

**Ninth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Eighth Conference**

**Lebanon Report on the Progress in the Standardization
of Lebanese Names**

Submitted by Lebanon**

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Here below is the report of Lebanon on the progress of work on geographic names during the period between the 8th (2002) and 9th (2007) UNGEGN conferences:

- In 1967 the 1st Conference for standardization held in Geneva recommended the establishment of national geographic commissions in all participant countries. The directorate of Geographical affairs responsible for mapping had to collect all place names in the country. Since that many attempts were made to establish an independent national commission responsible for naming.
- In 2003 interim commission was established in Lebanon with a preset task. This commission has put the basics and principles of the transliteration of geographical names according to the new transliteration alphabet; i.e. the modified Beirut paper, which was drafted by the Arab experts during the 8th conference on standardization held in Berlin 2002.
- This commission has prepared a gazetteer for the names of villages and cities – according to the new system – on paper and electronically, where any names can be sought to see how it is written in Arabic or Latin, the Case it belongs to, its coordinates, altitude, and some other information.
- The Directorate of Geographic Affairs (DAG) has contacted the members of the Arab Division to hold a conference in Beirut in order to discuss the details of applying the modified Beirut paper.
- During the 23rd session that was held in Vienna in 2006, the Arab experts agreed upon holding a conference in Beirut for that reason.
- On May 30 & 31 2007, a conference was held in Beirut. In harmony with the recommendations of the 7th (1997) and 8th (2002) UNGEGN conferences, the new Romanization system was unanimously adopted by all Arab experts that have attended that conference. Also, the representative of the Secretary General of the Arab League authorized this new system.
- The Chair of the conference has submitted this new Romanization system to the Lebanese Government, the Arab League, and the Economical and Social Council for Western Asia (ESCWA). Also, a copy was sent to the General Secretary of the UNGEGN, in order to present it during the 9th conference in New York, and to issue a resolution and recommendation to adopt it from the Arab countries in building their gazetteers and making their maps; and to adopt it by the international organizations that are interested in geographical information.
- In Lebanon, the map making authority (DAG) already uses this new Romanization system to write the geographical names on the maps and to issue a gazetteer and an atlas for Lebanon in accord with the new system. DAG also coordinates with other Arab countries that represent the commission of the Arab Division that was elected in Beirut and those that are represented in the committees that were named by that conference.
- The new system will be sent to all public and private institutions, schools, and universities in Lebanon in order to be used and taught in a way that facilitates understanding of the new way of writing. The second phase will be the adoption of this new way of writing by the Lebanese Government to write the names of streets and cities on the road signs.