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### **Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names**

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Item 13(a) of the Provisional Agenda\*

**Writing systems and pronunciation;**

**(a) Romanization**

New Persian Romanization System  
(Proposed for adoption)

Submitted by Islamic Republic of Iran\*\*

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\*\* Prepared by Iranian Committee for standardization of Geographical Names (ICSGN) National Cartographic Center (NCC)

## Transcription procedure for Iranian toponymic items

### Foreword

Seeking for a reliable scientific method for registering toponymic items on maps and other documents led to establishment of a joint committee, attended by academic professionals in geography, history, and linguistics as well as experts of National Cartographic Center (NCC) of Iran.

Following that, the Transcription Working Group of Iranian Committee on Standardization of Geographical Names was authorized to complete the job of scientific transcription of Iranian geographical names. Finally, a *Broad Transcription System*, as a new Persian Romanization System, was prepared in order to be utilized in actual registration of toponyms on maps as well as databases. The working group also prepared the needed practical procedures. In these procedures, all practical needs at the national and international levels have been considered. The following note clarifies some major justifications for the system.

### Characteristics of Persian Writing System

The Persian writing system, like all of its other counterparts worldwide, can not be relied upon as a full-fledged candidate for ideal transcription. Several indispensable idiosyncrasies have been reported to be responsible for this:

- In Persian writing system, several letters are distinguishable which stand in correspondence with more than one speech-sound (e.g. «ي» represents both [i] and [y]; «ه» stands for both [e] and [h]; and «و» is distinguished as either [u], [o] or [v]).

- On the other hand, there are several groups of other letters of Persian alphabet with their members, all, referring to the same speech-sound (e.g. the four letters «ز», «ذ», «ض» and «ظ», all stand in correspondence with [z]; and the three letters «س», «ص» and «ث» with [s]).

- Half of the Persian vowels are not (normally, at least) represented in Persian writings. The speech-sounds [æ], [e] and [o], are usually guessed while reading scripts in Persian, although there are special diacritics for them. This, normally, results in ambiguities for non-native readers (e.g. the word «گرد» can be read as either [gærd] "powder", [gerd] "round" or [gord] "hero").

- Few of the obligatorily used letters in Persian historical spellings are not read (e.g. the letter «و», normally standing in correspondence with either [u], [o] or [v], is not read in words like «خواهر» [xāhar] "sister").

- Most of the Persian characters change their shape in different collocations (e.g. the first letter in «غار» "cave", the second letter «تغییر» "change", the final letter in «جیغ» "scream", and the final letter in «باغ» "garden" are different contextual forms of the same letter.

- Several subsets are distinguishable among Persian letters of alphabet which are minutely different from each other. Normally, the presence or absence of one dot or one small part, above or under a letter, can change it into another one (e.g. «ب» standing for [b], «پ» standing for [p], «ت» standing for [t], and «ث» standing for [s]; or «ك» standing for [k] and «گ» standing for [g]).

To these one must add the two facts that the Persian writing system is not Latin-based and that it is written from right to left: these two characteristics are not in line with the strategy accepted at the international level to use romanized systems for transcriptions and transliterations.

The abovementioned considerations, among others, led to devise and adopt a broad transcription system for the toponymic items.

### **Broad Transcription Symbols**

The following tables present the symbols necessary for the broad transcription, as well as their counterparts from IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), equivalent letters of Persian writing system, and examples.

## Transcription Symbols for Persian

NO	Equivalent Letter(s)/Symbol(s) in Persian Writing System				Symbol	IPA Equivalent	Examples	
	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Ini</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Fin</i>			Persian Spelling	Transcription
1				ء أ ئ ئ	/ʔ/	[ʔ]	ضياء مأمونيه قائمشهر سنول	/Ziyā'/ /Ma'muniye/ /Qā'emšahr/ /Se'ul/
2	ؤ			ؤ	/ʔ/	[ʔ]	مؤمن آباد	/Mo'menābād/
3	آ، ا			ا	/ā/	[ɑ]	آبادان	/Ābādān/
4	ب	ب	ب	ب	/b/	[b]	بابل	/Bābol/
5	پ	پ	پ	پ	/p/	[p]	پاوه	/Pāve/
6	ت	ت	ت	ت	/t/	[t]	تکاب	/Takāb/
7	ث	ث	ث	ث	/s/	[s]	ملاثاني	/Mollāsāni/
8	ج	ج	ج	ج	/j/	[dʒ]	جماران	/Jamārān/
9	چ	چ	چ	چ	/č/	[tʃ]	چالوس	/Čālus/
10	ح	ح	ح	ح	/h/	[h]	حاجي آباد	/Hājiābād/
11	خ	خ	خ	خ	/x/	[χ]	خوي	/Xoy/
12	د			د	/d/	[d]	داراب	/Dārāb/
13	ذ			ذ	/z/	[z]	اشکذر	/Aškezar/
14	ر			ر	/r/	[r]	رشت	/Rašt/
15	ز			ز	/z/	[z]	زابل	/Zābol/
16	ژ			ژ	/ž/	[ʒ]	ژرف	/Žarf/
17	س	س	س	س	/s/	[s]	سراب	/Sarāb/
18	ش	ش	ش	ش	/š/	[ʃ]	شمشك	/Šemšak/

NO	Equivalent Letter(s)/Symbol(s) in Persian Writing System				Symbol	IPA Equivalent	Examples	
	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Ini</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Fin</i>			Persian Spelling	Transcription
19	ص	ص	ص	ص	/s/	[s]	صناباد	/Sanābād/
20	ض	ض	ض	ض	/z/	[z]	ضرغام	/Zarqām/
21	ط	ط	ط	ط	/t/	[t]	طالقان	/Tāleqān/
22	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	/z/	[z]	نظامآباد	/Nezāmābād/
23	ع		ع	ع	/ʔ/	[ʔ]	قلعه	/Qalʔe/
24		ع			not romanized in initial position	[ʔ]	عليآباد	/Aliābād/
25	غ	غ	غ	غ	/q/	[G]	دامغان	/Dāmqaṅ/
26	ف	ف	ف	ف	/f/	[f]	فریمان	/Farimān/
27	ق	ق	ق	ق	/q/	[G]	قم	/Qom/
28	ك	ك	ك	ك	/k/	[k]	كاشان	/Kāšān/
29	گ	گ	گ	گ	/g/	[ɟ] / [g]	گرگان	/Gorgān/
30	ل	ل	ل	ل	/l/	[l]	لار	/Lār/
31	م	م	م	م	/m/	[m]	مشهد	/Mašhad/
32	ن	ن	ن	ن	/n/	[n]	نور	/Nur/
33	و			و	/v/	[v]	وردآورد	/Vardāvord/
34	ه	ه	ه	ه	/h/	[h]	همدان	/Hamedān/
35	ي	ي	ي	ي	/y/	[j]	یزد	/Yazd/

## Vowel Symbols for Persian

NO	Equivalent Character(s)/Symbol(s) in Persian System*	Symbol	IPA Equivalent	Examples	
				Persian Spelling	Transcription
1	بی	/i/	[i]	بیرجند	/Birjand/
2	به	/e/	[e]	بهبهان ساوه	/Behbahān/ /Sāve/
3	با	/a/	[æ]	پزند	/Parand/
4	بو	/u/	[u]	بوکان	/Bukān/
5	بو	/o/	[o]	بستان	/Bostān/
6	با	/ā/	[ɑ]	آباده	/Ābāde/
7	بی	/ey/	[ej]	بیرم	/Beyram/
8	بو	/ow/	[ow]	گوهردشت	/Gowhardašt/

\*(ب stands for any consonant)

### Notes:

- 1- The relational suffix (*ezāfeh*) should be romanized **-e** after a final consonant character [گل سرخ, /Gol-e Sorx/]. After silent *he* (ه) and after vowel characters, it should be romanized **-ye** [محلہ ی بالا, /Mahalle-ye Bālā/].
- 2- A consonant character which would ordinarily be written with a gemination (ّ) in Persian should be romanized by writing the equivalent consonant letter twice, e.g., خرّم درّه, /Xorramdarre/.
- 3- The Persian letter **vāv** (و) when used to link components of numerals greater than 20, is romanized as **-o** (after consonants) or **-yo** (after vowels). For example, بیست و یک is romanized /Bist-o Yek/, سی و یک is romanized /Si-yo Yek/.
- 4- The Persian letter **vāv** when used to link components of a place name, is romanized as **-o** (after consonants). For instance, چهارمجال و بختیاری is romanized / Čāhārmahāl-o Baxtiyāri/. In the case of after vowels, there are many exceptions depended on type of vowel. For example, مانه و سملقان و شهرکی و ناروئی is romanized /Šahraki-yo Nāru'ī/, /Māne va Samalqān/.

## Technical Articulatory Description for Persian Consonant Symbol

No	Consonant Symbol / Standard Persian Consonant	Technical Articulatory Description
1	/p/	voiceless bilabial stop
2	/b/	voiced bilabial stop
3	/t/	voiceless denti-alveolar stop
4	/d/	voiced denti-alveolar stop
5	/k/	voiceless palatal stop
6	/g/	voiced palatal stop
7	/q/	voiced uvular stop
8	/ʔ/	voiceless glottal stop
9	/f/	voiceless labiodental fricative
10	/v/	voiced labiodental fricative
11	/s/	voiceless denti-alveolar fricative
12	/z/	voiced denti-alveolar fricative
13	/š/	voiceless alveopalatal fricative
14	/ž/	voiced alveopalatal fricative
15	/x/	voiceless uvular fricative
16	/h/	voiceless glottal fricative
17	/č/	voiceless alveopalatal affricate
18	/j/	voiced alveopalatal affricate
19	/r/	voiced alveolar thrill
20	/m/	voiced bilabial nasal
21	/n/	voiced denti-alveolar nasal
22	/l/	voiced alveolar lateral approximant
23	/y/	voiced palatal approximant

## Technical Articulatory Description for Persian Vowel Symbol

No.	Vowel Character(s)/Symbol(s)	Technical Articulatory Description
1	/i/	high front unrounded vowel
2	/e/	mid front unrounded vowel
3	/a/	low front unrounded vowel
4	/u/	high back rounded vowel
5	/o/	mid back rounded vowel
6	/ā/	low back unrounded vowel
7	/ey/	mid front closing diphthong
8	/ow/	mid back closing diphthong