

TO: ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 WG2

ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 WG2 *N4396*

FROM: Unicode Technical Committee

SUBMISSION TYPE: Liaison contribution

DATE: 11 February 2013

SUBJECT: Rationale for script name change from Mende to Kikakui

In the original proposal document, <http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4167.pdf>, it was noted that the name of the script is called Mende or Kikakui, and was used for the Mende language.

The script practitioners, according to Konrad Tuchscherer, one of the world's authorities on the script, call the script "Kikakui," a name that derives from the first three syllabic characters.

"Kikakui" specifically refers to the script, whereas "Mende" is the term often applied to the Mende language, the Mende people, as well as to the IPA-based alphabet for the Mende language. This other "Mende script" was created in the 1920s and promoted by Diedrich Westermann. It is very well known and used in Sierra Leone.

The current name on the ballot is confusing: "Mende" could refer to the IPA-based (Latin) alphabet, which is widely known, or to the Kikakui syllabary. (Note that the number of Mende language speakers is ca. 1.5 million, but the number of users of the Kikakui users is only a few hundred, according to Dr. Tuchscherer [<http://std.dkuug.dk/jtc1/sc2/wg2/docs/n4167.pdf>].)

The name "Kikakui" would be clearer and less ambiguous (and also is the term used by script practitioners).

Kikakui is the primary name used in the works of Dr. Tuchscherer, and he supports this name change.