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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Third Session: Tokyo, October 23 to 27, 1973

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FREQUENCY OF CITATION
OF NON-PATENT LITERATURE STUDY

prepared by the International Bureau

1. The PCT Interim Committee for Technical Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") in its second session in Geneva in October 1972 noted the conclusions of the Standing Subcommittee regarding the citation of non-patent literature and the role non-patent literature should play in the PCT minimum documentation. The Standing Subcommittee had concluded at its third session that, based on non-patent literature citation studies conducted by six Offices (the German Patent Office (DT), the Japanese Patent Office (JA), the Netherlands Patent Office (NL), the Swedish Patent Office (SW), the United States Patent Office (US) and the International Patent Institute (IIB), interest in non-patent literature was steadily decreasing and that the use of non-patent literature for search and examination appeared to be relatively low in the mechanical arts but higher in the electrical and physics fields.

2. The main elements of the reports of the six Offices are reproduced in the table in the Annex to this document. It should be noted that while two of the Offices (DT, US), reporting on studies conducted both previously and recently, note a reduction in the overall use of non-patent literature, one Office (IIB), notes a significant increase in the citation of non-patent literature. Furthermore, the finding of most of the studies that the citation rates in the mechanical arts are very low is contradicted by the finding of one Office (NL) which has a significant citation rate in the mechanical area and a rate which has increased manyfold over the finding of an earlier study.

3. Due to the importance that any trends in the area of the citation of non-patent literature will have on the determination of the role, if any, that non-patent literature will play in the PCT minimum documentation, the Standing Subcommittee intends to continue its study of the problem. It will in particular consider a report of the Austrian Patent Office (still to be submitted) as well as any other more recent studies being submitted by other Offices. The further work of the Standing Subcommittee will be undertaken with a view to analysing in more detail the trends reflected in the studies already considered, and which formed the basis of the tentative conclusions reached earlier and referred to above. If necessary, the Standing Subcommittee will present revised conclusions.

4. The Committee is invited to approve (i) the report on the progress of the Standing Subcommittee achieved to date and (ii) the continuation of the study with a view to establishing a more detailed analysis and, if necessary, revised conclusions concerning the citation rates of non-patent literature.

/Annex follows/

SUMMARY OF CITATION RATES (PERCENTAGES) OF NON-PATENT LITERATURE

(Based on information furnished to the Standing Subcommittee
of the PCT Interim Committee for Technical Cooperation,
(documents PCT/TCO/III/9, 16 and 19))

Office or Organization	German Patent Office		Japanese Patent Office	Netherlands Patent Office		Swedish Patent Office	United States Patent Office			IIB		
	Year of study	1971	1972	1970	1957	1968	1972	1963	1970	1971	1970	1972
Chemical		13.8	3.5	*	28	13	**	-	-	6.5	6.5	10.2
Electrical		5.9	3.8	*	15	19	**	-	-	3.5	15.4	21.0
Mechanical	Engineering	3.7	0.6	*	2	8	**	-	-	0.8	1.3	0.36
	Technology	4.8	1.2									
Total		5.9	2.1	9.9	15	11	6	4.4	3.8	3.2	7.8	10.7

* The report of the Japanese Patent Office gives citation rates for industrial fields which in some instances covered several of the three areas, i.e. chemical, electrical or mechanical, found in this table. The industrial field including the chemical area did have the highest citation rate.

** The report of the Swedish Patent Office used technical fields which did not in all cases fit into the three broad categories used in this table. In general it appeared that the fields related to the chemical area had the highest citation rates followed by the electrical and the mechanical areas with the mechanical predominant areas having 1% citation rates.

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Annex