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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION:
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Report on training in office procedures offered by
the U.S. Board on Geographic Names**

Summary paper presented by the United States

In an effort to develop cooperative programs with other countries in the area of names standardization, the United States Board on Geographic Names has provided training courses to representatives from other countries. Individuals from Thailand and Nigeria have participated in sessions in 1978 and 1979. The training was of benefit to their respective countries and to the United States as well.

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In keeping with its long-standing policies of cooperating with countries in matters pertaining to names standardization, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names has offered training in procedures followed by the Board to experts from other countries. The training was offered with the idea of exposing representatives of other countries to principles, policies, and procedures followed by the United States with the thought that these methods might be adapted for use in nations wishing to establish or strengthen national names standardization agencies.

In 1978 Lt. Col. Villa Wasanosomsith of the Royal Thai Survey Department participated in a six-weeks course, and in 1979 Mrs. Esther Adebiji of the Nigerian Federal Survey Department followed suit. Both trainees spent six weeks with the staffs of the Foreign Names Committee and the Domestic Names Committee studying principles, policies, and procedures followed by the Board in its work to standardize foreign and domestic names. Half of the time was spent at the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic/Topographic Center (which provides staff support to the Foreign Names Committee) near Washington, D.C. and the balance at the U.S. Geological Survey (which provides staff support to the Domestic Names Committee) in Reston, Virginia. The training included briefings about the history and function of the Board, with attention to the structure and operations of the inter-departmental agency and its various committees. Minutes of meetings of the Board and of the committees were examined to give the trainees a comprehension of the methods of work and of procedures for making decisions. Actual "hands-on" practice with names problems was carried out. The trainees held discussions with Board and committee members at meetings of these bodies.

In addition, tours of official mapping and charting agencies and libraries were offered. Included here were tours of the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division and the National Ocean Survey (which produces aeronautical and hydrographic charts of U.S. areas).

According to reports from their superiors, both Lt. Col. Wasanosomsith and Mrs. Adebiji gained much benefit from the training. As a point of information, the trainees' countries provided travel and living expenses, while the United States furnished space, materials, and instruction as part of the training.

The United States also benefited, because problems encountered in Board research in names of Nigeria and Thailand were discussed with the representatives who answered many questions. The joint effort set the stage for further collaboration in areas of mutual interest.