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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL  
NAMES

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REPORTS BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE PROGRESS  
MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Submitted by the Government of Finland

General Remarks

In Finland there is a close and regular co-operation between cartographers and toponymists. The National Board of Survey, which is responsible for Finnish maps, takes care of the field collection of names, chooses the names for maps and, before printing, submits them for revision to Finnish Name Archives (Suomen nimiarkisto) or, because Finland is bilingual, to Swedish Society of Literature in Finland (Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland). It has been recommended by the Parliament to discuss the experts in linguistics in these questions. The correcting and checking of names is based on the collection of geographical names, maps and other information available on the Name Archives, and on the guidebooks for standardization.<sup>1/</sup>

The field of collection of names from all of Finland, and the office treatment of them, are comprehensive tasks, during which appear most of those problems mentioned in the report written by the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names. As an example of the amount of work which has been done, it can be mentioned that

<sup>1/</sup> Viljo Nissilä : Suomalaista nimitystutkimusta ("On Research of Names in Finland"), Helsinki, 1962; Viljo Nissilä : Paikannimistöme huolto ja suojele ("Care and Maintenance of Our Geographical Names"), Helsinki, 1965.

for the compilation of the Finnish basic maps at scale 1:20,000, now in progress, about 700,000 names have been collected up to now. The whole work will be completed in the early seventies. Then more than 1 million names will be included in this uniform series of maps. The collection of geographical names for the basic maps makes the basis for the nomenclature in maps at smaller scales. In connexion with the revision of a map names are checked and corrected.

Particular attention has been paid to the standardization of geographical names in a new map 1:1 million, which is now under preparation. The main purpose of this new type of map is to show the location of the most important names in Finland, about 8,000 altogether. By means of a rotating indicator the names mentioned in a list can easily be found on the map. This kind of map will obviously be one of those maps the cartographic agencies abroad needs, and which they use for constructing their maps of Finland.

#### Some Problems in the Finnish Orthography of Foreign Compound Place Names

The Finnish orthography of compound foreign place names has developed in a direction slightly different from that of the compound names of places in Finland. In foreign compound names (mainly conventional) the elements have been written as separate words more often than in properly Finnish names. We have written e.g. Guinean lahti (Gulf of Guinea) but Suomenlahti (Gulf of Finland), Viktorian järvi (Lake Victoria) but Hiidenjärvi (a lake in Finland), Musta meri (Black Sea) but Selkämeri (part of the Gulf of Bothnia) etc. Probably because foreign place names occur less frequently in every-day speech than the domestic place names, their orthography, influenced by other languages, has not been as well established as that of the Finnish places. That is why it has recently been recommended by the Finnish Name Archives to apply the same orthographic rules to conventional compound names of foreign places as to domestic place names. This recommendation is as follows.

I. The modifier (the first part of the name) is a noun.

1. When the modifier is a nominative singular, the name is written as a single word, e.g. Kapkaupunki (Cape Town), Bahamasaaret (Bahama Islands), Como järvi (Lake Como). Names with a so-called epexegetic part (designation) should also be written as a single word, because it can be very difficult to distinguish them from the names above, e.g. Araljärvi (Aral Sea), Atlasvuoristo (Atlas Mountains). The designation, not closely attached to the name, should be omitted when possible (e.g. Aral).

2. When the modifier is a genitive singular, the name is written as a single word, e.g. Geneven järvi (Lake of Geneva), Adrianmeri (Adriatic Sea), Gibraltarin salmi (Straits of Gibraltar), except when

(a) the genitive marker is separated by an apostrophe indicating that the last letter is not pronounced, e.g. Calais'n salmi (Pas de Calais, Straits of Dover);

(b) the modifier is itself a compound, e.g. Kap Verden saaret (Cape Verde Islands);

(c) both parts of the name have a distinct stress, e.g. Nubian aavikko (Nubian Desert), Englannin kanaali (English Channel), Wegenerin jäätikkö (Wegener Inlandsis), or the latter part of the name indicates something constructed by man, e.g. Suezin kanava (Suez Canal), Hooverin pato (Hoover Dam);

(d) the two parts of the name are proper nouns, e.g. Espanjan Guinea (Spanish Guinea);

(e) the latter part of the name is a compound, e.g. Atlantin valtameri (Atlantic Ocean), Amerikan Yhdysvallat (United States of America).

3. When the modifier is a genitive plural, the name is written as two words, e.g. Brittein saaret (British Isles), Alankomaiden Antillit (Dutch Antilles).

## II. The modifier is an adjective.

1. When the latter part of the name is a proper noun, the name is hyphenated, e.g. Uusi-Seelanti (New Zealand), Isot-Antillit (Greater Antilles), Vähä-Aasia (Asia Minor), except when the stress is approximately the same on both elements, e.g. Brittiläinen Columbia (British Columbia), Dinaariset Alpit (Dinaric Alps).

2. When the latter part of the name is a non-compound generic term, the name is written as a single word, e.g. Kuollutmeri (Dead Sea), Isokanjoni (Grand Canyon).

3. When the latter part of the name is a compound, the name is written as two words, e.g. Dominikaaninen tasavalta (Dominican Republic), Pohjoinen jäämeri (Arctic Ocean), Iso valtameri (Pacific Ocean), Brittiläiset Salomoninsaaret (British Solomon Islands), Iso Karhujärvi (Great Bear Lake).