

**Twentieth Session  
New York, 17 – 28 January 2000**

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**Item 5  
of the Provisional Agenda**

**REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS**

**Country Paper/Jordan**

## Historical Background :

Geographical names are strongly related to the history of a country, and Jordan is not an exception to that case. A quick look at the history of Jordan and the civilizations and peoples who have lived on its land shows clearly the link between those peoples and the names of the cities and towns that are still keeping these names for thousands of years. Among those ancient civilizations are the Emmites, Moabites, Ammonites, Nabataeans, Greeks and Romans. Islam came to the country in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and its effect has been clearly left on the majority of names of towns and villages and almost all the names of natural topographic features.

## Cartographic Background :

Jordan was put under the British mandate directly after World War I the British government produced maps at various scales in English for Jordan and Palestine . In the early 1960's the American AMS ( Army Map Service ) produced a Complete cover for the Kingdom at a scale of 1:50,000. In 1980 the French IGN (Institute Geographique National ) produced 30 sheets at scale 1:25,000 for the north region ( Irbid District ), the quality of names in these maps was excellent.

Those maps were in English and the transliteration system adopted came from BGN/PCGN systems. The Americans also published in 1972 an official Standard Names Gazetteer for Jordan . Department of Lands and Surveys transliterated some small scale maps. However, the bulk of this work was accomplished at the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre.

The Arabic names on these transliterated maps have suffered from some mistakes for various reasons. The most important of those was the ignorance of some of those who did this work of the transliteration system which the Americans and British have adopted . This is in addition to the existence of some mistakes made on these maps when they were originally produced, and the inconsistency in following the transliteration system adopted. Then in the early 1980's the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre ( RJGC ) adopted a special transliteration system based on the Modified Bayrut System with little amendments made

The Arab group of experts on geographical names, and the U.N. group of experts on geographical names have adopted this system at the

eighteenth session of U.N. group of experts on geographical names, Geneva 12-23/8/1996. ( Annex 1).

## Achievement Regarding Geographical Names

### 1) Jordan Geographic Encyclopedia of Towns

The project is to be achieved and edited in separate parts, one for each governorate( Muhafadha ). One part , Muhafadhat As-Zarqa is currently under printing, The field work has been done to Muhafadhat Ajlun. Muhafadhat Al-Balqa was printed in 1997 contains 272 pages, 17 maps ( Full pages) 62 maps ( part of page ).

The major resources and references of this project :

- 1- Books and magazines.
- 2- Topographic maps 1:25,000. 1:50 000. 1:100,000
- 3- Government statistics and data.
- 4- Field work including interviews.

The Encyclopedia contains:

- 1- General and various information concerning the Muhafadha.
- 2- Information on each town, village, and agglomeration such as :
  - a- Name: Its meaning and origin.
  - b- History.
  - c- Location: coordinates.
  - d- Site: plain, slope, summit, undulating ..etc.
  - e- Suburbs (Ahya): Names, altitudes and location.
  - f- Rivers and valleys (wadis).
  - g- Mountains and areas.
  - h- Population: statistics, tribes, families.
  - i- Local administrative: Municipality, village council.
  - j- Services: Religious, education, water supply, electricity, post, health, clubs, roads, agriculture ( cultivated area, forest, livestock ).

## 2) Gazetteer of Jordan

### 1- Gazetteer of Jordan Towns, villages and Agglomerations:

This work was, produced in Arabic and has already been entered into the computer. It is divided according to the main district (governorate) (Muhafadha) and subdistricts (Liwa, Qada).

It includes various information about these settlements, such as:

- a- Name: In Arabic with short vowels, and Transliteration (Romanization).
- b- Coordinates.
- c- Population: 1994 census.
- d- Altitude.

### 2- Gazetteer of Jordan:

Work has already begun in producing new geographical names gazetteer of Jordan, depending on several sources:

- a- Gazetteer of Jordan Towns.
- b- Encyclopedia of Jordan Towns.
- c- The new and updated topographic maps at scales 1:25.000 , 1:50000, 1:100.000.
- d- Field completion names registers.
- e- The official standard names gazetteer of Jordan, produced by AMS, 1990.

It includes:

Name: Arabic letters, Roman letters.

Designation: Town, River, Wadi (Valley), Mountain Hill, Area...etc.

Coordinates: Geographic, Other.

Sheet: sheet name or number, scale.

Notes.

Up to 1-11-1999, 9850 names have been entered into the computer.

(Annex 2).

### 3) Geographical Names Committee:

- 1- First, the Government of Jordan formed a National Committee for Geographical Names. The committee was Active for three years in the early 1980's
- 2- Another committee was also formed at the Royal Jordanian geographic Centre for the same purpose, and is still active today. Some of its activities include the checking and verifying of the name registers of field completion and the choosing of names in their final form.

### 4) Atlases:

- 1- National Atlas of Jordan:
  - a- The first part of the National Atlas of Jordan "Climate and Agrohydrology" was published in 1984. It contains 135 maps.
  - b- The second part of the National Atlas of Jordan "Hydrology and Agrohydrology" was published in 1986. It contains 141 maps.
- 2- School atlas: In 1988, RJGC published the first print of school atlas in Arabic and was confronted by the problem of choosing the right form of names of cities and even countries of the world. It was noted that most general atlases in Arabic do not agree on the same form of exonyms.

A new Updated and reviewed edition of the school atlas in Arabic was published in 1996. RJGC did its best to choose the right names, by writing to the foreign embassies in Jordan and consulting the Jordanians who have studied abroad. It contains 128 pages, 101 maps, 12 geographical information tables two of these include exonyms of some world's countries and some of capitals:

- 1- Native name
- 2- Arabic name.
- 3- English name.

Another tables include all the world's countries and their capitals. An English edition of this atlas is under work. ( Annex 3).

**5) Book**  
**Basics of Geographical Names**  
**By Ibrahim Zoqurti**

The Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre has published this book in 1997 in Arabic (62) pages.

The book contains:

- 1- Importance of geographical names, their relation to Personal documents, media, history, education, culture and map production.
- 2- UN and geographic names: Goals of UN conference and meeting on geographical names.
- 3- Geographic names and Arabic language: Dictation, grammar, accents, using short vowels.
- 4- Transliteration, Historical view, adopted transliteration system in RJGC ( Assorted by Arab Group of Experts on Geographical Names at Eighteenth Session, Geneva 12-23/8/ 1996).
- 5- Spell as you pronounce: local spelling.
- 6- Principle of Geographic Names.
  - Topography, climate, colour, geology, mineral, water.
  - Religious.
  - Persons, Tribe, people, events, animals... etc.
- 7- Translation of geographic names.
- 8- Changing of geographic names.
- 9- New geographic names.
- 10- Historical changing of geographic names.
- 11- Official and field work, collecting geographic names.
- 12- Gazetteer and Encyclopedia of geographic names.

## Annex 1

### Transliteration System for Arabic Geographical Names:-

The transliteration (romanization) system adopted and used by the RJGC since 1980 is practically the same as that of the BGN/PCGN used in "The Official Standard Names Gazetteer of Jordan, ed. 1971" and as it appears in "The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, ed. 1981" with 2 main modifications :

1- **ظ** is transliterated as dh and not as z- (mainly because dh is the form that was used on 1 : 50,000 maps of Jordan produced by the American AMS).

**ا** (tā'marbūṭa) is transliterated as "a" and not as h (or ah).

The basic rule for transliterating Arabic geographic names is to consider the standard (formal) form of the word as it is pronounced, regardless of the actual spelling of the word.

### Transliteration System for Arabic Geographical Names .

#### 1) Arabic Consonants .

<u>Arabic Letter</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Examples</u>
ب	b	بئر bīr
ب	b	بيت bayt
ت	t	تل tall
ث	th	ثغره thaghra
ج	j	جبل jabal
ح	h	حرة harra
خ	kh	خربة khirba

<u>ArabicLetter</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Examples</u>
د	d	دير dayr
ذ	dh	ذيان dhībān
ر	r	رجم rujm
ز	z	زمنلا zumla
س	s	سيل sayl
ش	sh	شلال shallāl
ص	s	صخره sakhra
ض	d	ضبعه daba
ط	t	طاحونه tāhūna
ظ	dh	ظهرة dhahra
ع	‘	عين ‘ayn
غ	gh	غور ghawr
ف	f	فج fajj
ق	q	قاع qā’
ك	k	كرم karm
ل	L	لواء Liwā’
م	m	مطار maṭār
ن	n	نبع nab’
هـ	h	هضبه hadaba
و	w	وادي wādī
ي	y	يرقا yarqā



Most of the examples given are generic terms which explain using small letters.

2) Arabic vowels, diphthongs, and special diacritical marks,

(fatḥa)	a	سَهْل	sahl
(kasra)	i	جِسْر	jisr
(ḍamma)	u	جُرْف	jurf
(fatḥa alif)	ā	بَاب	bāb
(kasra ya')	ī	سَيْق	sīq
(ḍamma wāw)	ū	سُوح	sūh
(alif maqsura)	a'	بُصْرَى	Busra'
(shadda)	doubling	تَلَّة	talla

## Notes

1) Hamza (ء) is not transliterated in the beginning of words; e.g., :

Ard : أرض

hamzat al madd is equivalent to ا ء (hamza alif) and is transliterated as

a : e.g., Qur'ān. قرآن

2) Tā' marbūṭa (ة) occurs at the end of many words, usually feminine;

it is represented as a, (e.g., خربة : Khirba) which is shorter than,

and preferable to "ah" (khirbah) because "h" represents the letter ه

(ha') which is different from tā' marbūṭa, and also because transliterating it as "a" does not cause any confusion.

However if tā' marbūṭa is preceded by (alif) (which occurs in very few

words) it should be represented by "ah", (e.g., سفاه : Safāh)

if ta' marbūṭa is followed by another word in a unitary expression, it is

transliterated as "t" e.g., Ghazzat Hāshim : غَزَاة هَاشِم (according to the basic rule aforementioned) .

- 3) The definite article (أل) is transliterated (according to the basic rule) as "al" if the "l" is pronounced ; that is , before the so - called " moon letters " but when the definite article precedes a word beginning with t , th , d , dh , r , z , s , sh , ṣ , ḍ , : t , dh , l , n , ( i.e. : so - called " sun letters " ) the "l" is assimilated in pronunciation , giving "t t" , "th th" ,  
etc , e.g. , al jabal , الجبل as sahl السَّهْل .
- 4) Hyphens should not be used to connect parts of names ; e.g. ;  
Bayt Ra's بيت رأس Al Karak الكرك .
- 5) The word ابن is always transliterated as Ibn even if it is written بن as is the case when it comes between two proper names .g.  
عثمان بن عفان 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān , since it is always pronounced as Ibn .





Annex 3

الاسم المتعارف عليه (لغة عربية)	الاسم المتعارف عليه باللاتينية (حروف رومانية)	الاسم المحلي (حروف عربية)	الاسم المتعارف عليه (لغة عربية)
أثينا	Athens	أثينا	Athina
أبها	Ahimsa - Aha	أبها	Ahimah
أولان باتور	Ulan Bator	أولان باتور	Ulanbatol
بانكوك	Bangkok	بانكوك	Baku
بروكسل (أبريل)	Brussels	بروكسل	Bruxelles
بكين	Peking	بكين	Beijing
بغداد	Baghdad	بغداد	Bucaresti
بهدارست	Bucharest	بهدارست	Bayrut
بورت	Beirut	بورت	El-Jaza'ir
الجزائر	Nigeria	الجزائر	Al-Khartoum
الشمشون	Khartoum	الشمشون	Balle Alha Chah
دبلن	Dublin	دبلن	Onaka
دكا	Dacca	دكا	Dimachu
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Ad-Dauhan
دمشق	Doha	دمشق	Yangon
الدمشق	Damascus	الدمشق	Ar-Riyad
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Soul
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Saifu
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Tarabulus
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Taskent
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Aschabad
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Wien
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Al-Qahirah
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Al-Quds
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Kabul
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Kobenhavn
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Kiakinou
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Kijev
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Lisboa
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Masqat
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Muqdisho
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Ciudad de Mexico
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Moskva
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Lefkara (لوكا)
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Leukosia (لوكوسيا)
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Kabana
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Heisingfors
دمشق	Damascus	دمشق	Warszawa
اسماء بعض الدول حسب الأسماء المتعارف عليه واللفظ الخارج محلياً			
الاسم المتعارف عليه (لغة عربية)	الاسم المتعارف عليه باللاتينية (حروف رومانية)	الاسم المحلي (حروف عربية)	الاسم المتعارف عليه (لغة عربية)
أثيوبيا	Ethiopia	أثيوبيا	Al Imarat
أذربايجان	Azerbaijan	أذربايجان	Al Arabiya al Mu'tahida
الأردن	Jordan	الأردن	Ukrayna
إسبانيا	Spain	إسبانيا	Elra (إيرلندا)
إستونيا	Estonia	إستونيا	Island
أفريقيا الوسطى	Central Africa	أفريقيا الوسطى	Italia
ألبانيا	Albania	ألبانيا	Brasil
ألمانيا	Germany	ألمانيا	Belgique (بلجيكا)
الإمارات العربية المتحدة	United Arab Emirates	الإمارات العربية المتحدة	
أوكرانيا	Ukraine	أوكرانيا	
أيرلندا	Ireland	أيرلندا	
إيسلندا	Iceland	إيسلندا	
إيطاليا	Italy	إيطاليا	
البرازيل	Brazil	البرازيل	
بلجيكا	Belgium	بلجيكا	

الاسم التعارف عليه باللاتينية (حروف رومانية)	الاسم التعارف عليه باللاتينية (حروف عربية)	الاسم التعارف عليه باللاتينية (حروف رومانية)	الاسم التعارف عليه (حروف عربية)
Balgarija	بلغاريا	Bulgaria	بلغاريا
Druk - Yut	دروك - يوت	Bhutan	بوتان
Myanmar	ميانمار	Burma	برما
Bosna i - Hercegovina	بوسنة وهرسيفينا	Bosnia and Hercegovina	البوسنة والهرسك
Polska	بولسكا	Poland	بولندا
Prathet Thai	براثيت ثاي	Thailand	تايلاند
Türkiye	تركيا	Turkey	تركيا
Tchad	تشاد	Chad	تشاد
Cesk	تشيك	Czech	تشيك
Tunis	تونس	Tunisia	تونس
Al Jaza'ir	الجزائر	Algeria	الجزائر
Al-Qumur (عربي)	القمر	Comoros	جزر القمر
Suid-Afrika (لغة الافريكانا)	جنوب افريكا	South Africa	جنوب افريكا
Danmark	دانمارك	Denmark	الدانمارك
Cabo Verde	كابو فيردي	Cape Verde	الرأس الأخضر
Rossija	روسيا	Russia	روسيا
Belarus	بيلاروس	Belarus	روسيا البيضاء
Cote d'Ivoire	كوت ديفوار	Ivory Coast	ساحل العاج
Slovensk	سلوفنك	Slovak	سلوفاك
Slovenija	سلوفينيا	Slovenia	سلوفينيا
Suriya	سورية	Syria	سوريا
Sverige	سويديش	Sweden	السويد
Suisse (الاساني) Schweiz (الفرنسي)	سويسرا	Switzerland	سويسرا
Zhongguo	زونغر	China	الصين
Al - Arabiyah as-Su'udiyah	العربية السعودية	Saudi Arabia	العربية السعودية
Uman	عمان	Oman	عمان
Pilipinas (Tagalog)	فيليبيناس (تاغالوغ)	Philippines	الفلبين
Suomi	سويديش	Finland	فنلندا
Ulet Nam	فيت نام	Vietnam	فيتنام
Uiti, Fiji	فيجي	Fiji	فيجي
Kipros (يوناني) Kibris (يوناني)	كبريس - كبريس	Cyprus	قبرس
Hrvatska	كرواتسكا	Croatia	كرواتيا
Kambuchea	كمبوديا	Cambodia	كمبوديا
Taehan - Min'guk	تايجان - مينغوك	Korea S.	كوريا الجنوبية
Choson - Mini'ujuui	تشوسون - مينجوجوي	Korea N.	كوريا الشمالية
Imin Konghwaguk	اليمين - كونغواغوك		
Al Kuwait	الكويت	Kuwait	الكويت
Latuija	لاتفيا	Latvia	لاتفيا
Lao	لاو	Laos	لاوس
Lubnan	لبنان	Lebanon	لبنان
Lezebuurg	ليكسبورغ	Luxembourg	لكسمبرغ
Lietuva	ليتوانيا	Lithuania	ليتوانيا
Oniveni Rajjge	ونيفي رايجه	Maldives	مالديف
Madagasikara	مدغشكارا	Madagascar	مدغشقر
Misr	مصر	Egypt	مصر
Al Maghrib	المغرب	Morocco	المغرب
Makedonija	مكدونيا	Macedonia	مقدونيا
Mongol Ard Uls	منغول ارض الـ	Mongolia	منغوليا
Muritaniya	موريتانيا	Mauritania	موريتانيا
Mocambique	موزمبيق	Mozambique	موزمبيق
Norge	نرويج	Norway	النرويج
Osterrreich	اوسترايخ	Austria	النمسا
Sharat	بهارات	India	الهند
Magyarország	ماتجاروروساغ	Hungary	هنغاريا (المجر)
Nederland	نيدرلاند	Netherlands	هولندا
Nihon (nippon)	نيبون (نيبون)	Japan	اليابان
Ellas	الاس	grece	اليونان