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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
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Item 10 of the agenda

Dual distribution

STATEMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU (IHB)*

* Limited number of copies issued only to participants

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Instructions on above form

This form should be used to provide supporting information on domestic geographical name problems. A full statement covering the field investigation of each name is necessary so that adequate evidence may be submitted in proper form to the Board on Geographic Names for decision. Names should be reported if they fall in one of the following categories:

Names that have more than one local spelling;

Names where local spelling differs from that shown on previously published maps or reports;

Conflicting name usage due to change in property ownership;

Conflicting published names or application; New or proposed name for features previously unnamed (use BGN form 9-1344).

Established names in local use, even if previously unpublished, are not considered new names. If spelling, application and extent of use are undisputed, a name may be accepted for publication without submitting it to the Board on Geographic Names for approval.

This form is furnished in triplicate. Geological Survey offices should submit first two copies through appropriate channels to Geographic Names Section, Topographic Division. Other government agencies submit in accordance with established agency procedures.

Private individuals or non-Federal agencies, submit original only to Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names, United States Geological Survey, Room 1040 GS Building, Washington, D.C. 20242.

Annex III

EXCERPTS FROM EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The purpose, jurisdiction, and duties of the Board on Geographic Names and its predecessor agencies have been defined by Executive

Orders and legislation. Executive Order No. 27-A of September 4, 1890, signed by Benjamin Harrison, stated:

" . . . it is desirable that uniform usage in regard to geographic nomenclature and orthography obtain throughout the Executive Departments of the Government, and particularly upon maps and charts issued by the various departments and bureaus, . . . "

and that the jurisdiction of the Board includes:

" . . . all unsettled questions concerning geographic names which arise in the departments, . . . "

and the duties of the departments relative to the Board are that:

"Department officers are instructed to afford such assistance as may be proper to carry on the work of this board."

Executive Order No. 399 of January 23, 1906, specified that the responsibility of the Board included:

" . . . all cases of disputed nomenclature, . . . "

and

" . . . the duty of determining, changing, and fixing place names within the United States and insular possessions, . . . "

and the approval before publication of

" . . . all names hereafter suggested for any place by any officer or employee of the Government . . . "

It is also stated that:

" . . . the decisions of the board are to be accepted by the departments of Government as the standard authority."

Executive Order No. 6247 of August 10, 1933, stated:

"The spelling of geographic names [in Executive Orders and proclamations] shall conform to the most recent decisions of the United States Geographic Board . . . "

Executive Order No. 6680 of April 17, 1934, abolished the independent U.S. Geographic Board and transferred its functions to the Department of the Interior.

Public Law 242, passed by the 80th Congress on July 25, 1947, established the present Board on Geographic Names.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPERTORY OF TECHNICAL RESOLUTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC BUREAU (IHB)

Paper presented by the International Hydrographic Bureau*

The subject of standardizing geographical names on an international basis is of great interest to the International Hydrographic Bureau, which has been dealing with some of the problems involved for some years in accordance with its basic mission of encouraging and promoting the standardization of nautical charts and related publications.

With the thought that the work accomplished to date by IHB in this respect could be of some assistance to the delegates as background information (particularly for nations which are not yet member States of IHB), the approved resolutions bearing on the subject, extracted from the *Repertory of Technical Resolutions*, 1919-1965, of IHB, are reproduced below.

A14. Uniform policy for handling geographic names

1. With the purpose of obtaining approximate uniformity in the geographic names appearing on the nautical documents of maritime countries, it is recommended that each national hydrographic office:

(a) On its charts and other nautical documents of its own coasts, show names that are in exact agreement with the forms prescribed by the most authoritative source.

Each country will thus provide complete and authoritative name coverage in its own official script, whether Roman or non-Roman, for the use of all other national hydrographic offices that issue charts on various scales, and other nautical documents, for the same area.

(b) On its charts and other nautical documents of foreign coasts where the Roman alphabet is officially used by the sovereign country, show names that are in exact agreement with the most authoritative usage of the country having some sovereignty.

It is anticipated that these names may eventually be obtained directly from new and revised editions of the nautical charts and other documents of the country having sovereignty.

(c) On its charts and other nautical documents of foreign coasts where the script of the sovereign country is other than the Roman alphabet, show names that are obtained by applying its own authorized transcription system to the names appearing on the most authoritative sources of the country having sovereignty.

Note. Among countries where the Roman alphabet is official, international uniformity in transcription systems would be advantageous to the several national Governments. It is accordingly recommended that national hydrographic offices place before their Governments the desirability of obtaining uniformity and urge

* The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.54.

the formulation and adoption of an effective agreement (see also A16).

(d) On its charts and other nautical documents of all foreign coasts, use for the generic part of complex geographic names the word (in its Roman alphabet form) used by the country having sovereignty. Example: "Falsterborev."

By following this practice, the geographic generic term will not be translated but will appear (in its Roman-alphabet form) on the charts of all nations.

(e) On all its charts and other nautical documents, apply its conventional national usage to names of countries, major territorial divisions and boundary features, and to the oceans and international subdivisions thereof.

II. It is resolved that when the names referred to in para. I(b) are not adopted, they shall at any rate be inscribed between brackets after the place name used.

A15. *Type to be used for geographic names*

It is resolved that geographic names shall, as far as possible, be distinguished in Sailing Directions by the type and size of the print. The country which issues the original directions will thus itself indicate what should and what should not be translated.

A16. *Transliteration in Roman characters of geographic names*

With a view to facilitating as far as possible the transcription of geographic names, it is recommended that those countries which do not use Roman characters insert, in the alphabetical indexes of their Sailing Directions, a transliteration in Roman characters of those geographic names which refer to their own coasts.

The transliteration should be made in accordance with the official system of the country concerned.

A17. *Alphabetical indexes of geographic names*

I. It is recommended that those countries which do not include alphabetical indexes of geographic names in their Sailing Directions publish an alphabetical list of geographic names which concern their own coasts.

These names should be written according to the official orthography and should be accompanied by the corresponding geographic positions and the numbers of the charts on which they appear.

II. It is recommended that those countries which use a non-Roman alphabet add in brackets a transliteration of the name in Roman characters.

The transliteration should be made in accordance with the official system of the country concerned.