Title: Notes on Informal Meeting on Mongolian with Chuck Namujila
Source: Debbie Anderson, Script Encoding Initiative, UC Berkeley
Date: 23 April 2020

Participants: Chuck Namujila, Lisa Moore, Liang Hai, Debbie Anderson, and Michel Suignard.

Below is a summary of a call with Chuck Namujila on his Mongolian documents.

Chuck presented his documents, which proposed a glyphic model for Mongolian. (Note: Some of the same points were raised in discussing Chuck Namujila's proposals at an earlier Script Ad Hoc meeting. The recommendations to the UTC from the meeting are appended at the end of this document.)

The following highlights the discussion:

- Both Michel Suignard and Liang Hai reported that OpenType Layout (OTL) is required for many scripts throughout the world (including on computers and devices in China). Current problems on rendering is due to lack of consideration for smaller communities by certain software, a problem that is not specific to the Mongolian script or to China. However, for Mongolian, the top priority should be on fixing the encoding model, since software implementations and fonts are based on it.

- Clear documentation on the Mongolian model is necessary for implementers. This documentation will be contained in the Unicode Technical Note by Liang Hai.

- Lisa Moore re-iterated that the phonetic model was decided on by all the parties participating in Mongolian Working Group meetings (i.e., L2/17-347 and L2/18-108). (To track the progress made so far and topics still being worked on, see https://unicode.org/L2/topical/mongolian/, especially the Mongolian Working Group meeting reports, which document what was agreed to and next steps.)

- Because of Unicode's encoding stability policy, the characters already published in the Unicode Standard cannot be replaced or removed.

- Liang Hai clarified that the proposed transitional "dual track" strategy at this point would be problematic: the existing encoding model would still need to be fixed, the new model would introduce a whole new set of confusable characters, and all implementers and users would need to deal with two encoding models forever.

- U+180F MONGOLIAN FREE VARIATION SELECTOR FOUR was approved by the Unicode Technical Committee at its January 2020 meeting. It is expected to appear in Unicode 14.0, which will be released in September 2021 (tentative date).

- The encoding process involves getting the consensus of the key stakeholders: Mongolia, Inner Mongolia of China, the Chinese National Body, Unicode experts and implementers in companies around the world, as well as users. The process is lengthy because it involves discussions with many parties, and it is necessary to get agreement amongst the groups. Ideally, all the parties involved will agree and implement the script in software and fonts consistently so Mongolian text will be interchangeable across platforms. However, because of the number of groups

involved and the complex issues, it is extremely difficult to assign a concrete timeline.

- It was acknowledged that some users would like to see rapid progress in order to preserve the Mongolian language and its script. However, the character encoding process is slow and deliberative.

- The best way to help the process move forward most expeditiously is for users and interested parties to review Liang Hai's draft Unicode Technical Note and send comments. The latest draft is located at: https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2019/19368-draft-utn-mongolian.pdf Users are also highly encouraged to read MWG summaries in the Mongolian Working Group topical list.

Future actions:

- Chuck Namujila will review Liang Hai's draft UTN and encourage colleagues to also read the draft UTN.
- Liang Hai will share a preliminary review of the EAC standard by May 15.

From L2/20-105 **Recommendations to UTC #163 April 2020 on Script Proposals**
Date: 20 April 2020
Documents:
MWG/4-N5 The Simplified Mongolian Solution - Unicode – Z Team / Chuck Namujila
MWG/4-N4 Preliminary proposal for encoding the Mongolian Usgiin Solution in the SMP of the UCS File No: File-2 – Chuck Namujila

The following summarizes the discussion [by the Script Ad Hoc]:

- We agree with several points made by Mr. Namujila: the current phonetic model is problematic, MVS/FVS and NNBSP have issues, the present model poses cybersecurity phishing risks, and there are multiple ways to encode words in Mongolian.
- The approach of Mr. Namujila is better termed "glyphic", rather than "graphetic." The "glyphic" approach is closer to the Arabic Presentation model (whereas "graphetic" is closer to the Arabic script model).
- The UTC has made the decision to improve the phonetic model, based on response from the standards bodies in China, Inner Mongolia of China, and Mongolia, the local community of Mongolian users, and various publishers, though Unicode had earlier voiced a preference for a graphetic approach. The goal of Unicode is to provide a stable solution for implementing Mongolian that has been reached by consensus from all the stakeholders.
- Separating Todo, Manchu, and Sibe as different scripts from the Mongolian script, which is suggested by Mr. Namujila, is in our opinion very problematic, because it will cause even more confusability than at present.
- The idea of a dual track – that is, the phonetic model and a new Mongolian block with a different model (such as the graphetic approach) – was raised earlier in Mongolian discussions but was eschewed in favor of an improved phonetic approach.
- More details are needed on the exact characters proposed by Mr. Namujila, how they were designed and the design principles behind them, as well as detailed analysis