TO:          Unicode Technical Committee
FROM:        Patrick Andries
DATE:        3 November 2015
SUBJECT:     Comments on L2/15-297 Proposal for encoding the Mandombe script in the SMP

I briefly looked at the latest Mandombe proposal: "L2/15-297 Preliminary proposal for encoding the Mandombe script in the SMP of the UCS  (Revised) – Rovenchak".

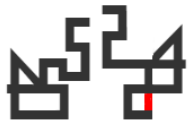1) It does not seem to address the apostrophe sign and how vowel lengths are specified.

For apostrophe (very common):

nkamba n'kamba

For length:

Môto (head in Lingala), the circumflex is the French sign for long vowel, not a rising then falling tone

As opposed to *móto* (fire), this "acute accent" is found in the proposal.

and *mòto* (person, human being) the "canonical" form:

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2) For ease of reference, the proposal should be paginated.

3) Some different naming conventions may lead to confusion:

3) C) speaks of gue that is /gue/, but lists as a character a different GUE (in fact GÜ) /gy/

I realize it is due to the Unicode English naming conventions. It may be useful to clarify that distinction.

4) There is a single acute accent 1x40E MANDOMBE ACCUTE [sic: ACUTE] ACCENT, but could it not need to be oriented in different ways (I suspect the reason to have flipped marks)?

5) Is it customary in other encoded scripts to have users (writers) precise where the second vowel in a syllable should be placed? There is no ambiguity as far as the script is concerned (you cannot have the same second vowel in two different positions on a given letter).

Are flipped versions of the combining marks necessary because of limitation of font technologies? Can't a combining mark be conditionally flipped in an OpenType table before it is attached to a syllable? For instance, using Contextual Substitution subtable?

6) Would it be possible to show the name of the syllable in the character table? This would ease reviewing this large character table. Something like the table extract below? (My font does not support ü at this stage)

| | 1x06x | 1x07x | 1x08x | 1x09x | 1x0Ax | 1x0Bx |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | | | | | | |
| j | 見 | 見 | 見 | 見 | 見 | |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| dj | 見 | 見 | 見 | 見 | 見 | |

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