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

AD HOC IPC REFORM WORKING GROUP

**Seventh Session
Geneva, May 13 to 17, 2002**

WORKING STRUCTURE AND WORKING METHODS OF IPC BODIES

Document prepared by the International Bureau

1. At its thirty-first session, held in February/March 2002, the IPC Committee of Experts briefly discussed the proposal by the International Bureau relating to working methods of the Committee as contained in paragraphs 5 to 13 of document IPC/CE/31/7, but, in view of the lack of time, was not in a position to arrive at conclusions with regard to this matter.
2. The Committee noted that all measures should be taken to ensure sufficient flexibility of its working methods in order to manage a project or a task in a dynamic manner, which was especially important in the period of IPC reform. In this regard, several Delegations indicated that a decision-making process in the IPC Union was relatively slow which was caused by the fact that the Committee normally meets in ordinary sessions only once a year.
3. In order to accelerate a decision-making process, certain Delegations proposed that the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group be abolished, its duties assumed by the Committee itself and the number of annual meetings of the Committee increased.
4. The Committee agreed that the above proposal supposed introduction of drastic changes in the working structure and methods of IPC bodies and required careful consideration. The Committee requested its member States and observer organizations to submit comments on that proposal, as well as on the proposal by the International Bureau relating to working methods of the Committee, reproduced in the Annex to this document, in time for the seventh session of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.

5. The Committee authorized the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group to consider both proposals and comments submitted thereon and, in case the majority of Delegations would be in favor of increasing the number of annual sessions of the Committee and the abolishment of the Working Group, to request the Director General of WIPO, on behalf of the Committee, to convene an extraordinary session of the Committee in the second half of 2002, subject to resources available.

6. The ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group is invited to take a decision concerning the working structure and working methods of IPC bodies.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

WORKING METHODS OF THE IPC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

1. The International Bureau proposes to specify in greater detail the working methods of the IPC Committee of Experts and its working groups as disclosed below.
2. The working methods of the Committee of Experts and its working groups should be of sufficient flexibility to manage a project or a task in a dynamic manner and to provide for increased use of electronic working which would allow for issues to be considered by a maximum number of experts. The overall mandate of the Committee of Experts should be to provide policy guidance with regard to the development of the IPC, to consider the reports of the working groups as to whether their activities are in line with overall objectives of the development of the IPC, to establish work programs of the working groups and to adopt the results achieved.
3. The working groups should have authority to further modify their work programs. In respect of the IPC revision requests, a simplified procedure has already been authorized by the Committee allowing submissions of the revision request directly to the IPC Revision Working Group.
4. The Committee should also authorize the IPC Revision Working Group to carry out the work on the introduction in the electronic layer of the IPC of the electronic data, such as classification definitions, illustrating chemical formulae and informative references, and to approve this data, when appropriate, without submitting them for adoption to the Committee which will carry out monitoring of this work.
5. With regard to the tasks of IPC reform, the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group should be authorized to modify the title and scope of the task, as needed, and accept new tasks to the reform program proposed by its members, if appropriate. Decisions of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group regarding new tasks and changes to existing tasks should be based on the overall policy laid down by the Committee and should be reported to the Committee for its adoption.
6. The Working Groups are empowered to create Task Forces to carry out short-term, focused activities. Emphasis will be placed on working by electronic means but physical meetings may be held, as necessary.
7. Discussion of IPC revision projects and of other tasks of the IPC Revision Working Group is carried out electronically, through submission of proposals and comments to the IPC electronic forum which is structured with regard to major activities of the Working Group, such as revision projects, definition projects, translation projects. Alternatively, the IPC revision list server may be used for other submissions.

8. Discussion of IPC reform tasks is carried out electronically through submission of proposals and comments to the IPC reform list server. In the future, activities of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group and certain tasks which could be carried out by the Committee of Experts itself will also be incorporated in a structured form in the IPC electronic forum. The forum will become a central place for discussion of all activities concerned with the development of the IPC.

9. Meeting documentation will be handled electronically with the exception of the letter of invitation and the agenda. The agenda will indicate the meeting documents available on the WIPO IPC Web site and an address to contact should paper copies be required. A limited number of paper copies will be available for delegates at the meeting.

[End of Annex and of document]