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**PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION FOR
DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

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**PROVISION OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY INFORMATION SERVICES TO DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES: ASSESSMENT OF ON-GOING ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE NEEDS**

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Introduction

1. One of the principal mandates of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is to offer technical assistance to developing countries. This also includes the access to and use of technological information contained in patent documents in order to accelerate the economic, social and cultural development in developing countries. In line with this part of its mandate, WIPO has assisted a number of developing countries and countries in transition in establishing their national industrial property information systems by providing expert assistance, training, collections of patent documents, etc. Furthermore, in view of the growing information needs of national industries, R&D communities and the business sector of developing countries, WIPO has set-up and operated the unique WIPO Patent Information Services for Developing Countries (WPIS) for handling individual requests for patent information. The WPIS represent a contribution to development and their success has been proved by the large number of requests received every year.

WIPO Patent Information Services for Developing Countries (WPIS)

2. Since 1975, WIPO has been operating a special program to provide users in developing countries with technical information such as that contained in patent literature. This program is known as the WPIS. Services under the WPIS are offered free of charge on the basis of contributions made primarily by some 16 industrial property offices world-wide (Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation (former Soviet Union), Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America), as well as the European Patent Office (EPO). The online searches undertaken by WIPO are made possible by the courtesy of Derwent Information. Furthermore, industrial property offices of the following countries also provided, free of charge, copies of their national patent documents: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa.

3. The WPIS services include the provision of:

(a) reports on searches and investigations carried out in patent document collections and online databases to establish the state of the art in a specific technology;

(b) search and examination reports of applications for patents of the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO) under the Harare Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs of December 10, 1982;

(c) search and examination reports of applications for patents under the International Cooperation in the Search and Examination of Inventions (ICSEI) program;

(d) information on equivalent patent documents and patent literature cited in earlier examination procedures or identified in documentary searches carried out by other patent offices;

(e) information on the legal status of published patent applications and granted patents;

(f) copies of individual patent documents.

4. These services have proved to be highly successful, which is reflected in the number of users who regularly ask for information, as well as in the number and diversity of requests received. So far, 110 countries and intergovernmental organizations have benefited from WIPO's free-of-charge patent information services. From the start of the program in 1975 until

December 31, 2000, more than 13,200 search reports have been established and transmitted free of charge to the requesting parties from over 90 developing countries and 14 intergovernmental organizations and countries in transition. During last year (2000) 1,315 search requests (including ICSEI) were received from 39 developing countries. These reports also covered special requests for novelty search and substantive examination as to the patentability of patent applications in developing countries as well as special requests for search and examination of patent applications submitted by ARIPO. WIPO has made all the necessary efforts to meet this increasing demand and to augment both the available capacities and the diversity of the services. A cumulative survey of the number of requests for state-of-the-art reports received from each developing country and intergovernmental organizations is given in Annex I.

5. The program of provision of reports on the state of the art, based on searches carried out in patent document collections and online databases, started in 1975, in cooperation with Austria, and was gradually extended to cover contributions from other donor countries. Agreements for the free-of-charge provision of search reports have been concluded between WIPO and the industrial property offices of the following 13 countries: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Russian Federation (formerly Soviet Union), Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. In addition, other offices provide assistance in particular cases, and some reports are provided by WIPO itself. The reports established by WIPO are completed after carrying out online searches in QUESTEL host computers, by courtesy of Derwent Information.

6. In practice, there exist various reasons for searching technological and business information in collections of patent documents and online databases, which each require a slightly different approach in the search method used. Some of the search "types" are basically concerned with technological information as such, while others are also directed towards economic and legal questions, such as patent rights and licensing of technology.

7. Within the framework of the WPIS, searches can be carried out which may serve:

(a) to determine the general state of the art for the solution of a given technical problem as background information for R&D activities and in order to know what relevant patent documents already exist in the field of the research activity;

(b) to identify alternative technologies which may replace a known technology or to evaluate a specific technology which is being offered for licensing or considered for acquisition;

(c) to locate information about published patent documents involving specific companies or individuals, such as applicants, assignees, patentees or inventors;

(d) to assist in determining the novelty (or lack of novelty) of the invention claimed in a patent application or a patent already granted, or even of an invention for which no application has yet been filed;

(e) to locate documents relevant to the determination not only of novelty but also of other criteria of patentability, such as the presence or absence of an inventive step, meaning the alleged invention is or is not obvious, or the achievement of useful results or technical progress;

- (f) to identify members of a “patent family” which could be useful in order to:
 - (i) find the countries in which a given patent application has been filed (if published);
 - (ii) locate the document that is written in a desired language;
 - (iii) obtain a list of prior art documents or “cited reference”;
 - (iv) estimate the importance of the invention by the number of patent documents relating to the same invention and being published in different countries or by industrial property organizations;

(g) to obtain information on the validity (status) of a published patent application or a granted patent, on a given date, under the applicable patent legislation in one or more countries. Such information can assist in making decisions on export, for example, or in the negotiation of license agreements. It can also give guidance on the value attached to a particular patent by the patentee.

International Cooperation in the Search and Examination of Inventions (ICSEI)

8. In special cases, the WPIS can offer substantive examination of patent applications pending in developing countries. The WPIS offers two specific possibilities: a search in the framework of the ICSEI and the search service “Equivalent patent documents and citations.”

9. The ICSEI program, which started in December 1983, assists patent offices of developing countries in assessing novelty and inventive step of patent applications filed with them. A necessary prerequisite of using the ICSEI is the availability of the complete text of the patent application, which should be transmitted to the International Bureau of WIPO in either English, French, German or Russian.

10. This possibility, which complements the services rendered under WPIS, has been used successfully in more than 1,250 cases by industrial property offices in a number of countries (i.e., Argentina, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Republic of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines, Peru, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, the former Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe) and assists industrial property offices of developing countries in examining patent applications pending with them and filed in their respective countries.

11. On the basis of the data provided by the requesting party, the International Bureau of WIPO can also proceed to search online for equivalent patent documents published in other countries or by regional or international patent authorities. In cases where equivalent patent documents have been published and patent literature has been cited during the examination procedure in other offices (normally in the form of search reports annexed to the published patent applications or as citations listed on the first page of the granted patent), the International Bureau secures copies of both the search reports and patent documents cited therein.

12. The cooperation program with ARIPO in examining ARIPO patent applications has been specifically adapted to comply with the provisions of the Harare Protocol and its Implementing Regulations.

Copies Free of Charge of Published Patent Documents

13. Since 1984, the WPIS program also provides free copies of full texts of any published patent or patent application as specifically requested by the users from developing countries. Where a requested document is published by a country in a language not familiar to the requesting party, WIPO endeavors to identify the description of the same invention contained in another corresponding patent document published by another country in English. If no corresponding patent is available in a language familiar to the requesting party, WIPO seeks to obtain the translation of the abstract in English wherever available.

14. Some 30 countries provide free-of-charge copies of their patent documents; however, the main suppliers of free copies are: Austria, France, Germany, Japan, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, EPO, WIPO. Since 1984, when this copy service began, WIPO has received more than 3,000 requests from 50 developing countries and more than 49,000 copies of patent documents published by 37 countries have been supplied free of charge to requesting parties.

Contributions to the Operation and Development of the WPIS

15. The following industrial property offices are providing, on a regular basis, free-of-charge support to the WPIS:

Australia: Since 1985, the Australian Industrial Property Organization has been offering 20 state-of-the-art searches per year in response to requests from the International Bureau of WIPO. Furthermore, they are providing information on the legal status of Australian patent documents, as well as copies of Australian patent documents that WIPO cannot obtain from other contributing offices.

Austria: Since 1975, the Austrian Patent Office has been providing up to 70 reports per year on the state-of-the-art, including search and examination reports under ICSEI, as well as copies of patent documents contained in its library collection.

Bulgaria: The Patent Office of Bulgaria has furnished since 1996 up to 15 search reports annually, including search and examination reports under ICSEI.

Canada: Since 1985, the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) has contributed by providing up to 37 search and examination reports per year. This figure includes search and examination reports under ICSEI and on patent applications filed with ARIPO under the Harare Protocol. The CIPO also provides copies of Canadian patent documents.

Finland: Since 1985, the Finnish National Board of Patents and Registration has provided 15 state-of-the-art search reports per year, including search and examination reports under ICSEI.

France: Since 1990, the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) has been contributing to the WPIS by preparing up to 24 search reports per year, as well as providing

copies of French patent documents and furnishing information on the legal status of such documents. Furthermore, the International Bureau of WIPO has limited free-of-charge access to the INPI computerized databases as available through QUESTEL, for the benefit of developing countries.

Germany: Since 1981, the German Patent Office has provided up to 100 search reports annually, including search and examination reports under the ICSEI program and on ARIPO patent applications. It also furnishes copies of German patent documents.

Japan: Since 1994, the Japanese Patent Office (JPO) has provided up to 100 search reports per year. The JPO also provides 200 copies of Japanese patent documents annually.

Norway: Since 1994, the Norwegian Patent Office has provided up to 25 search reports annually, including search and examination reports under the ICSEI program.

Portugal: Since 1994, the Portuguese National Institute of Industrial Property has provided a large number of copies of patent documents available in its collection.

Russian Federation: Since 1988, the State Patent Agency has prepared a total of 125 search and examination reports, including search and examination reports under ICSEI. Furthermore, the State Patent Agency continues to provide copies of Russian patent documents.

Spain: The Registry of Industrial Property provides copies of Spanish patent documents, as well as information on their legal status.

Sweden: Since 1979, the Swedish Patents and Registration Office provides approximately 50 search reports per year.

Switzerland: Since 1987, the Swiss Federal Intellectual Property Office has contributed to the WPIS by providing up to 72 search reports annually. This Office continues to provide information on the legal status of Swiss patent documents and copies of the patent documents to the extent that they are contained in its collection of patent documents.

United Kingdom: Since 1994, the United Kingdom Patent Office has provided up to 50 search reports annually, including search and examination reports under ICSEI. In addition, 400 copies of United Kingdom patent documents are furnished per year as well as information on the legal status of United Kingdom patent documents.

United States of America: The United States Patent and Trademark Office provides copies of American patent documents.

EPO: This office provides information on the legal status of European patent documents and copies of published European patent applications.

16. In addition, other offices have provided assistance in particular cases, especially in furnishing free copies of their national patent documents which were not obtainable from offices contributing regularly to the WPIS. This is the case of Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Singapore and South Africa.

17. It is important to mention that some of the main users of WPIS have developed their own patent information services, as for example, Brazil, Cuba, India, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam. In the case of Cuba, the Cuban Industrial Property Office is now offering such services to other industrial property offices in Latin America. These examples represent the first steps in creating a network that will exchange information and share experiences.

18. It should be mentioned that these Agreements have been flexible, especially in 1994 and 1995, when the International Bureau started receiving an increasing number of requests which exceeded the normal contributions of the donor countries. Owing to the generous exceptional contributions of Austria, Canada, Finland and Switzerland, the International Bureau has been able to process all the requests received till now.

WPIS Users and Beneficiaries

19. Since the Program began in 1975, and up to December 31, 2000, a total of 14,182 search requests were received from 94 developing countries: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe; two countries with economies in transition and 14 international organizations on behalf of users in their member countries: AIDMO, ALADI, ARCT, ARIPO, CEDARE (CED), CDC, ECA, ESCAP, FASRC, IFIA, OAPI, OAU, UNIDO and WHO.

20. From 1975 through December 31, 2000, a total of 13,453 search reports were delivered. Two hundred and sixty five of these search reports were provided by Australia, 2,133 by Austria, 64 by Bulgaria, 183 by Canada, 280 by Finland, 174 by France, 1,823 by Germany, 1,356 by Japan, 71 by Norway, 1,194 by the Russian Federation, 857 by Sweden, 912 by Switzerland, 168 by the United Kingdom, 40 by the EPO, and in more than 1,200 cases, the International Bureau itself carried out searches, mainly to identify equivalent patent documents by using its own access to computerized databases. Additionally, the International Bureau prepared 2,733 preliminary reports (121 in 1995, 538 in 1996, 360 in 1997, 426 in 1998, 657 in 1999 and 631 in 2000) based on online searches (see Annex II).

21. Annex I contains a cumulative survey showing the number of requests for state-of-the-art reports and searches for equivalent patent documents received by the International Bureau from each developing country since the Program began in September 1975 (ICSEI examination requests included).

22. From the establishment of ICSEI in December 1983 up to December 31, 2000, a total of 1,259 examination requests were received from 29 countries: by December 31, 2000, 1,091 search and examination reports had been prepared by Austria (305), Bulgaria (20), Finland (34),

Germany (72), Russian Federation (497), United Kingdom (31), Sweden (130) and EPO (2), and forwarded to the requesting offices.

23. Up to December 31, 2000, assistance in the examination of ARIPO patent applications had been requested in 791 cases. Since the start of the program in 1984, a total of 660 search and examination reports have been provided by the industrial property offices of Austria (246), Canada (128), Germany (211), Russian Federation (41), Sweden (23), United Kingdom (9) and EPO (2). In 117 cases, through online searches, patent documents could be identified with priority data provided by ARIPO. The copies of the documents found were sent to ARIPO.

24. In some cases, the cooperating offices of the donor countries requested additional detailed information to enable them to complete the search report. Where, despite the request, the information was not provided, the search request was considered cancelled. Such cases represented less than 5%.

25. Information on the legal status of patent documents was requested in only a few cases and the International Bureau was able to provide the information with the help of the contributing offices.

26. In cooperation with the industrial property offices of several donor countries, WIPO has continued to supply free copies of specific patent documents upon request by developing countries. In January 1986, when the International Bureau started to establish a statistical survey on this service, through December 31, 2000, requests for copies of patent documents were received from the following 64 developing countries: Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Sri-Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, two countries with economies in transition and, on behalf of their member states, from three intergovernmental organizations: ARCT, ARIPO, FASCR.

27. A total of 53,822 copies of patent documents were requested through December 31, 2000, and the International Bureau was able to satisfy virtually all of the requests (see Annex III). Only in very exceptional cases, as in the case of very old documents or of patent documents not published in multiple copies and normally not contained in search files, could copies not be provided. Some requests also referred to patent documents published in languages unlikely to be understood by the requesting party. In such cases, the International Bureau attempted to identify and supply copies of the corresponding patents or of the abstracts in the desired languages. The following table shows the main suppliers of copies of patent documents for the years 1994 and 1998:

TABLE 1 — IP Offices major suppliers of copies of patent documents

	1994	1998
Switzerland	6%	29%
United States of America	34%	26%
Austria	7%	9%
Germany	<1%	7%
United Kingdom	8%	6%
Japan	5%	4%
EPO	26%	4%
Portugal	6%	3%
WIPO	6%	7%

Some offices have substantially increased their contribution to the provision of copies of patent documents. The Industrial Property Office of Switzerland provided 1,037 copies (of a total of 3,634) of patent documents in 1998 and 1,698 copies (of a total of 5,604) in 1999.

Statistical Information and Analysis

28. For comparison purposes, in order to show the evolution of the WPIS, the number of search requests submitted to the International Bureau is reflected in the following table:

<u>Years</u>	<u>N° of search requests</u>
1997 – 1998	1748
1995 – 1996	1321
1993 – 1994	646
1991 – 1992	318

29. According to the statements made by the users when submitting their requests, the main purpose for requesting the report was:

	<u>97-98</u> (1748) requests	<u>95-96</u> (1321) requests	<u>93-94</u> (646) requests	<u>91-92*</u> (318) requests
– to assist in the decision-making process concerning industrial property proceedings (e.g. filing of a patent application, etc.);	86%	88%	57%	36%
– to form a basis for developing research and development activities by identifying the solutions already known to a technological problem;	12%	6%	9%	36%
– to assist in planning the use of new technology;	<1%	<1%	<1%	40%
– to assist in overcoming difficulties in certain technological steps of a technology already implemented by the requesting party	<1%	<1%	2%	31%
– to assess the technology and/or equipment to be or being purchased;	<1%	<1%	2%	9%

- to assess the results reached under a current research and development project; <1% <1% 2% 6%
- several intended purposes for the search report requested. <1% 4% 29% -

*The requesting parties referred to several purposes.

30. The distribution shown in the table shows that the main purpose of the search report is to assist industrial property offices, organizations or individuals in the decision-making process related to industrial property proceedings. In previous studies (1988-1990), the distribution shown above demonstrated that, for users in developing countries, the legal aspect of patent literature was of almost equal importance as the technical information aspect. This was also significant in view of an earlier analysis established by the International Bureau in the 1980s in which the technical information aspect largely overrode the legal aspect. These changes could be seen as new developments in view of the demands of the users towards the WPIS and shows proof of an increased use of the WPIS by industrial property offices in developing countries to meet their information needs.

31. The technical fields in which the requests for the period were carried out by contributing offices can be grouped as follows:

Technical field (according to IPC sections)	Percentage			
	<u>97-98</u>	<u>95-96</u>	<u>93-94</u>	<u>91-92</u>
. Human necessities (A)	26	23	32	23
. Chemistry; metallurgy (C)	22	22	21	24
. Performing operations, transporting (B)	18	18	19	19
. Electricity (H)	6	5	14	3
. Physics (G)	6	5	5	5
. Fixed constructions (E)	8	7	5	6
. Other or not specified	14	20	4	20

32. In most cases 77% in 1997-98, three or more patent documents were supplied with the search report, 87% in 1995-96 and 92% in 1993-94, and in 23% of the cases non-patent literature was included (15% in 1995-96 and 11% in 1993-94).

33. The “final users” of the search reports and their share of the total number of such reports are presented in Table 2:

TABLE 2 — Users of the WPIS search report services

	97-98	95-96	93-94
Industrial Property Offices	87%	89%	76%
Research Institutions (Universities, Information Centers, Enterprises)	12%	8%	22%
Individuals	1%	3%	2%

34. The beneficiaries are distributed by region as follows:

TABLE 3 — Users of the WPIS by geographical regions

REGION/YEAR	97-98	95-96	93-94	91-92
Asia & Pacific	21%	48%	43%	53%
Latin America	62%	38%	32%	30%
Africa	13%	8%	19%	12%
Arab Countries	4%	9%	6%	2%

35. The International Bureau receives many letters and comments from users concerning the quality and usefulness of the search reports and other industrial property information services provided. It should be noted that, in most cases, the technological information submitted with the search report meets the needs of requesting parties at a high level; only in exceptional cases, the information provided was considered not useful.

36. The following table shows the development of the time delay between submitting the request and receiving the search results from the industrial property offices of the different donor countries, the International Bureau could calculate the following averages for the years 1993-1994 (total of 646 requests), 1995-1996 (total of 1,321 requests) and 1997-1998 (total of 1,748 requests).

TABLE 4 — Number of donor IPOs and time needed for performing searches

TIME/YEAR	97-98	95-96	93-94
less than 3 months	6	6	3
between 3-4 months	3	3	5
between 4-6 months	3	3	1
more than 6 months	1	1	1

37. It should be mentioned that in previous studies prepared by the International Bureau concerning this matter (1991), most of the requesting parties expressed the opinion that the delay was as expected, but about 40% of the users were not fully satisfied, pointing out that the response time was rather long. It is important to note that compared to 1995, the number of donors delivering the search reports, within less than three months, has doubled.

38. It should also be mentioned that, in several cases, the donor office contacted the International Bureau to obtain complementary information. In these cases, the delay was considerably extended because of the time required to contact the requesting party and his/her sending of the necessary additional information.

39. The WPIS are made possible thanks to the generous contributions of industrial property offices of donor countries and with the support of Derwent Information, which provides free access to its databases. If the cost of the services (state-of-the-art searches, online searches and copy service), is calculated from the point of view of cost-benefit, and considering that the cost of a search report would be between US\$600 and US\$1,200, it may be assumed that 16 million dollars have been made available for the benefit of developing countries.

40. The WPIS have proved to be highly successful. This is reflected in the number of users who regularly ask for information and the number and diversity of requests received. The WPIS should now focus on the development of the national patent information infrastructures in countries, including those with economies in transition, with the objective of national industrial property offices being placed in a position to provide their own services.

WIPO's Future Activities in Promoting the Use and Dissemination of industrial property Information

41. Future WIPO activities in respect of the use and dissemination of industrial property information should be directed towards the establishment and development of a dynamic industrial property information infrastructure that will serve the needs of national industries, R&D organizations, universities and trade and commerce. This should be done in close cooperation with national industrial property offices, professional associations, chambers of commerce and industry, organizations and agencies of small and medium enterprises, universities, R&D organizations, etc. It implies the active use of information technologies, the Internet and existing services and technological information services and networks. WIPO activities should be developed in the following three main areas:

(a) promoting and assisting in the establishment and development of industrial property information services in all countries, and in particular in developing countries and countries in transition, to bring industrial property information closer to the users —R&D organizations, universities, industry, inventors, traditional craftsmen, etc.;

(b) promoting and supporting the development of software and other tools that would facilitate access to industrial property information (e.g. Internet-based industrial property information search tools);

(c) maintaining and developing the WPIS as part of the world-wide network of industrial property information services.

42. Relating to 41(a) above, WIPO should actively promote and assist all countries, in particular developing countries and countries in transition, in establishing and developing national industrial property information services and networks and in bringing industrial property information closer to the users —R&D organizations, universities, industry, inventors, traditional craftsmen, etc. This could be achieved by encouraging those organizations to establish industrial property information units or focal points within their structures. WIPO and the national industrial property offices would provide methodological guidance, training and assistance in establishing access to basic documentation, CD-ROM collections and Internet access to patent documentation.

43. WIPO should promote the creation of Industrial Property Information Services to provide industrial property information (including patent information) as part of the WPIS. Over the last few years, there has been a number of developments and enhancements to patent information centers, especially in Europe, United States of America and in some developing countries. The network of such Centers should be expanded to promote the use and dissemination of patent information and the WIPONET should in the future provide an excellent vehicle for such a network.

44. Until the beginning of 1990s patent information services were delivered as one of the services and resources offered by a number of national industrial property offices and by some public libraries. In those libraries (usually technical or university libraries) patent documents were just one collection, among many others, including medicine, natural sciences, computing and engineering, etc.
45. Patent information centers or units should provide, with the assistance of WIPO and national and regional industrial property offices, the following services:
- (a) access to industrial property documentation (published applications, granted patents, patent specifications, non-patent literature, registered trademarks, registered industrial designs, etc.), available on support or over the Internet;
 - (b) information and advice on taking out a patent, design or trade mark; an enquiry service with the necessary staff to assist the public; copying services;
 - (c) advice on the availability (and the contents) of online patent information services (commercial industrial property databases, Internet, etc.) and access to such services.
46. Such services should include Internet access, documentation and the most important indexes and search tools, as those currently available on CD-ROM, such as: ESPACE-ACCESS, CASSIS BIB, IPC-class, First page databases, full text CD-ROMs, ROMARIN, etc.
47. There has been a rapid change in industrial property information carriers — from conventional “paper-based” information to CD-ROM, DVD and Internet-based. Industrial property information services should be equipped and trained to facilitate access to these resources, rather than to maintain paper-based collections.
48. Patent information services, as any other information services, require promotion to gain access to the public.
49. The patent information services need to identify the potential users and the professional user groups. Also, patent information services need to publicize their services and reach out to the users. A promotional plan should be developed and implemented. This would lead to an increase in both use and awareness of the service. A survey of both users and potential users should be undertaken as a first task of any newly created industrial property information service to establish need, best location, services to focus on, users groups, etc.
50. Industrial property information services/units should be able to receive visitors and users in a specially arranged open study area with PCs for consulting CD-ROMs or Internet access. Access to the Internet should be free. The enquiry point should be staffed by at least one patent information specialist. To ensure the consistency of such an approach all the staff involved should undergo a special training organized by WIPO and should maintain regular contacts with the staff of the industrial property Office to practice and update their skills.
51. Such new services could be attached to existing technical libraries, to information services of chambers of commerce, small business administrations, etc. The industrial property information services could very well be matched with combined business information services and offer additional services aimed primarily at business users.

52. Some of the services could be offered free of charge, others could be subject to a service fee and WIPO should provide technical assistance and training to achieve the objective of demystifying industrial property concepts.

53. With respect to 41(b) above, WIPO should actively support the development and use of software and other tools that would facilitate access to industrial property information (e.g. Internet-based industrial property information search tools). Special attention should be given to reviewing and assessing existing industrial property information services available and search tools, training in their use, etc.

54. With respect to 45(c) above, WIPO should support the implementation and expansion of the industrial property information centers in the framework of the WPIS, which should be expanded to countries with economies in transition. Wherever possible, such services should be decentralized with support being provided through the network of industrial property information centers. Such services could be established with universities, industrial and commercial associations, industrial centers, etc., which should have, with WIPO's sustained support, the basic documents and tools necessary for the services.

55. The Permanent Committee is invited to note the information contained in this document and make any comment it may wish on the content thereof.

[Annexes follow]

