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London, 10-31 May 1972
Item 12 of the provisional agenda

CONVENTIONAL NAMES - DEFINITION AND USAGE OF EXONYMS

Paper submitted by the Government of Hungary

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DEFINITION AND USAGE OF EXONYMS

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Though exonyms /conventional names/, geographical names used by a language for the identification of features outside of the area where this language official is, are generally contrary to the international standardization by multiplying a given geographical name, we must accept their existence as a necessary part of almost any language.

We feel it useful, therefore, that this Conference should deal with the question of definition and usage of exonyms. At the same time means should be discussed which can diminish the "harmful effect" of exonyms on the international standardization.

As for the definition, we find it necessary to include the decisive factor of the boundary of the official language, in most cases coinciding with international boundaries.

As for the usage of exonyms: while this is an internal matter for every language /country/, it should be stated that exonyms must never be used in order to express territorial demands or in a way that such a conclusion could be drawn. At the same time exonyms of settlements and of all other features should be distinguished, as the exonyms of the latter group are more stable and they cause fewer complications.

As for the means of diminishing the "harmful effect" /which is embodied in the co-existence of several variations of an original geographical name/, lists should be prepared and published containing that amount of exonyms which reflect the actual use, and not the results of historic research. It is also advisable to include in these lists a classification of exonyms /suggested, acceptable/ as compared to various fields of application. Obsolete exonyms /clearly marked as not suggested/ may be included in an annex to such lists. All exonyms must refer to the original language geographical name.