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UNITED NATIONS
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Newsletter

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I. NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

A. Restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat

Following the forty-sixth General Assembly session's approval, the United Nations Secretary-General started the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat.

In the initial phase of the restructuring, the following offices/departments are being discontinued as separate entities, with their functions and programmes continuing under new administrative arrangements.

- *Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation*
- *Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services*
- *Office for Research and the Collection of Information*
- *Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea*
- *Department of Political and Security Council Affairs*
- *Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship*
- *Department for Disarmament Affairs*
- *Department of International Economic and Social Affairs*
- *Department of Technical Cooperation for Development*
- *Centre for Science and Technology for Development*
- *United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations*
- *Department of Conference Services.*

The new *Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD)* incorporates the responsibilities of the following departments and offices: *Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation*; *Department of International Economic and Social Affairs*; *Department of Technical Cooperation for Development*; *Centre for Science and Technology for Development*; and *United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations*.

Mr. *Ji Chaozhu*, former head of the *Department of Technical Cooperation for Development*, is appointed *Under-Secretary-General* in the *Department of Economic and Social Development* effective 1 March 1992.

Mrs. *Dunja Pastizzi-Ferencic*, former *Director* of the *Natural Resources and Energy Division*, is now *Director* of the new *Science, Technology, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Division (STEENRD)* of the *Department of Economic and Social Development*.

The *Infrastructure Branch* with its *Cartography Unit*, providing the *United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical*

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REFERENCE EC/DTCD/GN/16

The Secretary-General of the United Nations presents his compliments to the Permanent Representative of ... to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note EC/DTCD/CSGN(92) of 11 November 1991 in which His/Her Excellency's Government was invited to provide as soon as possible details concerning the size of the delegation and the names of the delegates designated by His/Her Excellency's Government to attend the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names which will be held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York from 25 August to 3 September 1992.

The Secretary-General also avails himself of the opportunity to remind those governments which may wish to submit technical papers in support of items of the provisional agenda that these documents should be forwarded to the United Nations Secretariat as specified in the note on documentation for the Conference (document E/CONF.85/INF/1) which was sent with the invitation, and copy of which is herewith attached.

The Secretary-General again has the honour to mention the above note in which His/Her Excellency's Government was also asked for providing the names of experts specified by His/Her Excellency's Government to participate in the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to be held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York on 23 August and 4 September 1992 one day prior and one day after the Conference. A copy of the provisional agenda for the Session is attached.

Annexes enclosed

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REFERENCE EC/DTCD/GN/16

Le Secrétaire général de l'Organisation des Nations Unies présente ses compliments au Représentant permanent de ... auprès de l'Organisation et a l'honneur de se référer à sa note EC/DTCD/CSGN(92) du 11 novembre 1991, dans laquelle il invitait le Gouvernement de Son Excellence à l'informer dès que possible de l'importance de sa délégation et du nom de ses représentants à la sixième Conférence des Nations Unies sur la normalisation des noms géographiques qui se tiendra au Siège de l'Organisation des Nations Unies, à New York, du 25 août au 3 septembre 1992.

Le Secrétaire général saisit en outre cette occasion pour rappeler aux gouvernements qui souhaiteraient présenter des documents techniques au titre des différents points de l'ordre du jour provisoire que ces documents doivent être communiqués au Secrétariat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies selon la procédure indiquée dans la note relative à la documentation de la Conférence (E/CONF.85/INF/1) qui a été envoyée avec l'invitation et dont on trouvera ci-joint copie.

Le Secrétaire général rappelle en outre que, dans la note susmentionnée, le Gouvernement de Son Excellence était prié d'indiquer le nom des experts qui doivent participer à la seizième session du Groupe d'experts des Nations Unies sur les noms géographiques qui se tiendra au Siège de l'Organisation des Nations Unies à New York les 23 août et 4 septembre 1992, soit juste avant et juste après la Conférence. L'ordre du jour provisoire de la session est joint à la présente.

Pièces jointes

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REFERENCE EC/DTCD/GN/16

El Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas saluda atentamente al Señor Representante Permanente de ... ante las Naciones Unidas y tiene el honor de remitirse a su nota EC/DTCD/CSGN(92) de 11 de noviembre de 1991 en que invitaba al Gobierno de Su Excelencia a que proporcionase cuanto antes información sobre el número de integrantes de la delegación y los nombres de los delegados designados para asistir a la Sexta Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre la Normalización de los Nombres Geográficos, que se celebrará en la Sede de las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York del 25 de agosto al 3 de septiembre de 1992.

El Secretario General aprovecha también la oportunidad para recordar a los gobiernos que deseen presentar monografías técnicas en relación con temas del programa provisional que esos documentos deberán enviarse a la Secretaría de las Naciones Unidas en la forma especificada en la nota sobre documentación para la Conferencia (E/CONF.85/INF/1) que fue enviada junto con la invitación y de la cual se adjunta un ejemplar.

El Secretario General tiene el honor de referirse una vez más a la nota mencionada en que también se pedía al Gobierno de Su Excelencia que proporcionara los nombres de los expertos que hubiera designado para participar en el 16° período de sesiones del Grupo de Expertos de las Naciones Unidas en Nombres Geográficos que se celebrará en la Sede de las Naciones Unidas en Nueva York el 23 de agosto y el 4 de septiembre de 1992, es decir, un día antes y un día después de la Conferencia. Se adjunta un ejemplar del programa provisional del período de sesiones.

Anexos incluidos

United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
Sixteenth session
New York, 24 August and 4 September 1992

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

First meeting, 24 August 1992*

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Reports of the Working Groups.
4. Organizational matters concerning the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
5. Review of the statute of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
6. Other business.

Second meeting, 4 September 1992*

1. Election of officers.
2. Planning for implementation of the recommendations of the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

* Meetings will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

II. NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

A.1 THE CELTIC DIVISION

Art O' Maolfabhail (Ireland)

The following may be of some interest to members of UNGEGN, particularly in relation to the subject of publicity at a national level for the group's activities.

In February 1992 a one-day seminar was held in Dublin for officials of the local authorities and the Public Service. The subject of the seminar was entitled "The Placenames of Ireland in the Third Millenium". The seminar was arranged by An Coimision Logainmneache (The Placenames Commission, which is the National Names Authority) with the cooperation of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (which is the National Mapping Agency).

The seminar took the following form:
Talks of 30 minutes length on the following subjects: "The work of the Placenames Branch of the Ordnance Survey", "The importance of placenames in the modern world", "Urban, Street and District Names". Each talk was followed by open discussion. A lengthy discussion was also held with a panel of speakers consisting of a legal author who specializes in bilingual affairs, a placenames expert from the mapping service, an official of Dublin City administration, and an official from the local administration of a Welsh-speaking area of the United Kingdom.

In addition to local administration officials from all over the country, representatives were present from the Central Statistics office, from the state organization for promoting tourism and from official bodies for promoting standardization, forestry, fishing and other activities. All those present were full-time paid officials in positions having power to put principles into practice.

The morning session was opened by the Government Minister for Finance as the Minister with responsibility for mapping. In his speech the Minister referred to the importance of geographical names at local and international levels saying "Placenames are truly a worldwide phenomenon with deep cultural and political significance". The afternoon session was opened by the Minister for the Environment who has responsibility for local administration. This Minister introduced a bilingual booklet entitled in English Streetnames: Guidelines which is aimed at standardizing linguistic and typographic conventions on nameplates in a bilingual situation.

In conjunction with the Seminar an Exhibition on the subject of Placenames was mounted in twelve sections:

1. Before the Ordnance Survey
2. The Ordnance Survey of Ireland
3. Placenames in a bilingual situation
4. The Placenames Commission
5. The Placenames Branch of the Ordnance Survey.
Subsections a: Sources, b: The work, c: Publishing through the Ordnance Survey, d: Other official publishing.
6. Road signs
7. Streetname plates

The file is prepared to be used in the following ways:

- to identify and localize geographical features;
- to provide the user with basic information on a certain geographical feature;
- to help with the elaboration of topical maps, especially of thematical ones.

To achieve these aims the following attributes of a geographical feature will be stored, the progress of storing depending on labour and financial capacities:

- geographical coordinates (by minutes, with extended features by 1 percent fields);
- category of the feature (settlement, mountain peak, etc);
- original script form with names from non-Latin-script areas (concerns 6 Cyrillic-script alphabets);
- variant names (allonyms) with a remark determining the language: current and historic; official names (back to around 1910) as well as exonyms
- thematical attributes of geographical features:
 - with settlements: administrative status (capital functions) around 1990 and 1910, administrative affiliation around 1990 and 1910, number of inhabitants around 1990 and 1910, altitude above sea-level, fact of aa river-, lake-or seaside situation; with extended physio-geographical features: geographical coordinates (referred to the central or highest part of the feature), altitude of the highest elevation, area in sq.km (with lakes and islands only); with mountain peaks and passes: affiliation to a state, altitude;
 - with rivers and canals: affiliation(s) to (a) state(s) from the mouth upwards, geographical coordinates of the mouth, hydrographical rank of the river, length.

In general, the date of the record is marked. This is of special importance as regards an envisaged later densification of features and periodic updating (after population censuses and the publication of new national gazetteers).

C.1 East Central and South-East Europe Division

Imrich Hornansky (Czechoslovakia)

Activities provided in the field of standardization of geographical names in Czechoslovakia during the period of September 1991 to March 1992 as follows:

3. Czecho-Slovakia as a coordinator is preparing the 11th meeting of the UN Regional Group of East, Central and South-East Europe. The meeting will be held from 5 to 7 May 1992 in Bratislava (Slovak). In addition to the participants from Czecho Slovakia, representatives from Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland have confirmed their participation. The main topics to be discussed are the preparation of material for the 6th UN conference and for the 16th meeting of the Group of UN Experts that is going to be held at the end of August 1992 in New York.