

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

FROM: Barbara B. Tillett, LC Representative

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

LC thanks ALA for making a proposal to merge RDA 11.2.2.21.1 and RDA 11.2.2.21.2 because a merged instruction with the same choice of language will be easier for catalogers and other users.

However, LC thinks that some aspects of the proposal add difficulty to the process of determining the preferred name of the head of state or head of government: choice of language; inconsistency in use of title or term. LC's recommendations for these two topics below have an impact on the inclusion of ruling executive bodies also noted below.

Choice of language: The ALA proposal does not explain the decision behind using the language of the jurisdiction (the instruction now in 11.2.2.21.2 for heads of government) rather than using the language preferred by the agency creating the data (the instruction now in 11.2.2.21.1).

Because the second paragraph of RDA 0.11.2 says "Other elements are generally recorded in the language and script preferred by the agency creating the data," LC recommends that terms in the language preferred by the agency (English for LC's catalog) be used for both heads of state and heads of government. As the third paragraph of RDA 0.11.2 notes for instructions specifying English-language terms, "Agencies creating data for use in a different language or script context may modify such instructions to reflect their own language or script preferences and replace the English-language terms ..."

Inconsistency in use of title or term: The wording in the first paragraph of the proposal at 11.2.2.21.1 refers to the title of the head of state, etc.; the fourth paragraph says to use a general term for a preferred name representing more than one incumbent in some situations.

LC recommends that the principle for the preferred name be the title of the office, rather than the title of a gender specific incumbent. In English, this allows for a single title of the office in those cases where the title of office varies with the gender of the incumbent (Sovereign, instead of Monarca, Rey, Reina). The same title would apply for any incumbent of the office regardless of gender and for use of situations representing more than one incumbent.

Ruling executive bodies: Including those corporate bodies with heads of state and heads of government in the proposed 11.2.2.21.1 results in strange wording in the first sentence: "Record the title of a head of state ... or ruling executive body ... ." A ruling executive body doesn't have a title of office.

LC recommends giving a separate instruction for ruling executive bodies; the language of the name would be the language of the corporate body consistent with the RDA instructions for other corporate bodies: "Record the name of a ruling executive

body (e.g., a military junta) (see 6.31.1) as a subdivision of the authorized access point representing the jurisdiction.”

The JSC will need to decide if other instructions are renumbered when an instruction is deleted (as in the ALA proposal), if an existing instruction can be replaced with another instruction covering a different topic or if such a new instruction should be added at the end of the latest existing instruction (if a separate instruction is created according to LC’s recommendation for a separate instruction for ruling executive bodies). Concerns were expressed earlier about the impact of deleting/editing instructions that may be linked to other documentation.

If the JSC approves this ALA proposal, the example “Norway. Sovereign” at 11.2.2.19, Type 9 will need revision. The concept of “ruling executive bodies” also needs to be added to an existing type or a new type at 11.2.2.19.