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SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992  
Item 12 (h) of the Provisional Agenda\*

TOPONYMIC EDUCATION AND PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION: COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES

Report of the Pan American Institute of  
Geography and History (PAIGH)  
to the 6th United Nations Conference  
on Geographical Names

Submitted by United States of America\*\*/

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\* E/CONF.85/1 Rev. 1

\*\*/ Prepared by Dr. Richard R. Randall, Executive Secretary, US  
Board on Geographic Names

# REPORT OF THE PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY (PAIGH) TO THE 6TH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

## 1. Introduction

Resolution 10 of the 5th UN Conference on Geographical Names in 1987 recognized that the PAIGH Working Group on Gazetteers and Geographic Names (WGGN) was capable of effective programs and encouraged the body to pursue its objectives in Latin America. Since the 5th conference, the WGGN has given 4 courses in names standardization which have contributed significantly to the field of geographic names in that area. The fifth course has been planned to take place in Brazil in the fall of 1992. All participating organizations realize that geographic names provide important national and international benefits and they endorse the WGGN theme: "Toponimia--La Clave para Comunicacion Mundial" (Toponymy--The key to global communications)

## 2. Courses.

During the past five years, courses were presented in Panama (1987), Ecuador (1989), Chile (1990), and Mexico (1991). The undersigned prepared the syllabus and presented many of the lectures. Mr. Henri Dorion of Quebec (Canada) Commission on Toponymy gave effective instructions on field exercises for the first three courses, and Mr. Roger Payne of the US Geological Survey (USGS) provided instruction on the use of automated equipment in name processing at the last three. Local experts lectured on such themes as native languages and the geographic nature of areas visited during field trips. Attending were one or more students from all PAIGH countries in Latin America except Uruguay. The total student count is approximately 80. Typical of the courses is the syllabus used in Mexico, which is attached to this paper. The courses concentrate on the practical nature of names standardization and do not deal with onomastic or theoretical issues. Special sessions concentrated on issues of local importance, and students participated in exercises both as staff experts on names issues and as committee members reviewing staff recommendations for decisions on names. Field trips illustrated how local placenames can differ and gave students insight as to resolving problems. Of particular value were practices with ADP equipment to collect, process, correct, and print results of names collected in the field. Each host agency provided graduation ceremonies and students received certificates of training.

## 3. International support.

The courses received support from various agencies. The PAIGH Cartography Commission, under which the WGGN is located, provided funds for travel and daily living expenses for students attending from other than the host country. The US and Canada supported

lecturers as indicated. DMA liaison officers in Latin America countries worked to arrange communications with host agencies and participating students from other countries. Local PAIGH officials worked with national authorities who provided lecture rooms, interpretation, teaching materials, local transportation, field trips, and other items. In all cases, host organizations were cartographic agencies which cooperated fully, even to the extent of giving formal opening and closing ceremonies.

#### **4. Benefits**

Through PAIGH, the WGGGN can effectively reach 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, which represent 8% of the world's population and 13% of the world's land area. In addition to benefits the individual students received, the host countries have acquired new skills and knowledge they are applying to their national names programs.

Chile (1990) "The course presented in an excellent and easily apprehended manner the significant potential for comparing and determining the evolutions of toponyms which serve in so integral a fashion to incorporate the national toponymic reality. Upon completion of this course, 4 students from Chile now seek to specialize in research, compilation, and analysis of historical, toponymic, and bibliographic documents which offer the best chance of ensuring a good outcome with respect to the course's objectives."

Martin Munoz Baeza, Coronel  
Instituto Geográfico Militar y  
Presidente Sección Nacional de Chile, IPGH

Ecuador (1989) "The concepts, experiences, and advanced methods, imparted by the course were applied in part to the activities of the Instituto Geografía Militar, especially in the understanding of the procedures required to conform with a system of geographical information at the national level, developing a processes to create data automation, the production of a toponymic bibliography and a dictionary of aboriginal names. In short, the course complied with the proposed objectives to integrate concepts of standardizing the geographic nomenclature."

Dra. Blanca Carrera, Geógrafo-Investigador  
División Geográfica, Instituto Geográfico Militar

Mexico (1991) "The course in 1991 permitted the amplification of the knowledge in dealing with the problems of geographic names at the level of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatica, at the level of the regional offices of the institute, and in the activities concerning materials being developed by the institute's Directorate General of Geography. These factors will give a significant opportunity in the work to

investigate and process geographic names for the purpose of standardizing them."

Lic. Nestor Duch Gary, El Director General  
Dirrección General de Geografía, Instituto Nacional de  
Estadística, Geografía, e Informática

Panama (1987) "The course was interesting as well as challenging since it involved learning new methodologies for selecting geographic names as well as demonstrating the necessity of creating an Office of Geographic Names at the governmental level. Furthermore, it provided the students with necessary knowledge to apply methods of compiling and disseminating geographic names. The course also illustrated the importance of geographic names to many aspects of national life.

Prof. Nydia M. Cardoza  
Presidenta, Sección Nacional de Panamá  
Instituto Pan-Americano de Geografía e Historia

Although not a host to the WGGGN, Venezuela has long been active in its work. For example, one student attended courses in 1989 and 1991. Due in large part to the benefits of the WGGGN, Venezuela created a national names authority in April of 1992. The director of the national cartographic and geographic agency wrote:

"It is important to mention that the work developed by the WGGGN has been of much support to our organization because of the instructions provided during the second and fourth courses. These and earlier experiences served as the basis for the formation of the new Venezuelan Commission of Geographic Names.

Lic. Alicia Moreau D., Directora General Sectorial  
Servicio Autónomo de Geografía y Cartografía Nacional

## 5. Future Programs

PAIGH is well satisfied with the accomplishments of the WGGGN. Further, it is clear that field of geographic names represents a logical synthesis of the PAIGH concerns: geography, history, cartography, and geodesy. The value of the WGGGN is illustrated by the fact that Brazil has offered to host the Fifth Course in the fall of 1992. PAIGH is fully implementing goals defined by United Nations Resolution 10 and the program represents an outstanding example of how a regional organization can serve the interests of its member nations. Oct. 25  
Nov. 6

TOPONIMIA--LA CLAVE PARA COMUNICACION MUNDIAL!.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 2-4 Nov.  
14. Automatic Recombining of Names  
Mr. Peter L. Payne, US Geological Survey  
15. Discussion of Gazetteer Specifications  
Randall

PROGRAM OF THE 4TH PAIGH COURSE ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES  
HOSTED BY THE MEXICAN "INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADISTICA, GEOGRAFIA,  
E INFORMATICA" (INEGI), AGUASCALIENTES, MEXICO  
25 NOVEMBER TO 6 DECEMBER 1991

**Monday, 25 Nov.**

1. Formal opening  
Dr. Mario Rodarte Esquivel, Executive Coordinator, INEGI  
Dr. Chester Zelaya Goodman, PAIGH Secretary General
2. Introduction to 4th PAIGH Course on Geographic Names  
Dr. Richard R. Randall, President of PAIGH Working Group  
on Gazetteers and Geographic Names
3. Nature of Geographic Names and their Linguistic and Cultural Origins  
Mr. Christobal Morales Bejar, INEGI
4. Importance of Geographic Names in Communications  
Mr. Fernando Tamayo Razo, INEGI

**Tuesday, 26 Nov.**

5. Creation and Function of an National Agency to Standardize Geographic Names  
Randall
6. Vocabulary of Geographic Names and Related Terminology  
Randall
7. Creation and Function of a Staff to Support a National Agency  
Randall

**Wednesday, 27 Nov.**

8. Introduction to Field Collection of Names  
Randall
9. Geographic Description of Area of Field Collection  
Personnel of INEGI

**Thursday, 28 Nov.**

10. Collection of Names in the Field  
Randall  
Mr. David Castro, INEGI

**Friday, 29 Nov.**

11. Class Exercises to Transfer Field Names to Office Records  
Randall

**Saturday, 30 Nov.**

12. Preparation of Maps with Collected Names  
Randall  
Castro

**Monday, AM, 2 Dec.**

13. Resolution of Conflicts with Names on Published Maps  
Randall

**Monday PM, Tuesday, and Wednesday 2-4 Nov.**

14. Automatic Processing of Names

Mr. Roger L. Payne, US Geological Survey **Thursday, 5 Dec.**

15. Discussion of Gazetteer Specifications

Randall

16. Description of Other National Names Authorities

Randall

**Friday, 6 Dec.**

17. Exercise as Staff and Committee on Names Collected in Field

Randall

18. Formal Closing and Graduation Ceremony

Dr. Mario Rodarte Esquivel, INEGI

Mr. Nestor Duch Gary, INEGI

Dr. Richard R. Randall