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Terminology in the standardization of geographical names

Working Paper on Proposed Modifications to the Glossary of Terms for
The Standardization of Geographical Names

Submitted by Lebanon**

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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This paper presents some notes on the "Glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical names". These notes apply to the Arabic section of the glossary, which was translated from its original English text. It is important to note that the Arabic translation is mainly addressed to the people in the Arab World; hence, it should not be in contrast with any of their cultural or lingual heritage.

Having this in mind, we suggest that in updating and revising the "Glossary" for the next edition, the following points should be taken into account:

1. The Arabic spelling of most of the words containing Hamzah (ء) is incorrect because this Hamzah was dropped.

2. The term number (as they are numbered in an ascending order according to the English alphabet) should appear next to the Arabic translation of this term whenever it is mentioned within the definition. This makes it easier for the reader to jump into that term and read its definition when needed.

3. The definition should concentrate more on giving examples in the Arabic language and avoid direct translation from English because it sometimes gets wrong. For example, "Radar" (رادار) is given as an example of acronyms, but it is not an Arabic acronym at all. The letters that make up the word "رادار" do not represent the first letter (or letters) of Arabic words. It, however, represents the English pronunciation written in Arabic letters. Therefore, the glossary should provide an Arabic acronym in this case and avoid using the English word. Another example is the "allonym" term. It was better to use "دمشق" (Damascus) and "الشام" (Sham) as an example instead of giving non-Arabic examples.

4. In term "002", it is wrong to exclusively define "address" as computer address, especially in the context of geographical names. Another definition of the real geographic meaning of address could be added.

5. In term "004", "لوحدة صرفية فارقة" should be replaced by "لوحدة صوتية فارقة", because after reviewing the original English text of the term definition, the former was mistranslated.

6. In "040", "081" and "214", the conventional name does not necessarily have to be an exonym as it is inferred from the mentioned terms.

7. In "045", the rectangular coordinates do not necessarily have the same unit length on both major axes. This, however, relies on the projection in use. Although the most commonly used projections have that property, some used projections do not.

8. In "059", "data portability" means "قابلية البيانات للتحويل" and not "قابلية البيانات للحمل" as it is given in the translation.

9. In "064", "(أين)" should be written after "où" in the definition of "diacritic".

10. In "100", "قياس 10" should be replaced by "قياس 10 ح/ب." in order to comply with the English text and to avoid confusion with the measurement unit given in the previous example.

11. In "134", it is better to give some examples in order to clarify the meaning of ideograms.

12. In "263", write "عنصر صورة" next to "بيكسل" in the Arabic translation of the term "pixel".

13. In "133", "152", "280", 352", and "368", some "Israeli" examples were given. It is, however, necessary to remove such examples from the definition of these terms and replace them by other Arabic examples. This is in compliance with the resolutions of the First Arab Conference on Geographical Names that was held in Beirut in 1971.

The adoption of this proposal does not necessarily mean that the glossary has got no more mistakes or that there are no more comments on it. It is just one step towards re-aligning this glossary in the direction of its main intended purpose.