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ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL COMMITTEE

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REVIEW OF UPOV INFORMATION DATABASES AND SERVICES

Document prepared by the Office of the Union

1. At its thirty-seventh session held in Geneva from April 2 to 4, 2001, the Technical Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the TC”) considered document TC/37/6 “Review of UPOV Information Databases and Service.” It considered (document TC/37/8, paragraph 144) that:

“The value of improved database searching efficiency, completeness of advice to Contracting Parties and clarification of coverage of Test Guidelines justified further work on the development of a UPOV code and invited the Office of the Union to select, from interested parties, a small *ad hoc* working group of technical and administrative experts to:

“(a) review the practical value of the existing UPOV documents considered in this document and propose any possible improvements;

“(b) in accordance with these findings, review the proposed structure of the UPOV code with a view to maximizing its practical value, and

“(c) propose a program for introduction, whilst identifying the resources required for the introduction and maintenance of such a code, together with an analysis of benefits for Contracting Parties.”

2. At its forty-third session held in Geneva on April 5, 2001, the Administrative and Legal Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the CAJ”) also considered document TC/37/6 and heard that the TC had decided to set up a working group. Considering the overlapping between the task of that subgroup and the one dealing with the publication of plant variety descriptions, it agreed (document CAJ/43/8, paragraph 69) that the working group on databases and the working group on publication of plant variety descriptions should be linked.

3. In addition to the working group on the publication of variety descriptions, the CAJ has also established an *Ad hoc* Working Group on Variety Denominations (document CAJ/44/9 Prov., paragraph 24). Discussions within this group, and a working group established by the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), have highlighted the importance of an effective global variety database containing variety denominations.

4. The work of the *ad hoc* working groups on the “Publication of Variety Descriptions” and “Variety Denominations” is at an early stage and it is difficult to know, at this stage, the appropriate elements of a UPOV code for serving all the needs which might arise from these groups. However, in the meantime, the Office of the Union (hereinafter referred to as “the Office”) plans to develop and maintain a single database of information based on species / taxonomic groups, which will be used to generate different reports. Thus, in future, the following documents will originate from this single database:

Ref.	Title
C/[35]/6	List of the taxa protected in the member States of UPOV and in those States and Organizations that have initiated the procedure for acceding to UPOV and which have provided information.
C/[35]/5	Cooperation in examination.
TC/[38]/4	List of species in which practical technical knowledge has been acquired or for which national guidelines have been established.

5. In order to construct a single database, it is necessary to use a unique identifier to address all the synonyms used in these different databases. This unique identifier is, in effect, the UPOV code. As discussed above, the nature of a code, which will be necessary to address the publication of variety descriptions and variety denominations, is not yet clear. However, the code developed in TC/35/16 “Revised Working Paper for a UPOV Taxon Code for Use in the UPOV -ROM Plant Variety Database” can be used for the construction of the database. New codes will be created for taxa not included in this document. If necessary at a later date, but before the code is put into use, the construction of this code can be changed relatively easily and quickly to meet the demands for variety descriptions and denominations. The Office will maintain the database and code until the requirements of a UPOV code for the publication of variety descriptions and/or variety denominations are clear. The code will then be submitted to the TC and the CAJ for their approval, and thereafter introduced in all relevant databases, including the UPOV -ROM.

6. In addition to the construction of the single, consolidated database, the Office will, in consultation with selected technical and administrative experts, consider how the existing reports might be improved for the benefit of the intended users. It is anticipated that this may involve the use of a questionnaire to be sent to interested organizations as well as members of the Union.

7. *The TC and the CAJ are invited to note, and comment on, these proposals.*

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