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

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

**Thirty-Fourth Session
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF IPC REFORM

Document prepared by the Secretariat

1. The IPC Reform Implementation Plan (see Annex VII to document IPC/CE/33/12) includes several tasks relating to the implementation of the results of IPC reform in the Classification itself. These tasks are carried out by the IPC Revision Working Group. At its tenth session, held in November 2003 (see document IPC/WG/10/3), the Working Group completed consideration of one task on its program entitled "Rearrangement of main groups according to the standardized sequence." Annex I to this document contains relevant excerpts of the reports of the eighth, ninth and tenth sessions of the Working Group which relate to this task.
2. A continuing project which emanated from the said task relates to the systematic introduction of new residual main groups in subclasses where the existing main groups do not completely exhaust the scope of the respective subclass (see document IPC/CE/32/12, paragraphs 49 to 52). The Committee of Experts had accepted an offer of the Delegation of the United States of America to prepare a list of all such subclasses; this list is currently under preparation and will be available at the session.
3. Another continuing project which emanated from the completed task "Checking of notes and references in the reformed IPC" relates to limiting references in advanced level groups. Annex II to this document contains relevant excerpts of the report of the tenth session of the IPC Revision Working Group which relate to this task.

4. With respect to the task “Contents of the core level of the reformed IPC” the Committee of Experts had invited the IPC Revision Working Group to take a final decision on the distribution of groups newly created for IPC-8 (2005) and to consider how the correctness of the structure of the core level could be checked (see document IPC/CE/33/12, paragraph 24). Annex III to this document contains relevant excerpts of the report of the tenth session of the Working Group which relate to this task.

5. The consideration of the task “Elaboration of classification definitions” started at the fourth session of the IPC Revision Working Group in 2001 (see document IPC/WG/4/5). A total of 58 subclass definition projects has been created so far and for 15 of these projects the English version has been approved (see document IPC/WG/10/3, Annex F). Annex IV to this document contains relevant excerpts of the reports of the eighth, ninth and tenth sessions of the IPC Revision Working Group which relate to this task.

6. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the contents of the Annexes to this document and to make decisions as necessary.

[Annexes follows]

ANNEX I

REARRANGEMENT OF MAIN GROUPS ACCORDING TO THE
STANDARDIZED SEQUENCE

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/8/8

“25. Discussions were based on document IPC/WG/8/4, containing a summary of discussions of the Working Group on the rearrangement of subclass indexes, at its seventh session. It was reconfirmed that the outcome of this rearrangement would be a secondary sorting key allowing interested users to view main groups in the standardized sequence as an alternative to the existing sequence. To avoid confusion in the preparation of proposals, the Working Group agreed to modify the title of this task to “Rearrangement of main groups according to the standardized sequence.

“26. In order to facilitate the drafting of new proposals, the International Bureau would create Excel files containing the main groups of all IPC subclasses. These files would be available for downloading by January 15, 2003, on the IBIS Web site <http://www.wipo.int/ibis/index.html>.

“27. The Working Group considered a number of proposals contained in compilations, distributed during the meeting, of proposals already submitted to the e-forum. The Working Group approved the proposals on rearranging of main groups in subclasses A44B, A61B, B61L, B81B, B81C, B82B, E01D, F04C and F23G. It was noted that the main groups in subclass F23B were already in the standardized order.

“28. On the basis of its discussions, the Working Group made the following recommendations to the rapporteurs for preparing proposals:

“(a) existing limiting references or precedence references should be considered when establishing the rearranged order of main groups. References in subgroups pointing to other main groups or subgroups of the same subclass are equally important;

“(b) when considering main groups with multipart titles, dividing the group into its constituent parts and presenting it in two (or more) different places should be avoided. If such division was deemed necessary, the reasons should be explained;

“(c) the proposal should contain all main groups, and not only the groups appearing in the current subclass index. Only references or precedence references within the subclass should be included, even if they appeared in subgroups, in order to justify the proposed sequence.

“29. The Delegation of the United States of America volunteered to prepare and submit to the revision listserver guidelines on the rearrangement of the main groups, by February 1, 2003.

“30. The Working Group discussed whether subheadings or guide headings contained in several proposals should appear in the final presentation of the IPC in the rearranged order of main groups. In the opinion of the majority of Delegations, this was not absolutely necessary and would require considerable manual work, thus not allowing completion of the project for all IPC subclasses in time for the next edition of the IPC. The Working Group agreed that this issue should finally be solved at the ninth session of the Working Group in light of the “Guidelines” to be submitted by the United States of America.

“33. The Working Group noted that the International Bureau would create on the e-forum new projects for rearranging main groups (projects R), separate from the definition projects. New subclasses were introduced in the program of the Working Group for rearranging main groups and corresponding rapporteurs were appointed (see Annex G to this report). Rapporteurs were requested to submit their proposals by March 1, 2003. Comments were invited by April 1, 2003, and consequently, rapporteur reports by May 1, 2003.”

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/9/8

“16. The Working Group considered a selected number of proposals contained in the compilations of rearrangement projects distributed during the session, and approved a number of them. The list of approved projects is given in Annex F to this report. Additional comments on the projects which were not approved at the session were requested by October 1, 2003.

“17. The Working Group reaffirmed its decision taken during its previous session that for groups with multipart titles, division of the group into its constituent parts and presenting it in two (or more) different places in the standardized sequence (e.g. by additional listing of a subgroup covering a part of this title) should be avoided.

“18. The Working Group accepted with gratitude an offer of the Delegation of the United States of America to prepare proposals for all remaining subclasses of the IPC which had not yet been assigned. The list of these remaining subclasses together with project numbers is given in Annex G to this report. In view of the difficulty and importance of this work, the Delegation of the United States of America indicated that comments on their proposals already submitted and on the proposals to be submitted for the new projects were most appreciated.

“19. The Working Group briefly discussed the Guidelines on the Rearrangement of the Main Groups According to the Standardized Sequence (see Annex to document IPC/WG/9/2). In view of the fact that limited practical experience had already been accumulated in the application of the Guidelines and in the absence of the comments submitted, the Working Group agreed to postpone further consideration and approval of the Guidelines until its next session and invited its members to submit comments on the Guidelines.

“20. The Working Group finally agreed that information given in the rearrangement projects on the need to create residual main groups in certain subclasses should be collected for the future work.”

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/10/3

“12. The Working Group discussed the Guidelines on the Rearrangement of the Main Groups According to the Standardized Sequence (see the Annex to document IPC/WG/9/2) and approved them in the English version with some amendments (see Annex G to this report).

“13. The Working Group provisionally approved the French version of the Guidelines on the understanding that the text of the Guidelines should be reconsidered with regard to terminology used so as to bring this terminology in accordance with terminology used in the new Guide to the IPC. Offices having French as a working language were invited to submit proposals in respect of terminology of the Guidelines by March 1, 2004. The Working Group agreed to reconsider the French version of the Guidelines at its next session on the basis of the proposals to be submitted.

“14. The Working Group agreed that these Guidelines should be published in the *WIPO Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation* as they would serve as a source of guidance for the future maintenance of the IPC.

“15. Based on a working document prepared by the International Bureau, the Working Group discussed problems related to certain main groups and headings with the titles referring to “preceding groups” or the like. Such titles could lead to inconsistent scope of these groups when they are presented in the standardized sequence. It was decided that for all truly residual groups the term “preceding” should be replaced by “other,” while for all other groups the explicit range of groups should be indicated. The list of all these groups with their amended titles is given in Annex H to this report.

“16. It was further agreed to consider these amendments as minor amendments to the IPC and the International Bureau was authorized to introduce them directly to the IPC.

“17. The Working Group considered the proposals contained in the compilations of rearrangement projects distributed during the session, and approved all of them. The Working Group further reconsidered a limited number of projects approved during its previous session and approved a number of changes to these projects. The list of projects approved during this session, including the standardized sequences of main groups for each relevant subclass, is given in Annex I to this report.

“18. The Working Group discussed the question as to whether standardized sequences should be established for indexing subclasses as well, and decided that rearrangement of indexing codes would not be needed in view of the absence of any priority relation between indexing codes.

“19. It was noted that the currently finalized standardized sequences of main groups of IPC subclasses could in the future require amendments and agreed that such amendments should be dealt with in the framework of the maintenance of the IPC.

“20. The Working Group agreed that the task relating to the elaboration of standardized sequences of main groups in subclasses of the IPC was completed.”

[Annex II follows]

ANNEX II

CHECKING OF NOTES AND REFERENCES IN THE REFORMED IPC

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/10/3

“21. It was recalled that the Working Group, at its ninth session, had noted problems related to limiting references in entries of the advanced level of the IPC pointing to groups located in another hierarchical branch. Discussions were based on a proposal prepared by the International Bureau and comments submitted by Sweden on this proposal (see Annexes 1 and 2 to project file IPC/WG 091, respectively). The Working Group also considered the list resulting from an automatic search algorithm (see Annex III of Suppl.1 to document IPC/WG/9/3) indicating all these entries which was posted on the IBIS website.

“22 The Working Group noted the significant amount of approximately 3000 affected groups of the core level and, in order to provide sufficient means for correct classification at the core level, decided that the “more elaborate solution” described in paragraph 6 of Annex 1 above, should be implemented.

“23. The Working Group agreed that the users of the core level should be warned about references in the advanced level that could influence classification in the core level. The Working Group also agreed that the following notes should be used in order to warn classifiers and searchers about the potential problems in these core level groups. Namely, a general indicator drawing attention to an appropriate note should be attached to each affected core level group.

“For the Internet Presentation:

‘The advanced level subgroups of the present core level group contain at least one reference which points to a group located in another hierarchical branch than the present one. The user should be aware that such references could affect the scope of the present group by explicitly referring out subject matter that would otherwise be classified in the present group.’

“For the Presentation in the Printed Version:

‘In some instances, advanced level subgroups of a core level group may contain one or more references which point to places located in other hierarchical branches than the core level group. The user should be aware that such references could affect the scope of the core level group by explicitly referring out subject matter that would otherwise be classified in this core level group. Such core level groups are indicated by an asterisk (*).’

“24. The Working Group finally agreed that a more comprehensive solution which could be applied in the future should be elaborated during the next revision period after removal of informative references from the IPC scheme and a study of the impact of remaining such references to the scope of the relevant core level groups.

[Annex III follows]

ANNEX III

CONTENTS OF THE CORE LEVEL OF THE REFORMED IPC

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/10/3

“46. On the basis of the project file WG 096, the Working Group considered the distribution of new groups in the IPC, adopted by the Committee, between the core and the advanced levels as proposed by offices-rapporteurs and taking into account a general rule recommended by the Committee, namely that new main groups and one-dot groups should be included in the core level.

“47. The Working Group approved the distribution of new groups between the core and the advanced levels as contained in Annex N to this report.

“48. The Working Group noted the request made by the Committee (see document IPC/CE/32/12, paragraph 25) to consider how the correctness of the structure of the core level could be checked and to propose a procedure for such checking. The Working Group agreed that the purpose of checking should be to verify that the structure and contents of the core level is sufficient for classifying without consulting the advanced level and, if certain corrections were found necessary, they should be made by moving IPC groups between the core and the advanced levels without changes to the text of the IPC except obvious corrections.

“49. The Working Group noted the following distribution of work among the volunteering offices:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Area of the IPC</u>
EPO	Sections D, E and G
Ireland	Sections A and C
Sweden	Sections B and F

The Working Group noted that, if no office would volunteer to do the checking for Section H of the IPC, it would be done by the International Bureau.

“50. The Working Group noted that the International Bureau would implement a final distribution of IPC between the core and the advanced level on the IBIS website in February 2004, and requested the International Bureau to present the core level in a form appropriate for easy viewing and checking. The volunteering offices were invited to submit to the International Bureau proposed corrections to the core level by the end of March 2004.”

[Annex IV follows]

ANNEX IV

ELABORATION OF CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/8/8

“13. Based on the procedure for the creation of classification definitions (see Annex F to document IPC/WG/5/3, paragraph 9), the Working Group agreed to apply the following criteria when selecting a subclass for a new definition project:

“(a) subclasses undergoing a revision or maintenance procedure;

“(b) overlapping subclasses with borderlines that are not well defined by the current notes;

“(c) residual subclasses, in particular with residual subject matter that is not well defined;

“(d) subclasses containing a large number of inconsistently classified documents;

“(e) very active subclasses.

“14. A subclass satisfying more than one of the above criteria should receive the highest priority.

“15. Although a formal request for introducing a new definition project was not needed, the proposing office should indicate the criteria applicable to the proposed subclass.

“16. On the other hand, the lowest priority should be given to the following subclasses:

“(a) subclasses with well-defined scope;

“(b) subclasses having only a small amount of overlap or well-defined borderlines;

“(c) non-active subclasses.

“19. In order to accelerate the discussion of the remaining definition projects on the e-forum, comments were invited on those projects for which a rapporteur proposal was lately submitted, by February 1, 2003. Rapporteurs were invited to submit revised proposals on the other projects by February 1, 2003, taking into account the comments already submitted. The International Bureau was invited to regularly update the deadlines and the actions needed for each project on the e-forum and the IPC calendar.

“20. When considering a project to be close to completion, rapporteurs were invited to indicate in the message part of the e-forum that the corresponding project is ready for approval. In such cases, the International Bureau would set a deadline for electronic approval following the adopted procedure. If a project is approved electronically, it would be forwarded to the ninth session of the Working Group for formal approval. If it is not approved electronically, either a new round of comments would be requested by the rapporteur or the project would be forwarded to the Definition Task Force meeting for consideration.

“21. In the course of the discussions of some definitions projects, useful conclusions were drawn concerning a future revision or maintenance of the corresponding subclass. It was agreed that those conclusions should be collected by the rapporteurs of the projects into an annex separate from the definition project file, after completion of the project.

“23. The Secretariat made a demonstration of a “module” developed in the framework of the CLAIMS project which provides for the collection of all material useful for drafting definitions of a particular subclass (for example, notes, references, reverse references). The Working Group agreed that such a tool would be very useful when drafting new definition proposals. The Secretariat indicated that this tool could be ready by January 2003, and that material concerning all the subclasses of the IPC would be available on the IBIS Web site.

“24. Furthermore, the Secretariat indicated that a new input interface for classification definitions, which could permit the conversion of definitions into XML format, was near completion. This interface was based on the Word format and was very similar to the format for drafting definitions already used. When ready, this interface would be available on the IPC Web site, with links from the IPC e-forum.”

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/9/8

“12. The Working Group agreed that for approving the French version of definition projects a similar procedure of electronic approval as for the original version should be applied. Approval of at least three offices having French as a working language, including the translating office, was requested.

“15. In view of the objective to finalize fifty definition projects for the next edition of the IPC and in view of the limited time left, the Working Group invited comments on the latest proposals of remaining projects and asked its members to indicate their electronic approval whenever they can agree with the latest proposal of a rapporteur. The International Bureau indicated that deadlines would be posted on the e-forum.”

Excerpt from document IPC/WG/10/3

“8. Due to time constraints, the Working Group was not in a position to consider the proposals contained in the compilations of the definition projects distributed during the session and did not approve any projects. The Working Group, however, noted that for D projects which cover subclasses under class C07, the notes after class C07 were not treated consistently by the rapporteurs of different projects. The Working Group agreed that in this, and in other similar cases, notes relating to several subclasses should be disclosed in a consistent manner.

“9. In order to reach the target of fifty definition projects for inclusion in the next edition of the IPC and in view of the limited time left, the Working Group recommended to its members to intensify the use of the e-forum and to indicate their approval of projects on the e-forum whenever they agree with the latest Rapporteur’s proposal.

“10. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that a table summarizing the status of all D projects had been established. The table would also indicate translating offices for projects D 004, D 018, D 019, D 038, D 050 and D 051, and deadlines for the next actions to be taken. Definition projects created during this session were also included in the table, which appears as Annex F to this report.

“11. The Working Group noted the request made by the Committee (see document IPC/CE/33/12, paragraph 12) to establish a procedure for considering proposals for improving the IPC, collected in definition projects, with the objective of their incorporation in the scheme of the IPC. In view of the lack of time, the Working Group was not in a position to consider such a procedure and agreed to discuss it at its next session.”

[End of Annex IV and of document]