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LIST OF COUNTRY NAMES

Progress report of the Working Group on a List of Names of Countries
of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

Document submitted by the Working Group on a List of Names
of Countries of the United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

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SUMMARY

Since the Athens Conference, the Working Group on a List of Names of Countries has continued to collect documentation from the competent services in each country with a view to obtaining the official names that did not figure in the list previously established.

The accession to independence of territories that became new States makes periodic updating of the list necessary; the list submitted to the present Conference is up to date as of 1 November 1981, the date on which Antigua and Barbuda attained independence.

In the course of the ninth session of the Group of Experts in February 1981 in New York, it was decided to add the Arabic translation to the versions existing in Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The considerable work involved is divided into three phases.

In the first phase, the aim was to eliminate differences existing between the Terminology Bulletin and the list of countries prepared by the Working Group. Some differences still remain between the two documents but they are relatively minor.

In the second phase, the Translation Division of the Department of Conference Services prepared the Arabic version of the names of countries. The Arabic Service is currently working on that document with a view to preparing a final, photocomposed list ready for publication.

The third and final phase will essentially be the physical task of going over all the cards again.

A computerized file has also been prepared. It comprises the short and long forms of names of countries in the official languages, transliterated where necessary, together with their English, French and Spanish versions. The file will make easy the updating of the list, especially the indexes; it could subsequently be developed by the addition of complementary information, for example the names of capitals, adjectives of nationality and the like.

It would appear that the work of the Working Group needs to continue. It would, however, be desirable in order to improve efficiency, for each geographical-linguistic division to be represented in the Group. That, in our view, would improve precision and speed up the obtaining of information.
