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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
Athens, Greece
17 August - 7 September 1977

DRAFT REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

CHAPTER III

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Vote of thanks

FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

The Conference,

Noting the importance and necessity of continuing the work on the standardization of geographical names on both the national and international levels by the States Members of the United Nations,

Further noting the important contributions of this Conference, as well as those contributions of the First and Second United Nations Conferences,

Appreciating the offer by the Government of Iran to act as host country for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,

Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that the fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in Iran not later than the first half of 1982.

FORMAT OF INTERNATIONAL GAZETTEERS OF COUNTRIES

The Conference,

Recognizing that several countries have prepared or will prepare national gazetteers of their standardized geographical names,

1. Recommends that the title page and all necessary information in this type of gazetteer should be in the official language(s) of the country concerned and in one or more of the official languages of the United Nations. The title page should contain the following details (blank spaces to be filled in with the appropriate country name):

United Nations Series of National Gazetteers

Published by the (authority on geographical names) ----- formal title ----- of

Adopted for official use by the (authority on geographical names) of

Prepared as far as possible in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations concerning national gazetteers.

2. Further recommends that in the introduction to this type of gazetteer reference should be made to Recommendation E of Resolution 4 of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

AUTOMATED DATA PROCESSING

The Conference,

Considering the importance of Resolution 3 of the First Conference 1/ and Resolution 30 of the Second Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 2/

Noting the plans for publishing gazetteers under the auspices of the United Nations, including a concise gazetteer of the world based on national standard names,

Recognizing the expanding use of automated data processing for the management of geographical names information and the production of gazetteers,

Recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names consider the problem of compatibility of systems on geographic-name information (data elements) compiled by different nations for gazetteers and automated data processing systems;

Further recommends that the Group of Experts recognize the importance of the compatibility of output media generated by automated data processing (such as magnetic tapes) so that geographic-name information may be made available to international users in other than the printed form.

RELIABILITY STATEMENT ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN DOCUMENTS

The Conference,

Recognizing the desirability of providing information on the basis of which users may judge the accuracy of names contained in a particular names source document,

Recommends that in such documents information be provided on whether the names concerned have been approved by the national names authority or are in a provisional form. In either event the maximum possible information should be provided as to the source of the names, e.g. whether field-collected, gathered from documentary sources or specially bestowed,

Further recommends that an assessment also be given of the degree of accuracy which the names possess together with an indication of their completeness and currency and, if appropriate, a citation of previous documents that are now superseded as to names.

1/ United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol. I. Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.I.9) p.9.

2/ Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol. I. Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2) p. 15.

DIVISIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS

The Conference,

Having considered resolution 7 of the First Conference ^{3/} and resolution 19 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, ^{4/}

Considering also the growing productiveness of divisional and interdivisional meetings and co-operative undertakings as reported to this Conference,

Recommends that the divisions continue and expand such activities and forward to the United Nations Cartography Section reports of meetings as they are held, of agreements as they are reached, and of co-operative programmes as they are initiated.

LIST OF COUNTRY NAMES

The Conference,

Considering that a working group of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names has brought nearly to completion a multi-language list of names of countries, ^{5/}

Noting that the Terminology Service of the United Nations is also concerned with this and related matters,

Recommends that the Group of Experts on Geographical Names bring to completion the list of country names on which it has been working, and

Recommends further that the Group of Experts on Geographical Names concurrently explore ways of co-ordinating its work with that of other offices of the United Nations including the Terminology Service.

^{3/} United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol.I. Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.I.9) p.7.

^{4/} United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol.I. Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2) p.13.

^{5/} Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names at its Sixth Meeting, Annex VII.

AIDS TO PRONUNCIATION

The Conference,

Noting that the transfer of names from one writing system into another would be facilitated by information on pronunciation;

Recognizing the practical difficulty of indicating precise pronunciations but the feasibility of providing indications of approximate pronunciations adequate for comprehension in the receiver script;

Recommends that the Group of Experts considers the nature and design of research and experiment that may help to establish the ranges of comprehensible pronunciation.

PROPOSAL FOR A RESOLUTION ON THE ROMANIZATION OF CHINESE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

The Conference,

Recognizing that "The Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" is China's official Roman alphabet scheme and that "The Rules for the Transliteration of Chinese Place Names with the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" have been drawn up in China.

Noting that "The Scheme for a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" is linguistically sound and is most suitable for the romanization of Chinese geographical names, that an "Atlas of the People's Republic of China in Chinese Phonetic Spelling", a "Gazetteer of Chinese Geographical Names in Chinese Phonetic Spelling (with the usual spellings in English)" and other materials have been published in China and that the Scheme is already in extensive use,

Considering the full possibility of adopting the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (Pinyin) for the romanization of Chinese geographical names internationally through a suitable transitional period,

Recommends that the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (Pinyin) be adopted as the international system for the romanization of Chinese geographical names.

ROMANIZATION OF ARABIC CHARACTERS

The Conference,

Considering the importance attached to establishing a single system for the transliteration of Arabic into Roman,

Considering the effort achieved with respect to transliteration and the results obtained by the Beirut Conference (1971) and the modifications attached to the Beirut Systems at the London Conference,

Noting the technical and practical difficulties met with in the application of the amended Beirut System,

Recommends that the Arabic Division meet and discuss the Moroccan proposal to arrive at a solution to be presented to the eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts.

BULGARIAN CYRILLIC ALPHABET

The Conference,

Considering that resolution 5 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 6/ is no longer appropriate,

Recommends that it be replaced as follows:

The Conference,

Noting that in 1972 Bulgaria adopted the System of Transliteration and Transcription of Bulgarian Geographical Names into Roman Letters, produced by the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names, Sofia, which has been in use since that time,

Considering that a great number of Bulgarian geographical names have been transliterated in accordance with this system,

Recognizing also that for the Bulgarian Cyrillic alphabet only one single standardized system meets the requirements of the international standardization of geographical names,

Recommends that the System of Transliteration and Transcription of Bulgarian Geographical Names into Roman letters, as shown in the Annex below, be adopted as the international system for the Romanization of Bulgarian Geographical Names.

SERBO-CROATIAN AND MACEDONIAN CYRILLIC ALPHABETS OF YUGOSLAVIA

The Conference,

Recognizing the need for elaboration of Resolution 6 of the Conference, 6/

Recognizing further that in Yugoslavia the romanization of the Serbo-croatian and Macedonian cyrillic alphabets has long been employed in official gazetteers and maps,

Recommends that the systems which are given in the annex to this Resolution be adopted as the international systems for the romanization of Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian for geographical names in Yugoslavia.

6/ United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol. I. Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2) p. 11

(Note: For technical reasons the tables mentioned above is given at the end).

TRANSLITERATION INTO ROMAN AND DEVANAGARI SCRIPTS
OF THE LANGUAGES OF THE INDIAN DIVISION

The Conference,

Referring to resolution 11 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 7/

Noting the corrections and amendments given in document E/CONF.69/L.116,

Further noting that the note regarding Tamil has now become applicable,

Recommends the adoption of the tables of Transliteration into Roman and Devanagari of the Languages of the Indian Division reproduced in volume II, Technical papers of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names as amended by E/CONF.69/L.116.

THE ROMANIZATION OF THE HEBREW ALPHABET

The Conference,

Recognizing the need for elaboration of resolution 9 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 7/

Recognizing further that in Israel romanization is carried out in all official gazetteers and maps in accordance with the system mentioned in the report of the 1972 Conference,

Recommends that the system given in the annex to this resolution be adopted as the international system for the romanization of geographical names in the Hebrew alphabet.

7/ United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names:
Vol. I. Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2) p. 1:
(Note: For technical reasons the table mentioned above is given at the end).

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMINOLOGY

Noting that the Glossary of Technical Terminology^{8/} has almost been completed in their English and French versions,

Further noting that the Spanish version requires additional work to bring it into conformity with standard Spanish usage, ~~definition contained therein~~ ^{is inaccurate,}

Further noting the need to finalize the glossary in all three languages,

Recommends that the Spanish-speaking nations review the present Spanish text and put forward a revised version to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names,

Further recommends that the term "national language" be considered by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names for restoration^{9/} to the glossary, and that the following be added to the definition of "exonym": "conversion from one writing system to another does not, as a rule, result in 'exonyms'."

Further recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names should consider additions and amendments required in the present text.

TRAINING COURSES

The Conference,

Noting that some countries offer or plan to offer training courses in toponymy,

Further noting that other countries have a desire to obtain expertise in the field collection, office treatment and standardization of geographical names,

Recommends that preference be given to candidates from countries or divisions indicating plans to offer courses of their own,

Further recommends that those countries having technical assistance programmes should offer expertise to those countries asking for them and ^{those} planning to offer courses in toponymy consider financial assistance to candidates selected to participate in these courses.

^{8/} E/CONF.69/L.1 "A glossary of technical terminology for employment in the standardization of geographical names".

^{9/} As given in E/CONF.61/L.4/Add.1, "Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, London, 10-31 May 1972, Vol. II, Technical Papers" page 50.

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

The Conference,

Considering that at the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Geneva, 1967), Resolution No. 4 10/ was adopted regarding national standardization,

Further considering that many countries have their national geographical names authority with status, composition, functions and procedures clearly outlined regarding officially standardized geographical names,

Recognizing that those national geographical names authorities have set up their rules pertaining to official standardization procedures,

Also recognizing that according to the Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (London, 1972) Vol. II, p. 52, item 72, a standardized name is "a name which has the official sanction of a legally constituted entity",

Recommends that to the recommendation A of the Geneva resolution No. 4 should be added the following:

It is recommended that any changes made by other authorities in the names standardized by the competent national geographical names authority should not be recognized by the United Nations."

NAMES OF COUNTRIES

The Conference,

Recognizing the desirability of avoiding new exonyms,

Recommends that every country uses in its language(s), for newly-independent countries and for countries which adopt new names, those names which correspond, as far as possible, to the official local names of the countries concerned.

10/ United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol. I, Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.I.9) p.10.

STUDY OF EXONYMS

The Conference,

Noting that, in accordance with Resolution 28 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 11/ progress has been made in the matter of exonyms in so far as a number of countries have identified and prepared, or are preparing, lists of their own exonyms,

Recognizing, nevertheless, that progress has not been uniform in all countries,

Further recognizing that both different types of languages and different linguistic categories of exonyms require different approaches to their reduction,

Recommends (1) that the countries concerned should continue to work on the preparation of provisional lists of exonyms, singling out those suitable for early deletion; (2) that the Group of Experts should contribute to the exchange of information among the countries concerned on the results of the studies of different categories of exonyms made by those countries.

LISTS OF EXONYMS

The Conference,

Considering that resolution 28 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 11/ asks for each country to prepare a list of exonyms currently employed,

Noting the definition of the word "exonym" given in the document E/CONF.69/L.1 worked out by that Conference,

Further noting that the implementation of resolution 28 in its present form must result in enormous lists of doubtful value,

Recommends that the lists referred to in resolution 28 should not contain the following categories of exonyms: those differing from the official name only by the omission, addition or alteration of diacritics or the article; those differing from the official name by declension or derivation; those created by the translation of a generic term.

11/ Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Volume I - Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2, p. 15).

NAMES OF FEATURES BEYOND A SINGLE SOVEREIGNTY

The Conference,

Recommends that resolution 25 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 12/ be reworded as follows:

The Conference,

Considering the necessity of an international standardization of names of geographical features which are under the sovereignty of more than one country or are divided among two or more countries,

1. Recommends that countries sharing a given geographical feature under different names should endeavour, as far as feasible, to reach agreement on fixing a single name for the feature concerned;
2. Further recommends that when countries sharing a given geographical feature do not succeed in agreeing on a common name, it should be a general rule of international cartography that the name used by each of the countries concerned should be accepted. A policy of accepting only one or some of such names while excluding the rest on principle would be inconsistent as well as inexpedient in practice. Only technical reasons may sometimes make it necessary, especially in the case of small-scale maps, to dispense with the use of certain names belonging to one language or another.

MARITIME FEATURE NAMES

The Conference,

Having considered resolution 22 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 12/

Noting that the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) has constituted a technical committee to recommend improvements in procedures for naming oceans and seas and their integral subdivisions - referred to as maritime features - beyond the limits of national jurisdiction,

Recognizing the progress made by the International Hydrographic Organization in standardizing names of maritime features,

Appreciating the IHO's offer to assist United Nations programmes related to maritime features,

Recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names co-ordinate its programmes with those of the IHO.

12/ Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Volume I - Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2, p.14).

UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES

I

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 26 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 13/

Considering the increased activity in ocean research, and the need to develop names to identify a rapidly growing number of newly discovered undersea features,

Recognizing that such names are required for certain hydrographic publications and for bathymetric charts or related material used for research documentation,

Noting that a set of procedures developed by the United Nations would, if implemented by all member nations, lead to a desirable degree of uniformity in naming new features, while also establishing a mechanism for resolving conflicts over, or duplication of, names,

Realizing the interest of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in standardizing not only procedures for naming but also the names themselves,

Recommends that the principles and policies, as well as the name proposal form put before the Conference, be submitted to the IHO for the purpose of developing an agreed statement to meet requirements for an internationally acceptable set of guidelines designed to ensure maximum standardization of undersea feature names.

II

The Conference,

Noting that national and international organizations may employ different terms and definitions for undersea features,

Realizing that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names has elaborated a list of terms and definitions that differ from those approved and submitted to the Conference by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO),

Recommends that the Group of Experts, in collaboration with the IHO, develop a joint list of terms and definitions for undersea features for international use.

13/ Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Volume I, Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2, p. 14).

EXTRATERRESTRIAL FEATURE NAMES

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 21 of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 14/

Noting that recent planetary research programmes have resulted in a growing requirement for names for newly discovered features on the surface of the planets,

Anticipating that names for many features as yet unidentified will be required for the future,

Recognizing that nations active in planetary research must meet requirements for names for maps and charts,

Recognizing that in view of the great importance of space exploration for the whole of mankind, world-wide participation in the procedure for naming extraterrestrial features would ensure that succeeding generations inherit a nomenclature less confused than that bequeathed by the past,

Realizing that those nations actively engaged in planetary exploration have developed certain procedures for producing names for maps, charts and other publications,

Being aware of the role played by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in the establishment of names lists and the application of names to features for international purposes,

Recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names collaborate with the IAU and other interested international bodies in programmes for the allocation of names to extraterrestrial features in order that all requirements for names information may be served,

Further recommends that, as required, nations employ their own languages and writing systems in the treatment of generic terminology,

Further recommends that proposal forms be devised by the Group of Experts for the use of all countries which may wish to suggest names for extraterrestrial features.

14/ Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Volume I - Report of the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2, p.13).

ANNEX

1. А а	а	11. К к	к	21. Ф ф	ф
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7. Ж ж	ž	17. Р р	г	27. Ъ ъ	ǎ
8. З з	з	18. С с	с	28. Ь ь	ј
9. И и	и	19. Т т	т	29. Ю ю	ју
10. Й й	ј	20. У у	у	30. Я я	ја

(Bulgarian cyrillic alphabet)