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ORGANIZATION

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Ninth Session
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PROPOSAL FOR THE REVISION OF WIPO STANDARD ST.88

Document prepared by the International Bureau

BACKGROUND

1.   At its eighth session in November 2020, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) adopted WIPO Standard ST.88: Recommendations for electronic representation of industrial designs. Agreement could not be reached on treatment of Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) image format within the Standard. The CWS requested the Design Representation Task Force to present a proposal for treatment of SVG format in ST.88 at its ninth session. (See paragraphs 36 to 43 of document CWS/8/24.)

TASK FORCE DISCUSSIONS

2.   The Design Representation Task Force met to discuss the issue of SVG. A number of potential benefits were presented, such as unlimited scalability and precision of vector images. Several Task Force member Offices already use or expressed interest in exploring SVG, particularly for line drawings from applicants. The Task Force also noted that SVG could also help with publishing sharper, more detailed drawings, as some applicants have requested.

3.   Potential drawbacks to SVG were also discussed. Notably, some Task Force Members had concerns about consistent rendering of images across devices or by different software programs. There were questions about long-term storage of images in a way that satisfies various Intellectual Property Office's legal requirements. There are security concerns with the SVG format that should be addressed. It is not clear yet how some Offices would adapt their existing examination processes and systems, which are based on raster images to handle vector images such as SVG.

4.   Taking into account the current lack of experience among Offices with implementing SVG and the technical and legal issues to be addressed first, the timeframe that would be required for many Offices to support SVG is unclear. While several members remain interested in exploring potential SVG use, it does not appear likely that they will be ready to accept SVG submissions in the near future. Considering the different situations and interests in Offices, including some Offices already using SVG, the Task Force agreed to recommend SVG as an optional format in ST.88. Offices may use SVG if they wish, but should convert to another format (PNG or JPG) for data exchange under this Standard.

PROPOSED REVISION TO WIPO STANDARD ST.88

5.   The Task Force proposes revising paragraph 12 of ST.88 by adding a new (a) as follows:

"12. Where supported by the Office, images may optionally use one of the following alternative formats instead of a preferred format:

(a) SVG format: this format is not preferred because some Offices have uncertainties about integrating SVG with their existing processes and requirements;

(b) TIFF format: this format is not preferred because it is not compressed, leading to very large file sizes; and

(c) GIF format: this format is not preferred because PNG is a newer format with better support for color and transparency features."

6.   *The CWS is invited to:*

        (a)   note the content of this document; and

        (b)   consider and approve the proposed revision of "WIPO Standard ST.88: Recommendations for electronic representation of industrial designs" as described in paragraph 5 above.

[End of document]