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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
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**SPECIAL UNION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION
(IPC UNION)**

AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP

Fourth Session

Geneva, October 30 to November 3, 2000

**REPORT ON THE THIRD MEETING OF THE TRILATERAL WORKING GROUP ON
CLASSIFICATION HELD IN WASHINGTON FROM SEPTEMBER 11 TO 15, 2000**

Document prepared by the European Patent Office (EPO)

1. The Trilateral Offices discussed in Washington mainly items relating to the Reform of the IPC. Also the availability of FI and F-terms and their manuals translated in English as well as the corresponding inventories for FI and F-terms were discussed. The creation of a concordance table USPC - ECLA - FI was also treated. In this report only the IPC Reform part is reflected.

WHAT TO CLASSIFY

2. Agreement on the definition of invention information and other information was already found in the second meeting of the working group. In this meeting attention was paid on all the possible cases of multiple classification to agree on a general rule which is formulated below.

If a document has more than one invention all inventions have to be classified. For each invention one obligatory invention information is given together with, as many as needed, other non-obligatory information.

3. Practical guidelines for determining what must be obligatory classified in the reformed IPC have been agreed to and are a trilateral proposal to be treated by this committee. Also the document on classifying mixtures has been discussed and the principles are accepted.

WHERE TO CLASSIFY

4. The rearrangement of the schemes according to a fixed lay-out could in principle be carried out as long as no renumbering is needed but limitations seem to be necessary in view of a possible impact on F-terms.

5. The USPC rules for classification (e.g. first place, inclusiveness) can only be used in the reformed iPC for subclasses which are in revision. It is decided to harmonise classification schemes in ECLA, FI and USPC according to the USPC principles. This work is to be seen as a proof of concept and as a de facto common trilateral classification scheme. We are in the process of identifying candidates for this proof of concept and plan to begin work as soon as possible.

– indexing

6. The cut-off point for the indexing schemes has been discussed and agreement is found on 10%. Offices willing to keep indexing codes for a lower percentage should be requested to present good arguments. Indexing codes introduced with IPC 7 are later-on to be discussed when more statistical data is available.

7. The remaining indexing schemes should be non-obligatory and all dual purpose indexing schemes are to be removed. Linked indexing is to be abolished.

– definitions

8. Agreement is reached on the layout of the definitions and the writing of these definitions is discussed. DOC 46 and the FI manual (after translation in English) could be a help in this action. The revision working group seems to be a good candidate for writing the definitions.

CORE AND ADVANCED LEVEL

9. The proposal prepared by the EPO has been discussed. Concern is expressed on the low percentage of the advanced level and that the core level may not be stable enough. Further analysis on basis of past reclassification activities is to be carried out.

10. The paper “IPC Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC” was discussed. The five member special subcommittee in paragraph 24 was concluded to be an unworkable arrangement because it would not permit the Trilateral Offices to meet their business needs.

MASTER CLASSIFICATION FILE

- patent family

11. Three types of families have been discussed namely the limited family (same set of priorities), the technical family (one common priority) and the extended family (one common priority for one document) but no agreement has been reached but it is hoped to do it on short term.

12. In families with Japanese documents but based on non-Japanese priorities a substantial difference in content of the documents is noted. The number of claims is different for the reason of the applicant's tactics. To be noted for propagation of classes via priorities.

13. Evolution of the classifications of a patent document during the granting process (from A to B) is noted and the question of reclassifying the documents in both levels has still further to be elaborated.

- marking of IPC symbols

14. The document "Marking of IPC symbols" has been treated and became a document for discussion by this committee.

- initial classification

15. The proposal to classify only once a filed priority application and its dependent applications has been discussed and accepted. A document on it is presented for this committee.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

16. The USPTO and EPO have both computer assisted reclassification procedures based on their local business rules. It is felt important that similar procedures are developed for the reformed IPC. Due to a lack of time no details could be discussed.

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