

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

From: Deirdre Kiorgaard, ACOC representative

Subject: Revision of RDA 11.2.2: Heads of State and Heads of Government

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ACOC agrees that it is a desirable simplification of the instructions to combine the instructions for heads of state with those of heads of government. We also agree that both should be established using the language of the jurisdiction (not the language preferred by the agency creating the data as is presently used for heads of state). We note that ruling executive bodies may be covered by the general instructions for government corporate bodies but we agree with their explicit inclusion in these instructions as it increases certainty for the cataloguer.

ACOC is concerned about the potential of this proposal to require global changes to systems to avoid split files. However we do not see this as sufficient reason to reject the proposal. We hope that if the proposal is agreed by the JSC some guidance on the access point conversions required is made available to assist in making the necessary system changes.

ACOC notes that one of the disadvantages of the proposal to use language of jurisdiction combined with gender specific terms for specific heads of state is the loss of chronological displays. It would be unfortunate to lose the utility offered by the use of a consistent neutral term. It may also make global changes of access points more difficult. However, we can also see advantages of the term more closely reflecting user's expectations. ACOC would welcome comments from specialist cataloguers and from the international cataloguing community on this aspect of the proposal. In particular to assess the proposal it would be helpful to know how many languages do not have non gender specific terms for heads of state.

If JSC accept the proposal to use gender specific terms for a specific incumbent we offer the following suggestion:

#### **Titles that vary with the gender of the incumbent**

##### **11.2.2.21.1 5<sup>th</sup> para**

To make it clear that gender specific terms are used for a specific incumbent we suggest that wording be added as follows:

“If the official being identified is a specific incumbent of the office, add, in parentheses, the inclusive years of the reign or incumbency and the

name of the person in a brief form and in the language of the preferred name for that person. If a gender specific term is commonly used as the official title in conjunction with the name of a specific incumbent, use that term in preference to the general term.

It may also be useful to have an English language example of this, for example:

Great Britain. Queen (1952- : Elizabeth II)