

New York, 26 February - 9 March 1979
Agenda item No. 10(f)

PROPOSAL FOR A WORKING PROGRAMME AND
LAYOUT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCISE
GAZETTEER OF THE WORLD

(Submitted by the Dutch and German Speaking Division)

Already two U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1972 and 1977, have discussed the compilation of a U.N. Concise Gazetteer of Geographical Names, but without any precise statement of size and format. Therefore work has not yet started. The compilation, however, of such a U.N. Concise Gazetteer would be a great step in the direction of the promotion of the standardization of geographical names. It would be a documentation of the goal of the U.N. Conferences and an evidence of the work of the U.N. Group of Experts on Geographical Names. Moreover it would answer the urgent need for a practical manual and work of reference for the general public.

The U.N. Group of Experts should hesitate no longer to start the compilation of the gazetteer. It is not necessary for the gazetteer in its first edition to be of voluminous size. The number of entries should amount to no more than 15,000 names. To give an example, the following number of entries would seem appropriate for the countries mentioned below:

Argentina	127
Belgium	41
Canada	291
Ecuador	57
France	303
Indonesia	116
New Zealand	50
Uganda	63
Upper Volta	31
United Kingdom	381
Zaire	64

The entries should comprise the following data:

- (1) official name
- (2) former official name, if the name has changed in the last 25 years
- (3) internationally used acronym of great importance as cross reference
- (4) country where the named entity is situated
- (5) geographical coordinates

In the case of languages using non Roman script the names should be given in the official transcription if an officially adopted system exists. In other cases an internationally widely used system should be applied.

It is proposed to start the work immediately, so as to enable at least some of the countries to carry out the compilation of names relating to their respective territories for inclusion in the U.N. Concise Gazetteer in the near future.

To carry out this work it is advisable to establish a special editorial staff within the framework of the U.N. Group of Experts.

The data to be furnished by the individual countries should be collected and forwarded to the editorial staff by the divisional chairmen. Should a country fail to furnish such material, it would be the task of the divisional chairman to procure the respective data.