail the procedure applied, to consider the draft version of the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the reformed IPC and to define a trilateral position on the pending issues of IPC reform.
8. In response to a question raised about the relationship between Harmony projects and IPC revision projects, the Delegation explained that many Harmony projects, as intended, would result in the revision of the advanced level of the IPC; however, revision of the advanced level should not exclusively depend on Harmony projects.

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC

9. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/32/2, containing amendments to the IPC approved by the IPC Revision Working Group, and its Suppl.1 containing comments on those amendments submitted by Sweden and the European Patent Office (EPO), as well as comments submitted by the EPO and a rapporteur report submitted by Sweden on the correct title of subclass B60T. Furthermore, comments submitted by France on the title of subclass B60T were distributed at the meeting.

10. The Committee adopted a number of amendments to the IPC, including an amended title of subclass B60T, which appear in the Technical Annexes to this report. Annex XI to this report lists the classes and subclasses for which the Committee has adopted amendments during the current revision period, and Annex XII to this report lists the classes and subclasses to which the said Technical Annexes pertain.

Observations Relating to the Amendments Considered

11. When considering the amendments proposed under Project C 386, the Committee noted that there were discrepancies between the English and the French versions of group A61G 7/00 and some of its subgroups, where the term “disabled persons” was translated into French as “les malades ou les personnes handicapées.” The IPC Revision Working Group was requested to clarify, within the scope of Definition Project D 029, whether in this subclass the term “disabled persons” includes also “patients.”

12. Concerning Project C 412, the Committee noted that the IPC Revision Working Group had not provided transfer notes of the deleted main group A61K 7/00 and its subgroups. A list containing transfer notes submitted by the EPO was considered and several amendments were made. This list appears in Annex III to this report.

13. The Committee was not in a position to adopt the said notes and requested the IPC Revision Working Group to consider and approve these notes. All other amendments of subclass A61K were adopted. Furthermore, the IPC Revision Working Group was requested to consider whether in subclass A61Q a residual main group should be created to receive subject matter which was earlier covered by group A61K 7/00 and is not provided for in the main groups of A61Q.

14. The Committee adopted the notes prescribing multiple classification in subclasses B29C and B29D in the framework of Project C 278. However it was noted that these notes were not in line with the standardized note templates for multiple classification adopted by the Committee at this session (see paragraph 35). The Committee requested the IPC Revision Working Group to review these notes and similar notes throughout the IPC with regard to the standardized note templates in the framework of the IPC maintenance after 2005 (see paragraph 36, below).

15. Considering Project C 362, the Committee noted that in the printed version of the IPC, in the wordings of some groups or in some references, IPC symbols outside the relevant subclass were in some cases indicated in abbreviated form, i.e. without indication of the subclass symbol (see Note (2) after subclass E21B). The Committee requested the Secretariat to investigate whether it would be possible to change this practice and to always print IPC symbols outside the relevant subclass in their complete form, i.e. including the subclass symbol.

WORKING GROUPS AND WORKING METHODS OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

16. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/32/3.

17. The Committee recalled that, at its thirty-first session held in February/March 2002, a proposal had been discussed to abolish the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group and to increase the number of annual meetings of the Committee. The Committee also recalled its instruction to the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group to consider this proposal (see document IPC/CE/31/8, paragraphs 47 to 51).

18. The Committee noted that, the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group, at its seventh session held in May 2002, had agreed that the implementation of the proposal in the year 2002 could negatively influence the IPC reform process and had recommended to the Committee to consider the proposal at the next ordinary session of the Committee, at the beginning of 2003.

19. The Committee recalled that the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group had been created in March 1999 for the preparation of the strategic plan for the development of the IPC and the elaboration, in light of the IPC long-term goals, of tasks of IPC reform.

20. The program of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group included 19 various tasks of reform. Since 1999, the Working Group has completed nine tasks, three tasks were close to completion and two tasks represented tasks of continuing activity (see Annex IX to document IPC/REF/8/2).

21. Having considered the status of the program of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group, the Committee concluded that a major part of this program had successfully been completed by the Working Group and had provided a solid basis for carrying out IPC reform.

22. In view of the need to accelerate the decision-making process in the IPC Union during the final stage of IPC reform, the Committee agreed that the number of its annual sessions should be increased and that the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group could be abolished as it had essentially achieved the goals for which it had been created. The Committee also agreed that the completion of the remaining tasks of IPC reform should be carried out by the Committee itself, the Task Force on the Revision of the Guide to the IPC and the International Bureau.

23. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the members of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group for the excellent work conducted.

24. The Committee also considered a proposal, approved by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group, relating to the improvement of working methods of the Committee and its working groups (see the Annex to document IPC/CE/32/3).

25. Following a detailed discussion, the Committee decided to endorse the proposal as introducing a more precise management structure in the IPC Union and providing for the increased use of electronic correspondence which would contribute to more efficient consideration of projects and tasks. The Committee adopted the proposal, with some changes, as given in Annex IV to this report.

26. With regard to the electronic handling of the meeting documentation, the Committee expressed the wish that an automated notification of its members of new documents posted on the WIPO IPC website be implemented.

27. Finally, the Committee agreed that its new working methods should be thoroughly tested and, probably, reconsidered or further specified when sufficient experience in their application is accumulated during the next revision period of the core level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THE AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP

28. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/32/4 containing recommendations formulated by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 2 (“Consideration of the IPC Revision Policy and the Revision Procedure in Relation to the Core and Advanced Levels of the Reformed IPC”)

29. The Committee considered the Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC approved by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group. With regard to paragraph 12 of the document it was noted that the figure of 10% testing of the search file concerned related to the PCT minimum documentation for the revision of the advanced level and to the national patent collections causing revision of the core level.

30. The Committee agreed that the Special Subcommittee for the supervision of the advanced level of the IPC should be established at the next session of the Committee.

31. The Committee noted that the detailed procedure for the preparation of the French version of the advanced level would be prepared in the framework of Task No. 16 on the IPC reform program.

32. The Committee finally adopted, with some changes, the Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC which appears as Annex V to this report.

33. The Committee agreed to consider Task No. 2 completed.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 4 (“General Principles of Classification; Elaboration of Rules for Multiple Classification”)

34. The Committee adopted, with some changes, the submitted Guidelines for Determining Subject Matter Appropriate for Obligatory and Nonobligatory Classification which appear as Annex VI to this report.

35. The Committee also adopted the following two templates for notes prescribing multi-aspect classification for obligatory and nonobligatory classification:

Obligatory Classification:

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

Nonobligatory Classification:

“Subject matter,” which is considered of interest for search purposes, may also be classified in...

36. The Committee requested the IPC Revision Working Group to apply these templates in the future IPC maintenance procedure. The Committee 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 would not apply.

37. Bearing in mind the totality of recommendations relating to this Task, adopted by the Committee at this and earlier sessions (see document IPC/CE/29/11, paragraph 32, and document IPC/CE/30/11, paragraph 35), the Committee agreed to consider this Task completed.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 7 (“Determination of the Most Appropriate Duration of Revision Cycles”)

38. The Committee considered the submitted document “The Most Appropriate Duration of Revision Cycles,” prepared by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.

39. The Committee recalled that, at its thirty-first session held in February/March 2002, it had taken the following decisions relating to the above Task (see document IPC/CE/31/8, paragraph 23):

- a fixed revision cycle would be needed for the core level of the IPC;
- a three-year revision cycle would be the most efficient for the core level;
- although the three-year revision cycle should normally be applied in the future for the core level, the Committee could extend the revision cycle if it considered the publication of the new edition of the core level premature.

40. In addition to the above decisions, the Committee adopted the following recommendations relating to this Task:

(a) Beginning from the year 2005, new IPC editions, incorporating revision changes, would appear every three years and would bear the designation of the year of publication, for example, IPC-2005;

(b) Amendments to the core level adopted by the Committee of Experts should be accumulated during the three-year revision period and should officially enter into force at its end. Amendments adopted should also be incorporated by the International Bureau in the IPC and published in the Internet version of the IPC, following the sessions of the Committee;

(c) Those amendments should not be mandatory for use until the end of the revision period and should be considered as temporarily belonging to the advanced level of the IPC. This would provide possibilities for the rapid implementation of the results of the core level

revision by any member or observer of the IPC Union that applies classification in the advanced level and would wish to use such amendments for classification of published patent documents;

(d) The above-mentioned use of core level amendments temporarily belonging to the advanced level should not distort the compatibility of the core and the advanced levels. Industrial property offices that would choose to use these amendments should be obliged to also assign official core level symbols to their published patent documents. Such an assignment would be facilitated by the revision concordance data which would be available to offices at the same time as the core level amendments themselves, and, in certain cases, could be done in a automatic way.

41. The Committee agreed to consider Task No. 7 completed.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 8 “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

42. The Committee considered the recommendations regarding the new presentation of classification symbols on the front page of patent documents and adopted the following rules:

- classification symbols should be presented in tabular form;
- the core level symbols should be printed in regular font and the advanced level symbols in italics; for documents subject to classification at subclass level, according to Article 4(4) of the Strasbourg Agreement, subclass symbols should be printed in regular font;
- the invention information symbols should be printed in bold font and the other information symbols in regular font;
- the version indicator for the core level symbols (year) should be placed in round brackets after the abbreviation Int. Cl;
- the version indicator for each advanced level symbol (year, month) should be placed in round brackets after each advanced level symbol;
- presentation of classification symbols in two columns is admissible;
- 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.

Master Classification Database (MCD)

43. The Committee adopted the recommended definition of patent family to be used in the Master Classification Database, namely that the patent family should be based on a common set of priorities.

44. The Committee agreed on the following principles for the generation of classification information:

- offices should generate either core level classification or advanced level classification for the same inventive subject, but not both;
- no rolling up of later added advanced level symbols should be done when core level symbols are present;
- the initial classification and the classification assigned by the Trilateral Offices should be kept in the advanced level.

45. The Committee adopted, with some changes, the Summary of Rules for Class Propagation which appears as Annex VII to this report.

46. The Committee also adopted the Reclassification Rules in the Master Classification Database (MCD) which appears as Annex VIII to this report.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 10 (“General Question and Answer Pamphlet on the Application of the IPC”)

47. The Committee considered a document prepared by the International Bureau on “Frequently Asked Questions About the International Patent Classification (IPC)” which had been published on the WIPO IPC website and expressed its appreciation of the significant work done by the International Bureau.

48. The Committee agreed to consider Task No. 10 completed.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 15 (“Study of the Feasibility of Introducing a Simplified Set of Rules in the IPC”)

49. The Committee adopted the recommendation on the systematic introduction in IPC subclasses of residual main groups, where those groups were not present, which should be carried out after the entering into force of IPC-2005.

50. The Committee also adopted 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.

51. The Committee agreed that residual main groups should have a standard number 99/00, whenever possible.

52. The Delegation of the United States of America informed the Committee of the plan to review the complete IPC in the course of 2003 in order to establish a list of all subclasses where residual main groups were needed, and to make this list available to the Committee. The Committee accepted the offer with gratitude as this list would provide significant assistance in the systematic introduction of residual main groups.

53. As a partial solution to the problem of the residual subject matter already in IPC-2005, the Committee agreed 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.

54. The Committee agreed that those residual classes should have a standard number 99 and adopted the following titles of such residual classes, subclasses and main groups as exemplified by section A:

A99	Subject matter not otherwise provided for in this section
A99Z	Subject matter not otherwise provided for in this section
A99Z 99/00	Subject matter not otherwise provided for in this section.

55. The Committee also adopted 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.”

56. The Committee instructed the IPC Revision Working Group to create classification definitions for such residual subclasses and main groups and to introduce in the definitions a special example section to provide additional guidance for the user.

Recommendations Relating to Task No. 16 (“Study of Ways and Means for the Establishment of the French Version of the Advanced Level of the IPC”)

57. The Committee adopted the following two approaches to the establishment of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC:

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

58. The Secretariat informed the Committee 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 was continuing in the framework of the WIPO CLAIMS Project.

59. The Secretariat also informed the Committee that a presentation of computer-assisted tools elaborated under the CLAIMS Project would be made at the next session of the Committee.

60. The Committee agreed that a detailed procedure for the preparation of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC should be elaborated and accepted, with gratitude, an offer of the Delegation of France to submit a proposal on the above procedure, by May 15, 2003. Comments on the proposal were invited by July 1, 2003, and a final proposal from France by September 1, 2003.

61. The Committee indicated that the procedure for the preparation of the French version, when elaborated, should be included in the Concept of Operations for the reformed IPC.

62. The Committee finally decided that a special body for the supervision and approval of the amendments to the French version of the advanced level should be established and agreed to consider this matter at its next session.

RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THE IPC REVISION WORKING GROUP

63. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/32/5 containing "Guidelines for Drafting Classification Definitions" proposed by the IPC Revision Working Group. The Guidelines were adopted with some amendments and appear in Annex IX to this report.

IPC REFORM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

64. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/32/6, containing the IPC Reform Implementation Plan approved by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.

65. The Committee noted that four more tasks of IPC reform had been completed.

66. Having made some changes to certain actions and timelines relating to particular tasks of IPC reform and the tasks of the IPC Revision Working Group, the Committee adopted the updated IPC Reform Implementation Plan as shown in Annex X to this report.

67. In relation to Task No. 13 of IPC reform ("Improve IPC Training by Providing Modern Training Techniques"), the Secretariat informed the Committee of the elaboration of a broad program of modernized training in the use of the IPC, including computer-based and Internet training tools, which would include information packages about IPC reform. The program would be presented for consideration to the next session of the Committee.

68. The Secretariat indicated that a composite part of the program would be interactive IPC tutorials which were being prepared under the CLAIMS Project on the basis of the sets of IPC training examples published in the WIPO Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation. The Secretariat explained that those training examples should be updated and revised according to amendments introduced in the IPC in the course of its reform and revision.

69. The Committee underlined the importance of IPC training examples for teaching the staff of industrial property offices and instructed the IPC Revision Working Group to create a Task Force on updating and revising IPC training examples. The Committee requested the International Bureau to prepare background material on this matter for consideration by the IPC Revision Working Group at its ninth session in June 2003.

70. Having agreed that the IPC Reform Implementation Plan was successfully carried out, the Committee decided that it was necessary to inform the Assembly of the IPC Union of the progress of IPC reform and requested the International Bureau to prepare the IPC reform progress report and to submit it to the Assembly of the IPC Union.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE REFORMED IPC

71. The Committee considered document IPC/CE/32/7, containing the draft of the Concept of Operations for the reformed IPC (CONOPS), prepared by the EPO in cooperation with the International Bureau. The main purpose of this consideration was to fix rules which were necessary for the creation and the proper maintenance of the Master Classification Database (MCD).

72. The Committee approved in principle the contents of CONOPS, but felt that certain parts of it could be further specified and additional details introduced, so that it could serve as a comprehensive document describing the classification and reclassification process of the reformed IPC and providing sufficient information to industrial property offices for accommodating their internal systems to various aspects of the reformed IPC. The Committee underlined that adaptation of the offices' internal systems should be done sufficiently soon before the entering of the reformed IPC into force.

73. In the context of the preparation of the reformed IPC, the following general statements were made (see paragraphs 74 to 76, below).

74. The Delegation of the EPO informed of the ongoing reform of ECLA aiming at bringing it in full concordance with the reformed IPC.

75. The Delegation of the Russian Federation indicated that a national collection of patent documents, including the documents of the Russian Federation and those of the former Soviet Union from 1920, would be reclassified according to the eighth edition of the IPC (IPC-2005) and the bibliographic data relating to this collection would be submitted to the MCD.

76. The Secretariat informed of its plans to submit a circular with a questionnaire 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 patent documents, informing them of the forthcoming entering into force of the reformed IPC and of its various aspects which would

influence classification and reclassification of patent documents. The questionnaire would request information about the intentions of industrial property offices to use for classification the core or the advanced level of the reformed IPC and about their plans and ability to carry out reclassification of their national patent collections according to amendments of the IPC. The Secretariat indicated that a summary of replies would be submitted for consideration to the next session of the Committee.

77. The Delegation of the EPO and the Secretariat made a detailed presentation of CONOPS and responded to questions raised by delegates.

78. The following remarks were made which should be taken into consideration in the further elaboration of CONOPS:

re Part 2.2: intellectual families having the same set of priorities could be used for family propagation as usual limited families.

re Part 2.4:

– the indicator of the classification level “O” (other) should be excluded from the revised version of Standard ST.8 since classification could be given only at subclass, core or advanced level;

– the definition of indicator “M” in the revised version of Standard ST.8 should be changed to “family propagated data” and the new indicator “G” should be introduced for “classification generated by machine.” The Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT), which is carrying out revision of Standard ST.8, should be informed of the above proposed changes;

– industrial property offices planning to use other standards than the ST.8 for the exchange of bibliographic data with the MCD, for example, electronic standards, should inform the MCD Administrator of this.

re Part 2.5.3: for storing reclassification data option (2) was approved.

re Part 2.6.1: the use of the cost/benefit considerations by the Special Subcommittee in considering revision proposals should be further explained.

re Part 2.6.5: one more rule should be added to the automatic propagation of classification symbols: “propagation should not result in deletion of all invention information symbols.”

re Part 2.6.8: for storing reclassification data option (2) was approved.

re Part 2.8: a new part relating to “correction of data” should be introduced.

A new Part 2.10 on classification changes outside revision projects should be introduced. It was noted that classification changes for documents should in principle be generated by the publishing office. In respect of WO documents, it was questioned whether the International Searching Authorities under the PCT should be involved.

re Part 3.6: it should be explicitly indicated that the Guide to the IPC should be published both as a printed publication and as an electronic publication on the Internet.

Re Part 4.1: it would be desirable that industrial property offices determine their policy with regard to the use of the core or the advanced level of the IPC, for the whole Classification or for their use in separate technical fields, and make this policy known to other offices in order to facilitate searching patent files.

79. With regard to the revision of the Guide to the IPC, the Committee instructed the Task Force on the Revision of the Guide to consider, at its next meeting, the need for introducing a formal procedure, and possible mechanism, for the revision of the Guide and to report to the Committee accordingly.

80. The Committee confirmed its intention to adopt the final text of CONOPS at its next session. In order to provide for the comprehensive consideration of CONOPS, the Committee requested the EPO, in cooperation with the International Bureau, to submit, by April 1, 2003, a further draft of CONOPS on the basis of the present text and remarks indicated in paragraph 78, above, and invited its members to submit comments on that draft by June 1, 2003. The EPO and the International Bureau were further requested to prepare the final text of CONOPS by September 1, 2003.

81. The Committee noted the CONOPS Timeline, prepared by the EPO, showing time periods of various stages of IPC advanced level revision projects and agreed that this Timeline should serve as a template for planning the work relating to each individual revision project.

82. The Committee noted that the latest version of the document “Trilateral Operations” (TOPS), describing trilateral procedures applied for Harmony projects, would be submitted by the EPO to the members and observers of the Committee.

DEVELOPMENT OF CLASSIFICATION TOOLS FOR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

83. Discussions were based on document IPC/CE/32/8 containing a report of the Task Force on Classification of Traditional Knowledge established at the thirtieth session of the Committee. The report described the work carried out by the Task Force in the year 2002.

84. The Committee noted, with appreciation, that the Task Force, as instructed by the Committee, had prepared a revision request with a revision proposal relating to the creation of the new main group A61K 36/00 for medicinal preparations containing plants and had submitted it to the IPC Revision Working Group for consideration. The Working Group, at its eighth session, agreed to include the proposal in the IPC revision program as a new revision project C 425 (see document IPC/WG/8/8, paragraphs 8 to 11).

85. The Committee confirmed its instruction to the IPC Revision Working Group to complete the revision project relating to traditional medicine classification in time and make the results available in the next edition of the IPC.

86. The Committee agreed with the suggestion of the Task Force that a more detailed revision could be carried out at a later stage, in the course of the next IPC revision period.

87. The Delegation of India expressed its appreciation for the substantial revision of the IPC in the field of traditional medicine that had been initiated by the Task Force. The Delegation indicated that many countries have started creation of databases covering traditional knowledge information in the public domain, that the volume of traditional knowledge documentation was tremendous and a more detailed classification system would be needed for its retrieval. In this respect, the Delegation informed that the number of non-patent traditional knowledge documents published in India approaches 250,000, contrary to the figure of 35,000 documents indicated in the report of the Task Force.

88. The Delegation of China indicated that the ongoing revision of the IPC in the field of traditional medicine was considered very urgent in view of the large number of patent and non-patent documents on traditional medicine published in China. The Delegation underlined that a revised IPC scheme in this field should already be included in the new edition of the Classification.

89. The Secretariat informed the Committee of the ongoing activities of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) which compiled an Inventory of Traditional Knowledge-related Periodicals and recommended to the International Searching Authorities their integration into the non-patent literature part of the PCT minimum documentation. The IGC also compiled an Inventory of Existing Online Databases containing Traditional Knowledge Documentation Data and made available on the WIPO website a traditional knowledge database portal.

90. The Committee agreed to inform the IGC about the current progress made by the Task Force on Classification of Traditional Knowledge by submitting to the IGC the Task Force report and the part of this report reflecting its discussions of classification tools for traditional knowledge.

91. The Committee finally instructed the Task Force to continue its work on further development of classification tools for traditional knowledge and to investigate possible patent classification aspects relating to components of biodiversity and folklore and requested the Task Force to consider how the future revised IPC could be linked to traditional knowledge resources classifications which may be developed in various countries, and how to best organize access to traditional knowledge documentation which was in the public domain, including hyperlinking the IPC to traditional knowledge databases. The Committee authorized the Task Force to consider the possibility of holding a physical meeting if necessary.

PUBLICATION OF THE EIGHTH EDITION OF THE IPC (IPC-2005) AND RELATED MATERIAL

92. The Committee considered document IPC/CE/32/9, containing a proposal by the International Bureau regarding the publication of the eighth edition of the IPC (IPC-2005) and related material.

93. The Committee noted that the International Bureau intends to publish, in June 2004, the next edition of the IPC both on paper and on the Internet. The Committee agreed that the paper publication would be restricted to the core level of the reformed IPC. This publication would mainly be intended for industrial property offices wishing to use the core level of the IPC for classifying their published patent documents.

94. The Committee also noted that the Internet version of the next edition would contain the complete text of the Classification and would incorporate the electronic layer, including supplementary information, facilitating the use of the IPC, such as classification definitions, informative references, chemical formulae and graphic illustrations. The Committee agreed that the Internet version should be considered as an official publication of the IPC.

95. The Committee expressed its wish that the improved printing facilities in the form of current hyperlinked PDF files be retained in the Internet version of the next edition and that enhanced functionalities, similar to those on the IPC:CLASS CD-ROM, be implemented in the Internet publication.

96. The Committee felt that publication of the IPC:CLASS CD-ROM should continue as this multilingual tool provided excellent possibilities for accessing the IPC, in particular for professional users of patent information. The Committee suggested that the next version of IPC:CLASS could include the core level of the eighth edition of the IPC and facilities enabling downloading of the advanced level from the Internet.

97. The Committee agreed that the contents and the language coverage of the next version of the CD-ROM could be determined at a later session of the Committee.

98. The Committee noted the plans of the International Bureau to publish, in Autumn 2004, the updated Official Catchword Indexes to the eighth edition in the printed form and on the Internet. The Committee also noted that no further updating of the Catchword Indexes was planned in the course of the next IPC revision period and that presentation of material in the updated Catchword Indexes should be reconsidered.

99. The Secretariat informed the Committee that a procedure for the updating of the Catchword Indexes would be proposed for discussion at the ninth session of the IPC Revision Working Group.

100. The Committee noted that, in order to facilitate the use of revision amendments, the International Bureau would coordinate the preparation of revision concordance data between the seventh and eighth editions of the IPC and that the revision concordance list would be published in 2004 on the Internet. It was suggested that two types of the revision concordance list would be needed, relating, respectively, to the core and advanced levels of the IPC.

ELABORATION OF A CONCORDANCE TABLE BETWEEN THE IPC AND THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION OF ALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES (ISIC)

101. The Secretariat introduced document IPC/CE/32/10 which outlined the Project on International Patent Statistics, Methodology and Analysis, carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Secretariat indicated that one of the major parts of the Project should be the building of a concordance table between the IPC and the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), and that the Committee was requested to give advice on the approach to be taken for the elaboration of such a concordance table.

102. The Committee expressed interest in the Project as aiming at matching patent data with such industrial data as R&D, employment, and external trade.

103. In considering possible approaches to building a concordance table between the IPC and the ISIC, the Committee felt that manual-based procedures, such as assigning to patent documents IPC symbols and ISIC codes in parallel, could be very labor-consuming, and that automated, statistically-based methods, should be applied for the preparation of the concordance.

104. In this regard, the Committee noted that such a method had already been used for the development of the IPC-ISIC concordance on the basis of the data produced by the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. The Committee also noted the existence of the concordance between the US Patent Classification System (USPCS) and the ISIC and expressed the opinion that this concordance could be converted into an IPC-ISIC concordance, using as an intermediate step concordance tables between the USPCS and the European Classification (ECLA) which is essentially an IPC-derived classification.

105. Several members of the Committee informed of the availability of concordance tables between the IPC and economic classifications similar to the ISIC. The Committee requested its members to submit available material to the International Bureau.

106. Finally, the Committee expressed its wish to be periodically informed of the progress on the Project on International Patent Statistics carried out by the OECD.

CLAIMS PROJECT

107. The Secretariat presented a quick status report on the CLAIMS Project. The budget allotment of CLAIMS for the current biennium is 2,4 million Swiss Francs (for non-staff costs); however, according to current estimates, the real cost of the project would be 2 million Swiss Francs. The main goal of this IT project is to provide IT infrastructure for IPC reform. The Project is managed using a methodology inspired by the Rapid Application Development which proved to be an adequate and economic approach. Phase 1 of the Project started in October 2002, and has four tracks.

108. Track 1 deals with the “autocategorization” of patent documents. One deliverable of Track 1 is the patent corpus which is made available to the research communities. Until now, 18 research and business communities downloaded WIPO alpha set (created from the PCTI2C PCT full-text archive). WIPO beta set would be published in March 2003. Running the in-house tests Rainbow (a free tool for research purposes) provided tools to evaluate and compare several algorithms. SNOW and WINNOWN-U both use the Winnow algorithm, which seems to be the most promising according to the internal tests. When using Microsoft Sharepoint Portal Server, not only an off-the-shelf product was tested but also an implementation of the SVM algorithm. A professional tool (not tested by other offices) was additionally tested. There is strong hope that a categorization assistance tool helping the small- and medium-sized offices can be developed just by extending Phase 1. The best performing software (WINNOWN-U) based upon neural network gave results beyond the original expectations.

109. Track 2 of the Project deals with the translation and linguistic support of the IPC reform. The translation assistance would be provided by using MultiCorpora’s MultiTrans which is a translation memory. Combined with patent-specific terminology and the proper translation of the most frequent phrases identified by MultiTrans efficient translation assistance could be provided for local (or remote) users. The search support system which is under consideration is inspired by the US OASIS or the French CIB-LN systems. Lingway, participant of the EU-funded ePatent Project, presented a favorable offer on the use of their TACSY and FULTY servers. The system presented in operation provides natural language query interface and retrieves the relevant IPC entries, based upon a concept network.

110. Track 3 of the Project aimed at the development of interactive IPC Tutorials. This track is closed now. Works of Track 3 resulted in a deliverable, web-based product, the adjustments of which can be done under the regular maintenance. The raw input for the training system is based upon the IPC training examples, published in the Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation. The data are input through a web interface and are stored in a relational database which is in turn linked to the IBIS system (<http://www.wipo.int/ibis/index.htm>). The administration can “switch” on/off any example. The system provides user management (registration, notification on new examples, etc.). Any example can be downloaded and used locally. The system is under in-house testing at WIPO.

111. Track 4 is the IPC reform support. Several minor and major projects were run to provide ad hoc assistance to the IPC Reform operations, and in the background building an infrastructure for the future operations. The whole IBIS system is in beta (currently it is version beta 5.1) until IPC-2005 will be published. A few examples of the ad hoc reform support: adjustments in the core and advanced level, limiting the full-text view to the core level only, recalculation of the outpointers, generation of the definition help files, consolidation of the chemical illustrating formulae. Obviously the linking to the Master Classification File (and the building up of the notification procedures concerning the documents classified on the advanced level) is one of the top priorities on this Track.

112. The Project, which has been run for six months by the Head of the Knowledge Management Center since September 2002, will have a new Project Manager, Patrick Fiévet (patrick.fievet@wipo.int) from March 30, 2003.

113. The Secretariat invited the member States to contribute to the Patent Corpus offered for the research communities dealing with autocategorization. Germany had already provided data and France also supported the initiative. The Delegation of France requested additional information on the translation support systems (translation memory), emphasizing that the system should be flexible enough to provide support for local translation and translators working remotely. When selecting MultiTrans this requirement was understood. The Secretariat would send a copy of the MultiTrans test report to the Delegation of France. The Delegation of Sweden asked for information on the size of the training set needed for the autocategorizers. The Secretariat indicated that the size of the alpha corpus (less than 80,000 documents) was enough only for subclass level tests (some 180 subclasses lack sufficient representative documents). The use of the ECLA codes in the training corpus can improve the usability. It is desirable to have some 400,000 to 600,000 documents (bibliographic data and abstracts) in the corpus.

114. The Committee noted the report with gratitude.

NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

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

Geneva, October 6 to 10, 2003.

116. This report was unanimously adopted by the Committee at its closing meeting on February 28, 2003.

[Annexes follow]