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

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

**Thirtieth Session  
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RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THE  
AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP

*Document prepared by the International Bureau*

1. At its third and fourth sessions, held respectively, in May and October/November 2000, the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group considered various tasks of the IPC reform program for the year 2000 (see Annex V to document IPC/CE/29/11) and formulated a number of recommendations to the Committee of Experts. Those recommendations are summarized in the Annex to this document.

2. *The Committee of Experts is invited to adopt the recommendations formulated by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.*

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THE  
AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No. 3 (“INTRODUCTION OF  
ELECTRONIC DATA ILLUSTRATING THE CONTENTS OF IPC ENTRIES”)

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/3/2

“23. Discussions were based on the rapporteur report (see Annex 22 to project file IPC/R 3/99 Rev.3) summarizing the work carried out by the Definition Task Force and containing the Rapporteur’s recommendations and action plan.

“24. The Working Group agreed that classification definitions, representing the most important type of electronic data to be introduced in the IPC, should provide additional information in respect of classification entries and serve for their clarification, but should not change the scope of classification entries. Definitions should be relatively short, practical for use and explain terminology used in classification entries without merely repeating it. The Working Group indicated that classification definitions should be present only in the informative layer of the electronic version of the IPC and should not appear in the paper version of the Classification.”

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/4/4

“14. Discussions were based on the recommendations by the Definition Task Force contained in its Summary of discussions distributed at the session and on the modified definition format paper submitted by the United States of America (see Annex 32 to project file IPC/R 3/99).

“15. The definition format was provisionally approved with some amendments and appears as Annex III to this report. Members of the Working Group were requested to submit comments on the format by January 15, 2001, and to propose editorial changes that would bring it more in line with the IPC terminology.

“17. The Working Group agreed that defining references should be retained in the titles of subclasses or groups of the IPC, but should not be repeated in the “Subclass title” or “Group title” part of classification definitions. With regard to explanatory-type information currently contained in notes in the IPC, it was agreed that notes defining subject matter not covered by a subclass or group should be retained in the IPC, but other explanatory-type information should be transferred to classification definitions.

“18. The Working Group agreed to recommend to the IPC Revision Working Group to create Task Forces (one for each technical field) for the elaboration of classification definitions in addition to example definitions already prepared, and 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.”

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No. 4 (“GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION; ELABORATION OF RULES FOR MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATION IN THE IPC”)

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/3/2

“30. Discussions were based on the recommendations by the Trilateral Offices relating to some general principles of classification and possibilities for multiple classification in the IPC (see Annex 14 to the project file IPC/R 4/99 Rev.3).

“31. The Working Group considered in detail the proposed policy statement relating to the subject matter in a patent document that should be classified and, following some modifications made, approved the following principle of classification of patent documents:

“– all invention information, i.e., technical information representing an addition to the state of the art, should be classified, using the claims as guidance;

“– it is recommended to classify also other information which could be useful for search purposes.

“32. The Working Group also considered the recommendations of the Trilateral Offices intended to ensure the applicability of multiple classification and to increase consistency in the classification and agreed to the following:

“– to reconsider the rules of classification stated in paragraphs 52 and 60 of the Guide to the IPC with the intention to clearly enable classification of useful information relating to constituent parts;

“– to include in paragraph 59 of the Guide to the IPC a statement to the following effect: “When there is a doubt whether a document is to be classified in a function-oriented or an application-oriented place, it should be classified in both places.”

“33. The Working Group agreed that the approved above recommendations should form part of the global revision of the Guide to the IPC which was planned to commence in 2001. The Working Group indicated that, in the future revised version of the Guide, it should be, *inter alia*, described in detail how to classify different kinds of patent documents, namely granted patents, examined and unexamined published patent applications.”

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No. 5 (“REVIEW OF THE HYBRID SYSTEMS IN THE IPC”)

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/3/2

“35. The Working Group considered the recommendations presented by the Hybrid Systems Task Force (see Annex 15 to project file IPC/R 5/99 Rev.2) and approved the following principles of treatment of the existing hybrid systems:

“(1) Delete indexing codes if they are superfluous or are not practically used.

“(2) (a) Convert separate indexing schemes into classification schemes and use them for multiple classification.

“(b) Move separate indexing schemes, which are useful and cannot be converted into classification schemes, to the advanced level of the IPC.

“(c) Consider moving the converted indexing schemes to the advanced level of the IPC.

“(d) Abolish double-purpose use of classification groups and consider use of those groups for multiple classification.

“36. It was realized that, since the existing hybrid systems are so different, the above principles should be seen as general guidance and not as strict instructions, and the hybrid systems should be treated individually.

“38. In relation to future hybrid systems, the Working Group approved the following principles:

“(3) (a) Abolish the linked mode of presentation of indexing schemes.

“(b) Elaborate guidelines for the creation and use of indexing schemes.

“(c) Provide definitions for indexing schemes.”

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/4/4

“24. The Working Group noted the work carried out by the Hybrid Systems Task Force in reviewing the hybrid systems in the IPC, as outlined in the Summary of discussions of the Task Force distributed at the session. The discussions of the Working Group were based on the recommendations made by the Task Force.

“25. The Working Group noted that the work of the Task Force was initiated by the statistical study of the use of separate indexing schemes conducted by the EPO (see Annex 18 to project file IPC/R 5/99 Rev.3) and agreed that statistical distribution of indexing schemes allowed to define a borderline between low-use and high-use indexing schemes at 10%. In conformity with the principles of treatment of the hybrid systems approved at its third session (see paragraph 35 of document IPC/REF/3/2), the Working Group agreed that indexing schemes introduced in the sixth edition or earlier editions of the IPC with use below 10% should be excluded from the IPC, subject to any persuasive reasons in favor of their retaining which could be submitted by the members of the Working Group by March 1, 2001.

“26. The Working Group noted that the indexing schemes introduced in the seventh edition of the IPC should be retained, as well as the indexing schemes contained in the following places of the IPC: B 29 K, B 29 L, B 62 D, C 04 B 103:00 and 111:00, C 09 K, C 10 N, D 06 M and F 16 L.

“31. Finally, the Working Group considered the explanatory paper submitted by the EPO (see Annex 22 to project file IPC/R 5/99 Rev.3) on classifying of constituents in a mixture and approved the approach proposed by the EPO, namely, that the mixture as a whole should be classified as invention information and constituents of the mixture should be classified as additional information using existing classification schemes for compounds, for example, classes C 01 and C 07. It was noted that detailed rules would be needed for classifiers to use that approach in order to avoid inconsistency in classifying.”

#### RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No. 8 (“STUDY OF THE POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATION BETWEEN OFFICES IN THE RECLASSIFICATION OF BACKLOG PATENT FILES”)

##### Excerpt from document IPC/REF/4/4

“32. The Working Group considered the proposal by the International Bureau concerning a new presentation of classification symbols for the reformed IPC (see Annex 14 to project file IPC/R 8/99 Rev.4) and decided that a linked mode of presentation of additional information symbols should not be used because it would bring unnecessary complexity in the presentation of classification symbols without providing sufficient benefits for the user.

“33. In connection with the above-mentioned proposal, the Working Group agreed that the linear form of the presentation of classification symbols, currently used in the IPC, should be replaced by a tabular form as suggested by the EPO and the United States of America (see Annexes 18 and 26 to project file IPC/R 8/99). It was noted that the tabular form of the presentation of classification symbols would allow different types of classification information to be shown in a more simple and clear way.

“34. The Working Group recommended to the IPC Committee of Experts to introduce a tabular form of the presentation of classification symbols, noting, however, the need for industrial property offices to verify implementation of this recommendation because it could require changes in the formats, for example, of the first page of patent documents.”

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No.15 (“FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING A SIMPLIFIED SET OF RULES IN THE IPC, IN PARTICULAR A UNIFORM PRECEDENCE RULE”)

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/3/2

“52. It was agreed that the introduction of a standardized IPC layout was highly desirable because it would make the IPC easier to use.”

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/4/4

“48. The Working Group noted the work carried out by the Rules Task Force, as outlined in the Summary of discussions of the Task Force distributed at the session. The discussions of the Working Group were based on the recommendations made by the Task Force.

“49. It was noted that, following the instruction given by the Working Group (see paragraph 53 of document IPC/REF/3/2), the Task Force had elaborated a standardized sequence of main groups in IPC subclasses and the procedure for its implementation in the existing areas of the IPC, on the basis of the proposal by the United States of America to introduce in the IPC a standardized sequence of main groups, a uniform top-to-bottom precedence rule and a uniform inclusiveness rule (see Annex 3 to project file IPC/R 15/00).

“52. The Working Group discussed the standardized sequence of main groups in IPC subclasses proposed by the Task Force and, following minor changes made, approved the standardized sequence as it appears in Annex IV to this report (appendix).

“53. The Working Group recommended to use the standardized sequence of main groups as guidance in the elaboration of new subclasses or substantially revised subclasses. It was noted that standardization of the presentation of the sequence of main groups was intended to facilitate the use of the IPC and did not aim at the renumbering of main groups in the existing subclasses which are not under substantial revision.

“54. The Working Group agreed that presentation of main groups in the standardized sequence, in parallel with their current presentation in the IPC, was possible to achieve by rearranging information in IPC subclass indexes according to the standardized sequence. This would allow, at the choice of the user, display of main groups in the sequence currently present in the IPC or in the standardized sequence.

“55. The Working Group agreed to request the IPC Revision Working Group 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. It was noted that, in the course of the revision of subclass indexes, some standardization of the sequence of subgroups in main groups could be achieved by including, in subclass indexes, of subgroups representing different categories of subject matter indicated in the standardized sequence. In the opinion of the Working Group, this procedure could lead, in the long term, to the standardization of the sequence of groups in the IPC.

“56. The Working Group indicated that, in the course of the revision of subclass indexes, a limited revision of the subclasses under consideration, for example, introduction of residual main groups where necessary, would be desirable.

“57. Finally, the Working Group recommended to the IPC Committee of Experts to consider, when adopting amendments to the seventh edition of the IPC, the possibility of rearranging of main groups according to the standardized sequence.”

#### 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”)

##### Excerpt from document IPC/REF/4/4

“58. Discussions were based on Annex 3 to document IPC/R 16/00, containing the proposal by the International Bureau for the establishment of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC. It was agreed that both proposed approaches should be explored, namely:

“(a) outsourcing the translation of amendments to external contractors; and

“(b) elaboration of automated translation tools which could produce translated texts at least of the quality sufficient for final editing.

“59. The Working Group noted that financial resources would be required for the study of the best solution and for its implementation in view of the fact that current available manpower resources at the offices having French as a working language would not be sufficient to cope with the increased volume of the translation work.

“60. The International Bureau informed the Working Group of its intention to request resources necessary for conducting a study of automated translation tools for the biennium 2002-03.

“61. The Working Group, finally, agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts that a procedure for the preparation of the French version of the advanced level of the IPC should be elaborated.”

[End of Annex and of document]