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

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

**Thirty-Eighth Session
Geneva, October 9 to 13, 2006**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE REFORM OF THE IPC

Document prepared by the Secretariat

1. The present document contains a status report on several tasks on the program of the IPC Revision Working Group with respect to the implementation of the results of the reform in the IPC.

List of Priorities for Definition and Maintenance Projects

2. The Working Group considered, at its fifteenth session, a document prepared by the International Bureau (see document IPC/WG/15/2) and reached several decisions with respect to Task No. 1(a) (“Development of a plan for completion of all subclass definitions”) and Task No. 2(a) (“Development of a plan for maintenance of all subclasses”) of IPC Development Program for 2006 to 2008 (see Annex IV to document IPC/CE/37/9). Annex I to this document contains a relevant excerpt of the report of that session of the Working Group summarizing these decisions.

Plan to Remove References from Guidance Headings and Informative References from the Scheme

3. The Working Group discussed, at its fifteenth session, a proposal prepared by the International Bureau (see document IPC/WG/15/3) and made several decisions. Annex II to this document contains a relevant excerpt of the report of that session of the Working Group summarizing these decisions.

Introduction of Residual Main Groups in IPC Subclasses

4. The Working Group considered, at its fifteenth session, a document prepared by the International Bureau (see document IPC/WG/15/2) and decided that no residual main groups would be needed for 81 subclasses where such consensus had been reached in the last round of comments. The consideration of the remaining 100 subclasses will be continued at the next session of the Working Group. The current status of this task with respect to each subclass is summarized in Annex 29 of project WG111.

IPC Definitions Program

5. Consideration of definition projects was continued at the fifteenth session of the Working Group. At that session, 17 definition projects were approved in English and nine definition projects were completed in both English and French. In total, 57 definition projects have been completed thus far. Annex IV to the report of that session of the Working Group (see document IPC/WG/15/4) contains a table summarizing the status of each definition project on the program.

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

[Annexes follow]

ANNEX I

LIST OF PRIORITIES FOR DEFINITION AND MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

EXCERPT FROM DOCUMENT IPC/WG/15/4, PARAGRAPHS 13 TO 19

“Definitions

“13. Regarding the priorities for inclusion of new subclasses in the definition program, the Working Group agreed upon the following:

“(a) new or extensively revised subclasses should be treated with the highest priority. Their subclass definitions should be discussed in the framework of the corresponding revision project with the aim to complete them at the moment of the publication of the new scheme at the advanced level.

“For each of these subclass definitions, a definition project should be formally created and a project number be assigned in order to properly keep track of their status. Comments or proposals should however be submitted to the respective revision project on the e-forum. The corresponding D-project file on the e-forum should contain only a remark referring to the respective revision project.

“(b) For each subclass which is under revision, either in the core or the advanced levels, the Working Group should consider whether subclass definitions are needed or should be amended, if they already exist.

“(c) Priority should also be given to subclasses where the rapporteurs of projects R 701 to R 706 recommended the initiation of a definition project in order to clarify any unclear scope of a subclass or of its main groups.

“(d) Subclasses selected for systematic maintenance should also be included in the definition program. This would allow for a most efficient treatment because experience and knowledge gained in a particular project would not be lost. In such cases, the same office should act as Rapporteur of both the definition and the maintenance projects.

“14. In addition, priority should be given to those subclasses which

“– have an unclear scope;

“– present classification difficulties that are caused by shortcomings of the scheme;

“– cover technology that has developed substantially since the subclass was created; and

“– have a high search activity or high file size growth.

“15. The Working Group agreed that prioritizing of existing definition projects was not necessary, with the exception of projects in categories indicated in paragraph 13(a) and (b), above. Since a further nine definitions have been completed during the present session and several other projects are in a rather advanced state, it is very likely that the aim of 50 additional subclasses to be completed by end of 2008 would be reached.

“Systematic Maintenance

“16. The Working Group recalled the goals of the systematic maintenance of the IPC and confirmed the following priority criteria for selecting subclasses for systematic maintenance as adopted by the Committee of Experts at its thirty-second session (see Annex VIII of document IPC/CE/33/12):

- ‘– subclasses presenting classification difficulties that are caused by shortcomings of the scheme;
- ‘– subclasses covering technology that has developed substantially since the subclass was created; and
- ‘– subclasses having a high search activity or high file size growth.’

“17. The Working Group noted that the following tasks have now become separate tasks of the Working Group in the IPC Development Program for 2006 to 2008 (see Annex IV of document IPC/CE/37/9): the removal of informative references (Task No. 3), the introduction of residual main groups (Task No. 5), and borderlines between the core and advanced levels (Task No. 9).

“18. In view of Task No. 2(b) of the Development Program, which requires the completion of systematic maintenance of 10 subclasses by end of 2007, the Working Group selected the following subclasses: A01F, C07B, F23G, and H04M with Sweden as Rapporteur, B01D, C08L, C09D, C09J with the United Kingdom as Rapporteur, F04C with the United States of America as Rapporteur, and D21F with the EPO as Rapporteur.

“19. The Working Group recalled its decision taken at its fourteenth session that “existing residual groups being residual to their whole subclass should be renumbered to 99/00 or 999/00, and their titles should be replaced by the standard title, in the framework of the systematic maintenance of the IPC” (see paragraph 9(c) of document IPC/WG/14/3). The Working Group agreed to carry out this task outside the systematic maintenance of whole subclasses and accepted an offer of the Secretariat to prepare a proposal containing the necessary amendments which would be posted on the e-forum by September 15, 2006. Offices were invited to comment on this proposal by October 27, 2006. The International Bureau was asked to prepare, by November 10, 2006, a rapporteur report for consideration at the next session of the Working Group.”

ANNEX II

PLAN TO REMOVE REFERENCES FROM GUIDANCE HEADINGS AND
INFORMATIVE REFERENCES FROM THE SCHEME

EXCERPT FROM DOCUMENT IPC/WG/15/4, PARAGRAPHS 23 TO 29

“23. The Working Group agreed that the two tasks would be carried out in the following way, incorporating a proposal, submitted by the United States of America, to make the scope of main groups independent of guidance headings (see Annex 3 to project file WG 011).

“Removal of References from Guidance Headings

“24. It was decided that this task would be carried out by the International Bureau as Rapporteur, in the framework of Project M 031, which would be created on the IPC e-forum.

“25. In respect to each subclass, the reference check should be carried out as follows:

“(a) For each subclass, the Rapporteur should check all guidance headings within the subclass and whether any of them contained references. At the same time, the Rapporteur would check whether a guidance heading has an impact on the scope of the groups covered by it.

“(b) For those guidance headings containing references, the Rapporteur should determine which references should remain in the scheme (see paragraph 21, above).

“(c) For references already existing in approved definitions, the decisions on removing them or not from the scheme should be based on the definitions, unless there is disagreement, in which case the Rapporteur of the corresponding definition project should be consulted and the Working Group should take the final decision. The definitions and the scheme should then comply with that decision.

“(d) In case of limiting references, the Rapporteur should decide whether they should be relocated in appropriate groups of the subclass or be transformed into notes, with modifications in wording as necessary.

“(e) Definitions of corresponding main groups should be created to collect the references to be removed from the scheme.

“(f) After steps (a) to (e), the Rapporteur should delete the references from guidance headings, propose amendments to the scheme (including those corresponding to step (d), above), and send them to the Working Group for approval.

“(g) If a guidance heading has an impact on the scope of the groups covered by it, the Rapporteur should propose new titles for those groups so that they can read independently of the guidance heading.

“26. Attention should be drawn to subclasses, where amendments have been approved and where definition projects already exist. In step (e), the Rapporteur should check whether the proposed amendments have already been considered in the completed definition projects and make necessary additions to definitions. In case of substantial changes, step (c), above, should be considered. In case of active definition projects, the Rapporteurs concerned should check whether the corresponding definitions have to be changed, taking into account the proposed amendments.

“27. It was agreed that the Working Group should complete the reference check for sections A and H by end of 2006, sections C, D and E by mid-2007 and sections B, F and G by end of 2007.

“Removal of Informative References from the IPC Scheme

“28. It was decided that this task would be carried out by the International Bureau as Rapporteur at the initial stage. At this stage the removal of references should be carried out in subclasses where definitions have been approved, in the framework of the D projects and following their numerical order, in the following way:

“(a) Proposals with additional definitions, containing the removed references, should be submitted for the corresponding groups to the relevant definition projects.

“(b) In case of disagreement with the original definitions or doubt, the procedure indicated in paragraph 25(c), above, should be followed.

“(c) Definitions of corresponding main groups should be created to collect the references to be removed from the scheme.

“(d) The corresponding amendments to the scheme should then be prepared by the Rapporteur and included in the proposal.

“29. At a second stage, it was decided that Rapporteurs of definition projects, which would be active by end of 2007, would include in their proposals for group definitions references that should be removed from the scheme. Once the project was completed, the International Bureau would prepare the corresponding amendments to the scheme.”

[End of Annex II and of document]