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

IPC REVISION WORKING GROUP

**Fifth Session
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IPC REFORM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN,
IN PARTICULAR ELABORATION OF CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS

Document prepared by the International Bureau

1. At its thirtieth session, held in February 2001, the IPC Committee of Experts decided to extend the transitional revision period by two years with a view that the next edition of the IPC—reformed IPC—would enter into force on January 1, 2005 (see document IPC/CE/30/11, paragraph 18). The Committee indicated that careful planning would be necessary in order to ensure successful completion of the IPC reform. Accordingly, the International Bureau prepared and the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group, at its fifth session, approved the IPC reform implementation plan (see Annex VIII of document IPC/REF/5/3).
2. The implementation plan covers the years 2001-04. The timing takes account of the requirements of the Strasbourg Agreement, according to which amendments to the Classification shall be notified to the competent authorities of the IPC Union six months before their entering into force. Given that the next edition of the IPC enters into force on January 1, 2005, it should be published by July 1, 2004, and last amendments to the current edition should be adopted by the Committee in early 2004.

3. The plan indicates timelines and milestones with regard to major activities which will be necessary to carry out for completion of IPC reform. Those activities are divided in two parts, namely activities relating to the elaboration of IPC reform tasks, which is in the responsibility of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group (IPC/REF) and the International Bureau (IB), and activities relating to the realization of the elaborated decisions in the IPC itself, which is in the responsibility of the IPC Revision Working Group (IPC/WG). The implementation plan also covers the IPC revision program carried out by the IPC Revision Working Group. A major part of decisions and recommendations of both Working Groups should be finally adopted by the Committee of Experts (IPC/CE).

4. The activities of the plan which are in the responsibility of the IPC Revision Working Group are reproduced below.

IPC revision projects

5. The current IPC revision program includes 31 revision projects. It is expected that approximately a half of the projects could be completed by the IPC/WG in 2001 and the proposed amendments to the IPC adopted by the IPC/CE in early 2002. The remaining projects will be completed in 2002. At its session, in early 2003, the IPC/CE will finally adopt all amendments to the seventh edition of the IPC emanating from the revision projects.

6. The results of the elaboration of several reform tasks should be implemented in the Classification itself. Such an implementation should be carried out by the IPC/WG, as participation of technical experts of industrial property offices will be necessary. The following tasks will require specific amendments and additions to the IPC in the framework of the implementation of the reform results: Task No. 3 "Introduction of electronic data illustrating the contents of IPC entries," Task No. 5 "Review of the hybrid systems in the IPC," Task No. 14 "Determination of the most appropriate contents of the core level of the reformed IPC," and Task No. 15 "Feasibility of introducing a simplified set of rules in the IPC." In the years 2001-02, preparation of those specific changes to the IPC will be carried out by the IPC/WG in parallel with the consideration of remaining IPC revision projects. The year 2003 will be wholly available for these activities.

Elaboration of classification definitions and revision of subclass indexes

7. At its fourth session, the IPC/WG approved a list of subclasses for which definitions should be created and appointed respective rapporteurs. In February 2001, an e-forum for the definition D-projects was established, where initial proposals and some early comments were posted. However, due to the continued elaboration of the definition format by the IPC/REF, the work did not progress as expected.

8. At its fifth session, the IPC/REF approved a new definition format (see Annex IV to document IPC/REF/5/3). It is suggested, therefore, that the rapporteurs on existing D-projects be invited to submit revised proposals, based on the new format, by September 1, 2001. Taking into account some decrease in the revision work, 10 more definition projects may be added to the classification definition program. Comments on definition proposals could be invited by October 1, 2001, and rapporteur reports by October 20, 2001.

9. At its fourth session, the IPC/WG agreed to consider at its fifth session a procedure for the creation of definitions and revision of subclass indexes. The Annex to this document contains the draft procedure prepared by the International Bureau. It is estimated that, by the year 2004, up to 100 subclasses could be provided with definitions and revised subclass indexes, following the procedure to be adopted.

Checking of notes and references in the reformed IPC

10. Under Task No. 14, the IPC/WG should carry out the work on correcting references and notes as necessary, in view of the division of the IPC into the core and advanced levels. It is suggested that the IPC/WG distribute to volunteering offices a number of classes which were not amended during the sixth or the seventh revision period, for checking of notes and references. Those classes would serve as pilot projects and, at the first stage, only references or notes from core level places to advanced level places should be considered. At the sixth session of the IPC/WG, this task should be planned in detail bearing in mind that checking of references and notes should be completed by the year 2004.

11. In order to facilitate the above-mentioned work on checking, the International Bureau will provide a list of all core level places in the IPC where notes or references point to advanced level places. This list will be available on the WIPO IPC Web site and will contain hyperlinks to a presentation of the IPC where the core level places will be highlighted.

Conversion of indexing schemes to classification schemes

12. Following the decision of IPC/CE to abolish double-purpose classification schemes and to consider their use for multiple classification, and to convert separate indexing schemes into classification schemes, the IPC/WG should consider such a conversion on the basis of the guidelines that the IPC/REF is supposed to approve at its sixth session. This work should start after the sixth session of the IPC/WG and should be completed in respect of all indexing schemes which are present in the seventh edition of the IPC.

13. The International Bureau expects that, with regard to the work to be conducted under Tasks Nos. 3 and 15 (see paragraph 6, above), the IPC/WG will be given authority of the final approval of prepared classification definitions and revised subclass indexes. The results of the work to be conducted under Tasks Nos. 5 and 14 should be submitted by the IPC/WG to the IPC/CE, for final adoption.

Checking of illustrating chemical structural formulae

14. At its fifth session, the IPC/REF noted that the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) had carried out the work on collecting and incorporating illustrating chemical formulae in all chemical areas of the Korean issue of the IPC and had kindly agreed to make available to the International Bureau the electronic data containing illustrating formulae.

15. The IPC/REF agreed that illustrating chemical formulae should be incorporated in the electronic layer of the IPC. By August 1, 2001, the International Bureau will post the whole collection of chemical formulae provided by KIPO on the IPC Web site for comments and eventual additions by the members and observers of the IPC Union. Comments and proposals should be sent by offices to the IPC Revision mailing list before November 1, 2001, for discussion at the next session of the IPC/WG.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

PROCEDURE FOR THE CREATION OF DEFINITIONS AND REVISION OF
SUBCLASS INDEXES BY THE IPC REVISION WORKING GROUP

Background

1. At its fourth session, the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group (IPC/REF) provisionally approved a format of definitions to be introduced in the electronic layer of the IPC. This format was further revised at the fifth session of the IPC/REF (see annex IV to document IPC/REF/5/3). It was also agreed to recommend to the IPC Revision Working Group (IPC/WG) to create Task Forces (one for each technical field) for the elaboration of classification definitions, in addition to example definitions already prepared. It was indicated that the Task Forces should give priority, in creating definitions, to subclasses currently under revision. In the long term, definitions should be elaborated for all IPC subclasses and main groups, and for selected subgroups where necessary.
2. Furthermore, the IPC/REF approved a standardized sequence of main groups in IPC subclasses and recommended its use as guidance in the elaboration of new subclasses or substantially revised subclasses. The IPC/REF agreed to request the IPC/WG to start, as soon as possible, revision of subclass indexes according to the approved standardized sequence of main groups and creation of subclass indexes using the standardized sequence in subclasses where they are missing (see, in this respect, document IPC/REF/4/4, paragraphs 14 to 18 and 48 to 57, and annexes III and IV).

Procedure

3. For each subclass, a D-project is created concerning both definitions and subclass indexes, a rapporteur office and a translator office are designated by the IPC/WG. The D-projects are discussed at three levels:
 - (a) first on the e-forum for definition projects, then
 - (b) at the Task Force when agreement on certain points has not been achieved, and finally
 - (c) at the IPC/WG for formal approval.
4. The Rapporteurs post their proposals on subclass definitions on the e-forum. Comments are posted on the e-forum by any office wishing to comment, whether it is a member of a Task Force or not, before the deadline indicated for each project. After each round of comments, the Rapporteurs should post their reports and eventually modified proposals. In case of the absence of comments or if an agreement has been reached, the project is considered electronically approved in its original language. If a complete agreement has not been reached, the rapporteur either asks for a new round of comments or submits the project to the Task Force.

5. The Task Forces should discuss and solve problems for which a solution has not been found during the e-forum discussion. If necessary, the Task Forces may request a new round of comments. In exceptional cases, the Task Forces may request a decision by the IPC/WG.
6. Once the definitions of a D-project are approved in one language, either during the e-forum discussion or by the Task Force, the Rapporteur posts the proposal on the revision of the subclass index of the corresponding subclass, and the translator office posts the translation of the definitions in the other authentic language. The translation and the revised subclass index are discussed in parallel.
7. Following a round of comments, the Rapporteur posts the final version of the subclass index in the original language in time to allow its translation into another language. The final translation of the definitions is posted together with the translation of the subclass index. As a rule, the subclass index and the translations are discussed only on the e-forum. Exceptionally, important questions may be solved by the Task Forces.
8. Once the D-project is completed in both languages, it is forwarded by the International Bureau to the IPC/WG for formal approval. The IPC/WG may approve a project, with or without amendments, reject it or return it to be partly or completely reconsidered. D-projects are not submitted for adoption to the Committee of Experts.
9. At its fourth session, the IPC/WG created three Task Forces, one for chemistry, one for electricity and one for mechanics, with the following composition:
 - Chemistry: Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America, EPO;
 - Electricity: Germany, United States of America, EPO;
 - Mechanics: Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America, EPO.
10. The Task Forces work by means of electronic correspondence. In exceptional cases, the International Bureau may arrange a physical meeting of the Task Force.
11. According to the progress of the work, new definition D-projects will be created and added to the program by the IPC/WG, following requests by offices. Overlapping subclasses or very active subclasses should be first considered.

[End of Annex and of document]