

IPC FORUM
(February 13, 2006)

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Forum expressed thanks to WIPO for organizing this event.
2. The Forum noted that the strategic goals of IPC reform were to adapt the IPC to the electronic environment for improved efficiency in retrieval of patent information and to facilitate its use by IP offices and the general public. In the course of a six-year process of IPC reform, all basic objectives of the reform have been achieved.
3. The reformed Classification has been created, published and entered into force. The following fundamental changes have been made to the IPC itself and methods of its revision and application:
 - the IPC has been divided into two levels to better satisfy differing needs of users of patent information;
 - IPC Master Files have been generated and used for the production of an Internet version of the IPC enhanced by various electronic data to facilitate classification and search;
 - a new revision procedure based on the creation of a common classification under the Trilateral Classification Harmony Project and providing rapid introduction in the IPC of changes required by technological developments has been introduced;
 - the most up-to-date version of the IPC will be available for patent searching as patent collections will be reclassified on the basis of the changes introduced in the IPC;
 - a worldwide bibliographic database of patent documents – the Master Classification Database – has been created.
4. The reformed IPC was published by WIPO in its authentic versions in English and French. The Spanish version was published in cooperation between WIPO and the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office. Several other language versions of the IPC were published by national IP offices.
5. IPC-related materials supporting the use of the IPC, such as official Catchword Indexes, the Revision Concordance List, the IPC validity file, have also been published and made available to the users.
6. IT tools supporting the reformed IPC and its use have been elaborated providing for: management of IPC revision and publication, translation assistance, natural language search in the IPC, automated classification at high levels of the Classification, IPC symbols validation.
7. The majority of IP offices have made the necessary changes to their administrative systems to accommodate the reformed IPC and started to use the reformed IPC for classifying published patent documents.

8. Commercial providers of patent information have introduced changes to their products and services to make them compliant with the reformed IPC and to allow searches with the use of the IPC to be more efficient.

9. However, the Forum noted that the quality of the reformed classification information provided by IP offices is not yet sufficiently high and errors often occur. It encouraged IP offices to take measures to increase the quality of classification of their patent documents, in particular, by the urgent introduction of the validation of the published symbols and by strictly following the standards for the reformed IPC elaborated by WIPO.

10. Work should continue to encourage all IP offices using the IPC to start application of the reformed IPC as soon as possible, following the rules and principles elaborated for the reformed IPC.

11. In view of the many fundamental changes introduced into the IPC and in the methods of its application for classifying and searching, work on informing the users of these changes should be intensified. The users and commercial providers of patent information should also be completely and timely informed about all further developments planned to be made to the IPC and its use for classification and search of patent information.

12. Easier and broader access of the users to the tools supporting the reformed IPC should be provided. More information material on the reformed IPC should be elaborated and published on the Internet and other media.

13. Future development of the IPC should be directed to the following strategic goals:

- further adaptation of the system to technological developments and to the electronic environment;
- creation of a universal search tool for all IP offices;
- establishment of a global system for generating, processing and distributing classification information.

[End of document]