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

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

**Thirty-First Session
Geneva, February 25 to March 1, 2002**

RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED BY THE
AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP

Document prepared by the International Bureau

1. At its fifth and sixth sessions, held, respectively, in May and October/November 2001, the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group considered various tasks of the IPC reform program for the year 2001 (see Annex III to document IPC/CE/30/11) 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/5/3

“16. The Working Group agreed on the following definition of informative reference.

“18. Informative reference:

“An informative reference is any reference that indicates the location of subject matter that could be of interest for searching, but which subject matter is not within the scope of the classification place where the reference occurs.”

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/6/2

“22. The following definition was approved by the Working Group.

“23. Limiting reference:

“A limiting reference is a reference associated with a classification place, that:

“(a) excludes specified subject matter from the scope of this classification place, when this subject matter would otherwise fulfill all the requirements of the classification title and definition; and

“(b) indicates the place(s) where this subject matter is classified.

“25. The Working Group agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts to consider Task No. 3 (“Introduction of electronic data illustrating the contents of IPC entries”) completed.”

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

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/5/3

“32. The Working Group approved the Guidelines for Creation of Indexing Schemes in the Reformed IPC^{*} elaborated by the Hybrid Systems Task Force, which appear as Annex V to this report.”

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/6/2

“35. The Working Group agreed to recommend to the IPC Committee of Experts to consider Task No. 5 (“Review of the hybrid systems in the IPC”) completed.”

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No. 7 (“DETERMINATION OF THE MOST APPROPRIATE DURATION OF REVISION CYCLES”)

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/6/2

“36. Discussions were based on project files IPC/R 7/99 and its Rev.1 containing a proposal by the International Bureau on the most appropriate duration of revision cycles for the core level of the reformed IPC and comments submitted on the proposal by industrial property offices.

“37. The Working Group agreed that a fixed revision cycle would be needed for the core level of the IPC for the periodical publication of its printed version, preparation of national language versions of the IPC, revision of the Guide to the IPC and proper administration of classification and reclassification work.

“38. The Working Group agreed that a three-year revision cycle would be the most efficient for the core level as it would accelerate implementation in the core level of the changes necessitated by technological progress, preserving at the same time its relative stability.

“39. The Working Group recommended that, although the three-year revision cycle should normally be applied in the future for the core level, the IPC Committee of Experts could extend the revision cycle if it considered the publication of the new edition of the core level premature, as in the case, for example, of an insufficient number of revision amendments made to the core level.”

* The Guidelines for Creation of Indexing Schemes in the Reformed IPC, approved by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group at its fifth session, are reproduced as the Appendix to this Annex.

RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO TASK No. 8 (“ELABORATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE CREATION, MAINTENANCE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE MASTER CLASSIFICATION DATABASE”)

Excerpt from document IPC/REF/5/3

“36. The Working Group agreed with the recommendation by the Task Force that the following additional field indicators of classification symbols stored in the Master Classification Database (MCD) would be necessary for the reformed IPC:

- “– core or advanced level classification indicator;
- “– validity date (version) classification indicator;
- “– action date (date of allotting classification symbol) indicator;
- “– first or other invention symbol indicator;
- “– invention or other information symbol indicator;
- “– original or reclassified data indicator;
- “– generating office indicator;
- “– intellectual or propagated data indicator.

“39. With regard to the character currently identifying indexing codes (a colon), the Working Group decided that it could be replaced by a slash, since the double-purpose use of classification symbols had been abolished and separate indexing codes have different numbers than classification symbols.”

[Appendix follows]

APPENDIX

GUIDELINES FOR CREATION OF INDEXING SCHEMES IN THE REFORMED IPC

approved by the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group

1. Indexing schemes (as opposed to classification schemes) can be created whenever it is beneficial to provide searches based upon concepts covering subject matter that is not specified in the titles and definitions of the classification schemes. Indexing schemes can, for example, identify specific applications or problems to be solved that are useful for limiting a search. Such indexing schemes can frequently be useful for considering subject matter from differing perspectives. This can be particularly helpful when combined with classification schemes for searching.
2. Indexing schemes shall not be created to cover aspects of subject matter that are already specified, either explicitly or inherently, within the scope of the groups they are associated with. Entries that follow or parallel the same, or similar, bases for hierarchical breakdowns set forth in the classification scheme should only be created as classification groups. In particular, indexing schemes should never be created that merely specify:
 - (a) variations of a general concept covered by the classification scheme, or
 - (b) details of the subject matter already covered, explicitly or inherently, in existing classification groups.

For example, an indexing code for “steam engines” is not proper for a subclass with a group covering engines, since it covers subject matter that is already covered by this group. A group covering this particular variant should be created instead.

3. Indexing schemes should not normally be created for subclasses when existing groups in other subclasses already explicitly identify the same subject matter. In these situations, additional classification in those groups should be used instead.
4. Indexing schemes should be tested for feasibility, cost benefits and clarity prior to their introduction into the IPC. This testing should also verify that the schemes contain no unbeneficial overlap. Indexing schemes should have definitions, similar to those of classification schemes.

[End of Annex and of document]