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CONTINUATION OF THE PRODUCTION OF THE CD-ROM SERIES GLOBALPAT

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INTRODUCTION

1. GlobalPat, a collection of patent documents on CD-ROM, has been financed jointly by the Trilateral Offices, i.e., the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the European Patent Office (EPO) and the Japanese Patent Office (JPO). The product is derived from the First Page Database containing a single representative member of almost every patent family published by the Patent Offices of France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the United States, by the European Patent Office, as well as by WIPO under the Patent Cooperation Treaty. GlobalPat contains, in the English language, bibliographic data, including title and abstract, and, where appropriate, the image of a representative drawing. GlobalPat uses the MIMOSA software developed for SGML-encoded documents. The backfile set of the product consisting of 116 disks covers the period 1971-1996 and is arranged in 69 technology groups based on the *International Patent Classification*. GlobalPat was developed for conducting a quick off-line state-of-the-art search in first page data and for identifying family members for a given patent application in the English language.

2. In accordance with Task No. 31 of the SCIT Work Program (“Assist small intellectual property offices in acquiring CD-ROMs to enhance accessing search of patent information”), the International Bureau made arrangements in 1998 for a free-of-charge distribution of one backfile set of the GlobalPat CD-ROM to IPOs in various countries.

3. It should be noted that the International Bureau was in a position to satisfy all of the requests by small IP Offices for the GlobalPat CD-ROM series. The following 47 countries or organizations have received a free copy of the backfile set: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Croatia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Palestine, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia and the Eurasian Patent Office.

4. The high value of GlobalPat was proven through an inquiry conducted by the EPO among users of the CD-ROM series. According to the EPO, there is "a clear interest of the user community for the continuation of such a product, eventually converted into DVD-ROM depending on migration of the technology".

THE FUTURE OF GLOBALPAT

5. In spring of this year, the International Bureau was informed of the intention by the USPTO to discontinue its participation in the production of the GlobalPat CD-ROM series. By letter of June 30, 1999, the President of the EPO invited WIPO to participate in the production of GlobalPat at least until the time that the WIPO Global Information Network (WIPONET) would constitute a viable alternative for accessing such patent information.

6. The International Bureau would like to bring the above-mentioned situation to the attention of the Standards and Documentation Working Group (SDWG) in order to exchange views on the appropriateness of the continued availability of the GlobalPat CD-ROM series (taking due note of the existence of various alternative databases via the Internet). The International Bureau would like to receive the views of the SDWG with regard to WIPO's participation in the GlobalPat project. The International Bureau considers that the backfile set of GlobalPat arranged in 69 technology groups (see paragraph 1, above) would best serve the needs of small IP Offices. As it is understood, the front file of GlobalPat (from 1997 onwards) is arranged by issuing country and document number on monthly issues. Should WIPO contribute to the project under the budgetary limitation (see document SCIT/4/2, "Information Technology Strategic Implementation Plan"), the International Bureau would propose to the EPO that the financial contribution by WIPO be effectively used for the rearranging of the front file disks in accordance with the 69 technology groups and for a free distribution of the CD-ROMs to small IP Offices.

7. The Standards and Documentation Working Group is invited to assess the value of the GlobalPat CD-ROM series for the needs of IPOs and to consider WIPO's participation in the GlobalPat project.

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