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Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

Reports of the division

Report of the Arabic Division *

*** Prepared by Mr. Saif Salim Al Qaidi (UAE), Arabic Division**

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REPORT OF THE ARABIC DIVISION

Since our last meeting in New York 2004 many activities have been undertaken in our Division.

The first Arab conference on Arab Geographical names took place in Tripoli, Libya from 18-20 December of 2004. The following topics were discussed in that meeting:

- a. Romanization
- b. Official Arab Gazetteer
- c. Arab geographical terminologies in the existing maps.
- d. Database for Arabic Geographical Names
- e. The co-operation between the Arab States in geographical names.

The participants agreed for further co-operation in terms of geographical names and the need for establishing the database for the Arab geographical names guide to be used by others.

The UAE is organizing the 2nd annual conference and exhibition for Map Middle East 2006 "MME 2006". The conference under the banner 'Geospatial for All - All for Geospatial', is jointly organized by Dubai Municipality and GIS Development (India) and it would embrace all aspects of addressing 'Geospatial for All - All for Geospatial' in the context of present demands and fast-paced technological changes. It explored manners and ways in which geospatial tools can reach out to citizens and benefit them in the future. The conference will have a comprehensive programme that will feature stimulating keynotes from eminent professionals; technical sessions, tracks, workshops, and training sessions on the geospatial technologies and their applications". <http://www.gis.gov.ae/en/news/news.asp?ID=71>

The high demand for using geographical names in our countries drove us to establish web sites to show the activities of each survey authority on mapping and geographical names.

Several Survey authorities have their own web sites to promote their own activities in geographical names and other related work. Lebanon, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Jordan, and KSA are among these countries which launched their geographical and map related work on the net. Several Arab countries are in the process of publicizing their activities for better co-operation.

In term of software, several Arab countries developed their own software to serve their needs in geographical names. Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are an example of these Arab countries who designed their own

software on Romanization according to Beirut modified Guide to serve their needs. Established in January 1974, with an initial mandate of serving the surveying and mapping needs of military units. .

The UAE Military Survey (http://www.uaesurvey.ae/survey_E/default.htm) has an on-going project about UAE digital geographic name dictionary. Their future vision is to initiate a national system for spatial data infrastructure in UAE, and organizing over all surveys operations in the country.

Also, several private agencies which are dealing with Romanization have the chance to design their software. Transliteration.org:

(<http://transliteration.org/quran/home.htm>) developed a complete geographic names transliteration (Romanization) system from Arabic words, according to the Arabic Roman "Beirut modified transliteration system" standards, approved by the "League of Arab States".

Some Arabic countries started their own training program on mapping and geographical names. For example Saudi Arabia established a geographical Survey institute. Annually several training programs are taking place in this institute.

Also, Jordan designed some courses and training programs on geographical names.

The National Survey Authorities in Sultanate of Oman,

(<http://www.nsaom.org.om/english/services/serv05.htm>)

provides technical training for Omanis in mapping sciences and related subjects such as map reading, Cartography, Photogrammetry, Topographic Surveying, Hydrographical Survey. The UAE Military Survey organizes regular training program for their employees.

The following are an idea about the activities of some of Arabic countries related to Geographical names.

Algeria conducted several meetings on Geographical names. They finished collecting data for all their geographical names.

Sudan started collecting data about their geographical names. More than 70,000 places have been collected and identified covering all country regions.

Lebanon finished collecting data base for 28,000 identifies places in all Lebanon region. They just finished their Gazetteer using Beirut modified guide for Romanization. A digital formatted of this gazetteer is available to be used. Lebanon will present this gazetteer in a hard copy and CD during this meeting.

Qatar also working in their geographical names, and they finished collecting 3000 names covering the whole country.

Further details will be provided by the country report of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan.