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POLICIES OF THE SCIT AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WORKING GROUPS

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO and of the Paris, PCT and IPC Unions, as well as the WIPO Coordination Committee, at their thirty-second series of meetings held in Geneva from March 25 to 27, 1998, approved the establishment of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (hereinafter referred to as the "SCIT"). The main objectives of the SCIT and its functions were described in a proposal contained in document A/32/3, which was subsequently approved by the Member States at the above-mentioned meetings.

PROPOSED POLICIES

2. In considering the policies of the SCIT, it is useful to reflect on the policy adopted by the Permanent Committee on Industrial Property Information (PCIPI), as this body is to be integrated into the SCIT and its Working Groups. The PCIPI Executive Coordination Committee, at its twenty-first session held in November, 1997, recognized the significant and particular challenges facing the PCIPI and industrial property offices and the measures that should be taken to meet some of those challenges. It also gave specific attention to the recommendation concerning the PCIPI long-term policy in respect of the creation of Industrial Property Digital Libraries (see document PCIPI/EXEC/XXI/6, paragraph 71 and Annexes XI and XII).

3. In view of the above, it is proposed that the policy of the SCIT for the present biennium (1998-99) be set out as follows, with the understanding that it should be reviewed by the SCIT Plenary, whenever appropriate, in light of the rapid development in information technologies and the mid-term or long-term policy of the SCIT,

(a) to discuss issues, facilitate coordination and provide guidance concerning the implementation of the WIPO global information network (hereinafter referred to as the "WIPONET"), the provision of intellectual property information services on this network through Intellectual Property Digital Libraries (hereinafter referred to as the "IPDL") and other projects using the WIPONET,

(b) to address issues pertinent to the provision of intellectual property information (including secured data) services through the Intellectual Property Digital Libraries (hereinafter referred to as the "IPDL") and other projects using the WIPONET, and, where necessary, coordinate policies (such as information dissemination policy) to facilitate such services, in particular, through WIPONET,

(c) to deal with problems arising in transition to the full operation and use of the WIPONET, including the use of various on-line systems as well as other data carriers,

(d) to provide intellectual property offices, particularly in developing countries, with technical assistance to facilitate the effective use of information technology in their computerization projects and efficient use of the WIPONET,

(e) to formulate recommendations and policies regarding the proposed network and related matters and, where appropriate, submit them for approval to the WIPO General Assembly and Assemblies of the Unions concerned.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SCIT WORKING GROUPS

Information Infrastructure Working Group

4. It is proposed that the Information Infrastructure Working Group (IIWG) should review the progress made concerning the deployment of the WIPONET, formulate policies related to the network, make relevant recommendations, and propose projects concerning information systems useful to intellectual property offices. The IIWG should pay particular attention to the needs of developing countries, especially in matters concerning the transition from non-networked data carriers and human resources development (for details of the project, see document SCIT/1/4). In this regard, it is proposed to assign a task to the International Bureau to launch pilot projects to evaluate viable, cost-effective and user-friendly solutions for the streamlining and automation of intellectual property administration functions, in particular, those solutions most suitable for small intellectual property offices. The pilot projects will be

implemented on a trial basis in selected intellectual property offices willing to serve as model offices. The IIWG, at its first session in November, will evaluate the progress and first results of these projects, recommend proposed technical solutions and recommend, where appropriate, projects to be scaled up to cover a larger number of participants.

Standards and Documentation Working Group

5. It is proposed that the Standards and Documentation Working Group (SDWG) should define and adopt new standards, where necessary, and promote the use of existing standards regarding intellectual property data and documentation. Recent developments in information technology, in particular, Internet-based technology, is supported by open systems and non-proprietary technology and standards so as to stimulate more competition-driven growth and innovation. In this regard, it is proposed to assign a task to the International Bureau to monitor and participate in relevant Internet and information technology standards-setting bodies. WIPONET applications should also be based on these principles which have themselves been effective through the explosive growth of the Internet and associated technologies. In discussing standards, therefore, it is suggested that the following principles be applied:

(a) Any standards to be elaborated within the scope of the SDWG should, to the greatest possible extent, apply provisions of existing industry standards (*de facto* standards) supported by open systems and the so-called Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products. This means that when drafting recommendations and standards, specific provisions and amendments for use of such standards in the field of intellectual property should be limited to those that are essential to ensure effective use.

(b) WIPO Standards covering provisions relevant to documentation aspects of intellectual property should be dealt with by the SDWG whenever a need arises for their updating or maintenance.

6. The SDWG should also address matters regarding access to and dissemination of intellectual property information. To this end, the IPDL concept should be used as a vehicle to coordinate as much as possible information dissemination policies of Member States and the International Bureau. To upgrade and expand the IPDL system by collective efforts of intellectual property offices in Member States, it is proposed to invite Member States to make proposals to make their national data available to the IPDL program. If intellectual property offices in certain Member States have already provided intellectual property information services on the Internet according to their national information dissemination program, it is proposed that those Member States should further reinforce and expand their services, taking advantage of international cooperation through the IPDL project.

7. On the other hand, the International Bureau should not only coordinate dissemination policies concerning the provision of services through the IPDL but also continue to develop new and user-friendly facilities for use in the IPDL program, including multilingual interfaces, simple automatic translation tools for assisting users to search various data

collections in different languages, integration of different local and distributed data collections for searching by a single query, tools for finding proper classification symbols to refine a search query, intelligent search agents, and integration of classification systems with search systems for more accurate searches. Until the WIPONET is fully operational, it will be necessary for many intellectual property offices to maintain the minimum set of intellectual property data collections such as PCT minimum documentation in their local archives. The International Bureau should assist intellectual property offices in developing countries in acquiring such documents on CD-ROM and other CD-ROMs containing information useful in the search and retrieval of such documents.

8. In order to improve access by offices and the public to electronic documentation concerning intellectual property, the International Bureau should be requested to provide public Internet access to various appropriate information collections. Such collections should contain surveys and inventories of interest to office staff and public users, such as inventories of patent document collections, surveys of numbering systems, sample title pages of patent documents, annual technical reports, statistics, etc. Offices should be given the opportunity to provide electronic updates of their data included in these collections.

9. The contents made available through the IPDL system could also be useful for developing human resources in the intellectual property community. In this regard, pilot projects facilitating the WIPO Academy initiatives should be undertaken by the International Bureau. For further details, please see document SCIT/1/5.

Information Security Working Group

10. It is proposed that the Information Security Working Group (ISWG) discuss technical issues in relation to the exchange of unpublished data (confidential data), and to undertake pilot projects, associated with the IPDL program and using the WIPONET, in the areas of electronic filing, the exchange of priority documents for the examination of patent applications, and other planned activities of electronic commerce. In particular, the potential of electronic commerce is so high that Member States should take advantage of the availability of suitable state-of-the-art information technology through WIPONET and the IPDL program. In order to bring the WIPONET in line with such activities, the International Bureau should undertake a preliminary study, in particular, on the following points:

- Consideration of technical requirements for the WIPONET to support electronic commerce by WIPO and provision of the necessary facilities (an internationally coordinated approach to related technical issues such as encryption, data integrity, authentication methods, etc.),
- Possible establishment of a WIPO supported and maintained Public Key Infrastructure (i.e., an international arrangement to provide and recover keys used for digital security systems) in which WIPO will play a central role for intellectual property related to electronic commerce.

11. It is also proposed that the Working Group should provide an opportunity to intellectual property offices to share the experience of advanced offices in this area and work on the following points of technical cooperation:

- Technical cooperation to Member States to assist in their use of network infrastructure and tools for electronic commerce,
- Coordination between the electronic commerce activities of WIPO and Member States from technical viewpoints (e.g., adoption of the necessary tools, possible adoption of general technical guidelines for electronic commerce in the intellectual property area),
- Pilot projects using electronic commerce tools for the provision of intellectual property information.

12. Some examples of pilot projects would be, for example, the posting of draft documents to be accessed, revised and completed by designated members, and secure interactive services envisaged for IPDL such as priority documents and other (unpublished) useful data for examination purposes between the International Bureau and intellectual property Offices to facilitate examination and registration activities.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

13. Most of the above projects impact on the work of more than one Working Group. For example, the information security issues will have a significant bearing on the technical requirements of the WIPO network and international cooperation on standards for the exchange of secured data. In this regard, steps should be taken to ensure the coordination of activities across all Working Groups.

14. Networks permit continuous communications between individuals and organizations, through the exchange of documents and electronic mail, and through the use of videoconferencing and “chat” facilities. These technologies allow any member of the SCIT to inform anyone of anything at any time. There is little need to await the SCIT meetings to make progress in undertaking tasks and implementing pilot projects. As proposed in document SCIT/1/2, the Working Groups are encouraged to set up and use Task Forces, wherever appropriate, which will fully utilize electronic communications to address business matters on an accelerated basis.

15. The SCIT Plenary is invited to note and approve the contents of this document.

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