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ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

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Report of the Divisions

The Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names

Submitted by the Arabic Division *

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The Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names

Abstract

Achievements of the Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names

During the last two years 2014/2015

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INTRODUCTION:

The Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names is composed of Arab experts in Geographical Names assigned by their countries to collect, check, standardize and process names of places and natural landmarks in all Arab countries. It includes experts from the following 22 Arab countries members in this Division: Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Comoros Islands and Yemen.

Following are the achievements of Arab countries which already provided reports in the field of Geographical Names to the office of the Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names:

1) Achievements of Jordan:

- The 7th Arab Conference of Arab Experts was convened in Jordan-Amman 2014, in which the most important goal of the conference was to activate the joint Arab work in the field of Geographical Names. Many decisions and recommendations were adopted, and a 4 years Governing Board was elected.
- The 1st Conference on Survey and Geographical Names was convened in Amman 2013. This Conference aimed to activate the Arab joint work, many decisions and recommendations were adopted.
- Participation in the International Forum on the Names of Landmarks in the Arab World and Countries of the Sahel, which was convened in Constantine/Algeria from 1-3/2/2016. Papers were submitted by the Chair of the Arab Division and Jordanian delegation.
- Offices of the Arab Division in the permanent headquarter: Jordan has rented offices for the Arab Division in Amman equipped with all needed devices and materials.
- Arab Division Website: Jordan launched the Arab Division Website (www.adegn.net) in both Arabic and English. It includes a lot of information about the Arab Division.

- Geographical Names Magazine: Jordan had issued periodic magazine for the Arab Division which considered the first of its kind on the Arab level. (Attach.1)
- Maps & Charts: Many maps of various scales were produced for different areas in Jordan for various purposes.
- Atlases, glossaries and indexes.
- Publications and brochures. (Attach.2)
- Participation in conferences and workshops.

2) **Achievements of Qatar:**

In 1996, the GIS Center conducted a project for collecting and documenting geographical names through a geographical survey for the whole area of Qatar for 18months. Various groups registered geographical coordinates of geographical names sites, coordinated work with the information resources by GPS devices and determining the names of these sites on the map.

The GIS Center also provided integrated information about geographical names through various digital and paper products such as: Geographical Names Guide Booklet, Advisor Guide, Electronic Sites Guide Program, Geo Portal Program on Center's Web site, Guide Program works on the iPhone and iPad, "Al Furjan" Book, in addition to digital maps scale 1:200,000 and 1:100,000 include the correct geographical names in Arabic and English.

3) **Achievements of Oman:**

The National Survey Authority in Oman has established the Geographical Names Section. Its mission the Arabization all kinds of Omani maps, revision and field checking of all Omani geographical names, locating and determining sites of all Omani geographical names not available in the National Survey Authority, preserving and standardizing the identity of the Omani geographical name with the necessity of transforming it to foreign languages, providing Omani Geographical Names Data base includes information about the geographical name, kind of phenomena, coordinates, administrative division and transliteration to Latin by using the (Standardized Arab System of

Transliteration), in addition to mention the accredited authority of the name with reference to the related documents. This Data Base includes more than (9000) approved geographical names. Also the NSA participated in various conferences, meetings and scientific workshops about geographical names.

4) Achievements of Egypt:

- Collecting, documenting and standardization names of Egyptian sites in Geographical Data Base for the maps project of population and housing Census.
- Participating in related international conferences.
- Participating in working groups of the UNEGN.
- Participating in technical committees of the Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names.
- Participating in the related international working committees.
- Participating in the semi-annual information bulletins of the Experts team.
- Updating the world data base related with geographical names.
- Awareness of geographical names.

5) Achievements of Saudi Arabia:

Establishing the National Committee of Geographical Names on 2014 in King Abdel Aziz Foundation to include all relevant authorities and aims to serve the names of the sites in Saudi Arabia. This Foundation prepared the Sites Names Encyclopedia in Saudi Arabia, the Gazetteer of countries and tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, South Jordan and Sina'a. Also many consultative studies were accomplished for the Ministry of Transport, preparing the Roads Guide in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gazetteer of Geographical Names in the Dead Sea. The Public Survey Authority, the Public Authority of Tourism and National Heritage, Public Authority of Statistics, the National Center of Documents and Archives accomplished many achievements in the field of geographical names.

6) Achievements of Algeria:

The Ministry of Culture/ the National Center of Researches on Prehistoric Age, Anthropology and History organized the

International Forum about the Names of Landmarks in Arab world/ Standardization Policy/ Cultural Interests which was hosted by the Arabian Cultural Capital of 2015 Constantine City in the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria during the period 1-3 Feb. 2016. Many Arab countries and Sahel countries in Africa participated in this Forum in addition to the president of the UNEG and many scientists and experts in the field of geographical names. Many papers were presented in this field and many recommendations and suggestions were approved.

7) Achievements of United Arab Emirates:

United Arab Emirates is considered one of the pioneering Arab countries in the field of geographical names applications of spatial connotations and every day uses of geographical names in a way that makes the daily life of UAE citizens and visitors easy.

The specialized geographical names authorities in UAE were able to collect and document most of the geographical names and work is going on now to complete and update data bases of all geographical names in the country. Those institutions in charge of geographical and spatial names, through the smart applications and the intensive use of advanced techniques, were able to reduce some of environment and modern problems that face developing societies.

Also the attendance and participation of delegations and experts of our country in the related international meetings about geographical names especially those held by UNEG and the Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names, played a great role in being fully aware and continuous consultation with Experts to develop the infrastructure of geographical names in UAE. Also there is coordination between local institutions and municipalities of UAE such as: Department of Municipal Affairs in Abu Dhabi, and working committees of the Higher Committee of Geographical Names in Abu Dhabi, the Executive Committee for Approving Geographical Names in Abu Dhabi and also municipalities of Dubai, Sharjah, Ra'as Al Khaima, Al Fujaira, Ajman and Um Al Qewain. Those authorities were able to develop

their infrastructure to collect and document geographical names by using the most advanced techniques.

Geographical Names are included in the directions of the UAE government to use Arabic language and UAE heritage in new names either according to address systems or spatial guidance and balance in using these modern names, preserving the national identity and the heritage of this country.

8) Achievements of Tunisia:

- Participating in the 3rd High Level Forum about the Global Geographical Information Management in Beijing- China during the period 22-24 October 2014.
- Representing the UN Experts of Geographical Names in the meeting of the UN-GGIM Africa which was held in Tunisia during the period 10-12 Dec. 2014.
- Organizing a workshop about Geographical Names for the Members of the National Committee on Geographical Names during the period 12-16 Jan. 2015.
- Participating in the 1st Meeting of GGIM- Arab States which was held in Riyadh – Saudi Arabia during the period 24-25 Feb. 2015.
- Participating in the Working Groups Meeting on Publicity/ Funding and Implementation/Evaluation, as well as the Working Groups Meeting on Cultural Heritage held during the period 10-12 Sep. 2015 in Copenhagen/ Denmark.
- Participating in an International Symposium ,held in Tunisia during the period 12-14 Nov. 2015.
- Participating in 48 Edition of the UN Experts on Geographical Names Magazine.

Activities and future ambitions of the Arab Division:

The presidency of the Arab Division seeks to achieve the expected level and match the progressed division through achieving the following:

- Convening the 8th Conference of Experts on Geographical Names.

- The Permanent headquarter of the Division.
- Including the Geographical Names subject in the educational curriculum.
- Activating the Committees of the Arab Division.
- Establishing national authorities and committees concerned with geographical names.
- Preparing the Arab Standardized Gazetteer and the Arab Atlas.
- Establishing a Data base for Arabic Geographical Names.
- Convening an international conference about the Judiazation of geographical names in Palestine.
- Providing the financial support for the Arab Division.

Chair of the Arab Division of Experts on
Geographical Names

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