ISO 639-3 Registration Authority
Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3

This form is to be used in conjunction with a “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code” form

Date: 2016-9-10

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Associated Change request number : 2017-011 (completed by Registration Authority)
Tentative assignment of new identifier : lws (completed by Registration Authority)

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the public record of this change request and the history of the ISO 639-3 code set. Use Shift-Enter to insert a new line in a form field (where allowed).

1. NAMES and IDENTIFICATION
   a) Preferred name of language for code element denotation:
      Malawian Sign Language
   b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:
      Malawi Sign
   c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:
      Malawian Sign Language
   d) Reason for preferred name:
      Recognibility in Academic and Educational Community of Malawi.
   e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language (complete individual language currently in use):
      Chewa, Tambuka, and Yao. [Potentially more ethnic minorities].
   f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available: MSL

Your suggestion will be taken into account, but the Registration Authority will determine the identifier to be proposed. The identifiers is not intended to be an abbreviation for a name of the language, but to serve as a device to identify a given language uniquely. With thousands of languages, many sets of which have similar names, it is not possible to provide identifiers that resemble a language name in every case.

2. TEMPORAL DESCRIPTION and LOCATION
   a) Is this a
      ☒ Living language
      ☐ Nearly extinct/secondary use only (includes languages in revival)
      ☐ Recently extinct language
      ☐ Historical language
      ☐ Ancient language
      ☐ Artificially constructed language
      ☐ Macrolanguage
(Select one. See explanations of these types at http://www.sil.org/iso639-2D3/types.asp)

For individual languages, also complete:

b) Countries where used:
   Malawi

c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used. Include GPS coordinates of the approximate center of the language, if possible:
   Mzimba (District), Karonga, Zomba, Llongwe, Dedza, Embangweni, Blantyre, Mua, and Mzuzu.

d) For an ancient or historical language, give approximate time frame; for a recently extinct language, give the approximate date of the last known user’s death

3. MODALITY AND LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION

   a) This language is: \( \square \) Signed \( \square \) Spoken \( \square \) Attested only in writings

   b) Language family, if classified; origin, if artificially constructed:
      Artificially constructed from preliminary exposure to American Sign Language, British Sign Language, and contact with local African countries.

   c) Closest language linguistically. For a Macrolanguage, list the individual languages (adopted and/or proposed) to be included in its group. For signed language, note influence from other signed or spoken languages:
      Noted influence from American Sign Language, especially visible in alphabet system.

4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

   a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?:
      Sparse resources, non-comprehensive.

   b) Is this language officially recognized by any level of government? Is it used in any levels of formal education as a language of instruction (for other subjects)? Is it taught in schools?:
      Currently, the government authorities acknowledge there is an indigenous sign language but lack documentation of it. Therefore, no official recognition has been given to the Malawian Sign Language. Within Deaf institutes, this language is being taught and used by Deaf native signers. Within higher education, Malawian Sign Language is taught but mixed with American Sign Language and British Sign Language; ASL and BSL is more readily learned due to better documented resources and textbooks being available.

   c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:
      Most development of Malawian Sign Language occurs within Deaf institutes. Deaf children
use this form of communication in all aspects of their lives; Deaf teachers communicate to each other likewise, at school or at home.
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

You do not need to repeat sources previously identified in the form, “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code”

a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:
   Our team has traveled to Embangweni, Malawi, twice to interact and document their language. Communication with Deaf and hearing teachers continues throughout our visits.

b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
   Deaf and hearing Malawians who are fluent in Malawian Sign Language are repeatedly consulted with the translation process of English to Chewa for sign language elicitation and documentation.

c) Knowledge from published sources. Include known dictionaries, grammars, etc. (please give complete bibliographical references):
   Minimal resources are available. This team is working to create a dictionary and eventual corpora that includes syntactic structures as well as vocabulary.

Please return this form to:

ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236 USA
Email: iso639-3@sil.org
An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Further information:
If your request for a new language code element is supported by the Registration Authority as a formal proposal, you may be contacted separately by researchers working with the Ethnologue or with LinguistList asking you to provide additional information.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers: