PERMANENT BUREAU OF COORDINATION OF ARABISATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

(P. B. A.)

1 - By the gracious initiative of His Majesty the late King Mohammed V (God bless his soul) the first Arabisation Conference was invited to convene in Rabat in 1961 with the participation of representatives from the Arab League and the Arab States. The purpose of this important convention was to study the proper means of reviving the use of the language of the Holy Koran and adapting it to contribute efficiently to the development of modern civilisation same as the other international languages.

2 - The issue of this conference has been the creation of the P.B.A. with the objective of compiling in its first stage the results of the work carried out in the field of linguistics and scientific and technical terminology by the various academies and universities, famous writers and translators in the Arab world.

This centralisation was followed by the coordination and publication of these terms into lexicons to be submitted to conferences organized periodically by the Arab League and the P.B.A. for reviewing and discussion, to choose and unify the scientific terms to be used in the entire Arab word.

3 - His Majesty the late King Mohammed V proposed Rabat as the seat of the P.B.A. and nominated a Director to head it.

4 - It was only since 1968 that the Bureau has been adopted and attached to the Arab League which provided the necessary funds for its budget distributed as follows:

A) Salaries of employees and experts.

B) Printing of lexicons.

C) Publication of the periodical "Al-Lisan-Al-Arabi" which is the organ or mouthpiece of the P.B.A.

It is proper to note here that the gouvernment of the Kingdom of Morocco has undertaken to assist the P.B.A. with important contributions to consolidate its finance.

5 - After its creation and from the beginning the P.B.A. knew an unceasing activity and during the decade of its existance produced the following.

A) Ten issues of its large periodical some of which contained 2,000 pages and even surpassed that number as for example the eighth issue which consisted of 3 volumes 700 pages each containing entries from highly authorarative scientists, philologians, lexicographers and Arabists.

B) More than a dozen analogical lexicons such as lexicons of Games & Sports, Colours, Ichthyology, Instruments, Tools, Sciences & Arts, Doctrines & Systems, Gastronomy, Trades, Mineralogy, Building & Household, Osteology, and Hematology.

C) A number of lexicons of scientific and technical terms, six of which will be reviewed by the next Conference in Algiers. They are lexicons of Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Zoology, Mathematics, and Geology.

A seventh lexicon which is that of Petroleum has been prepared to be studied apart by a seminar with the concerned inter-Arab organization. This collection of projects have been compiled in three languages: English, French and Arabic with the view of adding to them Russian and German at a later stage.

E) On the other hand the P.B.A. has organized literary competitions in the area of philological scientific studies and publication of manuscripts and original works yet unpublished. The prizes offered to the winners of the first competition were granted by the Moroccan government while those for the next two will be submitted by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

F) Other works of diverse studies have been published, or are underway by the P.B.A. One may mention a few specially:

I) "The Ten Categories" of Aristotle which is an Aarabic commentary by a hegira tenth century author. This unpublished work was verified by Dr. Mamdouh Hakki,

II) A major work which is under print entitled "Laalie-Al-Arab"; a voluminous dictionary of analogical terms edited by a great Syrian philologist the late Khalil Rizk.

III) A series of studies aiming at the return to classical Arabic usage phrases in the different dialects of the Arab peoples har been made by Mr. Abdellaziz Benabdellah to be published soon. It is rather a solid campaign against the current faults and barbarisms which menace the purity of the language of Islam. These studies will be edited and published as a work on their own.

Within the frame of his professional activities the Director of the P.B.A. Mr. Benabdallah has made many trips of studies, particularly to China, the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Germany. He was informed there of the reforms effected on the phonetics and lexicography of the modern Chinese language and has agreed with the principals of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences in Moscow and the University of Halle in Eastern Germany on collaboration to introduce a fourth and fifth languages in the P.B.A. lexicons.

Very recently another tour was made by the Director accompanied by Doctor Hakki visiting the Arab capitals in preparation for the next Conference to be held in Algiers. Accordingly many discussions and meetings were organized with the Ministers of Education and the responsibles in the universities and Arab academies.

Another task of the P.B.A. is to methodically dissect the great ancient lexicographic works such as "Lisan-Al-Arab", "Al Mukhassas", etc., in order to obtain more terms to enrich the vocabulary card-index of the Bureau.

Also the P.B.A. extracts terms by the thousands from historical and literary works and classifies them into the general card-index which includes a number of thousands of words.

6 - The P.B.A. is headed by Mr. Abdellaziz Benabdallah a notable and well-known Moroccan personality in the Arab world. His second is Mr. Mohamed Benzian the Assistant Director in charge of administration. Dr. Mamdouh Hakki who is the Dean of Experts in the Bureau has functions of technical nature.

There are in the Bureau two classes of Experts:

1) Experts with higher university degrees.

2) Experts with standard university degrees.

The third category consists of a large number of experts and correspondents of the P.B.A. Most of them are Arab nationals stationed in their countries of origin, while the others live abroad in Europe and the two Americas. Among those correspondents one could count a number of western Orientalists who contribute according to their specializations and mother tongues.

7 - After the creation of the P.B.A. by the happy initiative of H.M. the late Mohammed V promoter of the first Arabisation Conference, H.M. King Hassan II since his accession to the throne has not ceased to extend his care to this Bureau which has become today an international organization of world renown.

As well all the successive Moroccan governments have always insured their support of the Bureau.

Such encouragements, care and support are due to the kind consideration of H. M. King Hassan II.

At the present time the Arabic language has already acquired a serious role by its admission as a fifth international language in certain organizations such as the U.N.E.S.C.O., F.A.O. and W.H.O. This feat is considered insufficient and the P.B.A. should by its close links with the academies and the different qualified bodies unfailingly continue its efforts aiming at the usage of Arabic in the U.N. assemblies and making it a work instrument by constant updating of Arabic terminology on technical and scientific plans.