

Group of Experts on
Geographical namesWORKING PAPER No. 59

Twelfth Session

Geneva, 29 September - 7 October 1986

Item No. 13 of the
Provisional Agenda*

Draft

STATUTE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
(Submitted by the USSR)

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was established in pursuance of the Economic and Social Council resolutions 715A (XXVII) of 23 April 1959, 1314 (XLIV) of 31 May 1968 and 1854 (XXII) of 4 May 1973 to further the standardization of geographical names on both the national and the international levels.

I. Aims

The main aims of the Group of Experts are:

- the working out of principles and methods for solving the problems of national and international standardization of geographical names;
- the collection and dissemination of information on work of national and international bodies on the standardization of geographical names to the United Nations Member States;
- the sharing of experience of national bodies on the standardization of geographical names;
- scientific and technical aid to developing countries in national standardization of geographical names;
- the preparation of the United Nations regional and international conferences on the standardization of geographical names.

II. Principles -

The Group of Experts acts as a collegiate, consultative body; its resolutions are of recommendatory character.

Questions implicating national sovereignty are excluded from discussion in the Group of Experts.

The Group of Experts in its activity adheres to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and proceeds from the following provisions:

- the standardization of geographical names must be based on the achievements of modern science;

- international standardization of geographical names must be carried out on the basis of national standardization.

III. Functions

To achieve the aims mentioned the Group of Experts performs the following functions:

- co-ordinates the efforts of countries on the standardization of geographical names;
- promotes fulfilment of the resolutions of the United Nations international conferences on the standardization of geographical names;
- provides for continuity of activities on the standardization of geographical names during the periods between the conferences;
- considers matters of regional and working groups formations.

IV. Composition

The United Nations Group of Experts is composed of representatives of linguistic/geographical divisions appointed by the Governments of the United Nations Member States. The Group of Experts is headed by elected officers who guide activities of the Group during and between the sessions.

The Group of Experts in its activities is supported by the linguistic/geographical divisions.

1. Linguistic/geographical divisions

1.1. The following divisions were formed according to linguistic/geographical principles:

1. Africa Central Division
2. Africa East Division
3. Africa West Division
4. Arabic Division
5. Asia East Division (other than China)
6. Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division
7. Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)
8. China Division
9. Dutch and German-speaking Division
10. East-Central and South-East Europe Division

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11. India Division
12. Latin America Division
13. Norden Division
14. Romano-Hellenic Division
15. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Division
16. United Kingdom Division
17. United States of America/Kanada Division

1.2. The composition of the linguistic/geographical divisions may be revised, if necessary.

1.3. A country decides for itself to which linguistic/geographical division it wishes to belong.

A country may also participate in the activities of divisions other than its own as an observer.

1.4. Each division by agreement with the governments of its member states periodically selects an expert, who represents the division as a whole and speaks on divisional matters at the sessions of the Group of Experts and on the UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names.

In order to guarantee continuity of the work, each division by agreement with the governments of its member states selects an alternate representative.

The divisional representative maintains continuous contacts with his alternate.

1.5. The divisional representative stimulates activities on the standardization of geographical names within his division by all appropriate means (correspondence with national bodies on the standardization of geographical names and with national surveying and mapping agencies, arrangement of meetings of the divisional experts).

1.6. The divisional representative informs member states of the division about the activities of the Group of Experts as well as informs the Group of Experts about the activities and problems of the division.

1.7. To discuss technical and procedural matters a division may organize regional meetings during the United Nations conferences on geographical names and meetings of the Group of Experts or at any other convenient time.

2. Officers

2.1. The Group of Experts elects the following officers: a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Rapporteur.

2.2. The elections of the officers are held at the termination of the respective United Nations conference on the standardization of geographical names. The officers serve until their successors are elected at the next United Nations conference.

The procedure of the elections of the officers is given below, in the rules of procedure.

2.3. The secretariat for the Group of Experts is provided by the Cartography Section of the UN Secretariat.

3. Working groups

3.1. Working groups are formed of the members of the Group of Experts to study particular problems concerning the standardization of geographical names. When it is necessary a working group may include specialists invited to take part in the sessions of the Group of Experts.

3.2. Working groups are disbanded upon completion of their appointed tasks. Expediency of prolongation of their term of activities is considered at the sessions of the Group of Experts. If necessary, new working groups may be appointed and their tasks determined.

3.3. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of a working group are elected at the meetings of the working group by methods of its own choosing.

4. Specialists invited by the Group of Experts

The Chairman of the Group of Experts may, in accordance with the established procedure, invite persons with special knowledge on particular aspects of the standardization of geographical names, to participate in the sessions of the Group.

V. Rules of procedure

1. Membership

Rule 1.1. The expert who represents a division is a full member of the Group of Experts with voting rights.

Rule 1.2. Member states of the divisions may appoint national experts to participate in the sessions of the Group of Experts without the right to vote.

2. Sessions

Rule 2.1. The Group of Experts normally holds one session every two years.

Rule 2.2. Invitation for experts to participate in the sessions of the Group of Experts is sent to Government on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Rule 2.3. In years when a United Nations conference on the standardization of geographical names is held, the Group of Experts meets on dates immediately preceding the opening date of the conference and immediately following the closing date of the conference.

Rule 2.4. Sessions of the Group of Experts are held if majority of the representatives of divisions are present.

3. Agenda

Rule 3.1. The agenda drawn up by the Group of Experts at its previous session and communicated to the Governments invited by the Secretary-General to send experts to participate in the session constitutes the provisional agenda for the session.

Rule 3.2. Experts participating in the session may propose additional items for inclusion in the agenda.

Rule 3.3. The agenda is discussed and approved at the session.

4. Conduct of meetings

Rule 4.1. The Chairman of the Group of Experts presides over meetings. If the Chairman is to be absent from a meeting or part thereof, or if he ceases to be able to perform his functions, the Vice-Chairman or the Rapporteur acts as Chairman.

Rule 4.2. If either the Vice-Chairman or the Rapporteur are unable to perform the functions of their office, the Chairman appoints an expert to complete the unexpired portion of either term of office.

5. Secretariat

Rule 5.1. The Secretary of the Group of Experts appointed by the UN Secretary-General acts in that capacity in all meetings of the Group. He may designate a member of the secretariat to take his place at any meeting.

Rule 5.2. The Secretary is responsible for making all necessary arrangements for meetings and performs all other work which the Group of Experts may require.

Rule 5.3. The Secretary or his representative may at any meeting make either oral or written statement concerning any question under consideration.

6. General powers of the Chairman

Rule 6.1. The Chairman declares the opening and closing of each meeting of the Group of Experts, directs the discussion at such meetings, accords the right to speak, puts questions to the vote and announces decisions. He rules on points of order and has complete control over the proceedings of the Group of Experts and over the maintenance of order at its meetings.

Rule 6.2. The Chairman may, in the course of the discussions, propose to the Group of Experts the closing of the list of speakers or the adjournment or closure of the debate.

7. Order of session

Rule 7.1. During the discussion an expert may at any time raise a point of order, which is immediately decided by the Chairman. An expert may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal is immediately put to the vote and the Chairman's ruling stands unless overruled by a majority of the representatives of divisions present and voting.

Rule 7.2. The Group of Experts may limit the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times an expert may speak on any question. If a speaker exceeds his allotted time, the Chairman may with the consent of the Group of Experts extend the time for his speech.

Rule 7.3. During the course of a debate, the Chairman may announce the list of speakers and with the consent of the Group of Experts, declare the list closed. The Chairman may, however, accord the right of reply to any expert if, in his opinion, a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed makes this desirable. When there are no more speakers, the Chairman declares the debate closed.

Rule 7.4. During the discussion of any matter, an expert may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. Any such motion has priority. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one expert is allowed to speak in favour of, and one expert against the motion, after which the motion is immediately put to the vote.

Rule 7.5. An expert may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other expert has signified his/her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion is accorded only to two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion is immediately

put to the vote.

8. Decision - making

Rule 8.1. The Group of Experts as well as its regional and working groups take decisions on all matters except procedural matters by consensus.

Rule 8.2. Decisions on procedural matters are reached by voting.

Rule 8.3. A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that it has not been amended. A proposal or a motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any expert.

Rule 8.4. When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the Group of Experts, by a two thirds majority of the representatives of divisions present and voting, so decides.

Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider is accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it is immediately put to the vote.

9. Voting

Rule 9.1. Decisions of the Group of Experts on procedural matters are reached by a majority of the divisional representatives present and voting.

If a vote is equally divided a second vote is taken after an adjournment of the meeting for 15 minutes.

If this vote also results in equality, the proposal or motion is regarded as rejected.

Rule 9.2. A roll-call vote, if requested, is taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the divisions, beginning with the division whose name is drawn by lot by the Chairman.

Rule 9.3. After the Chairman has announced the commencement of voting, no expert must interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.

Rule 9.4. The Chairman may permit experts to explain their votes before or after the voting. The Chairman may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

Rule 9.5. Parts of a proposal may be voted on separately if an expert requests that the proposal be divided. Those parts of the proposal that have been approved then are put to the vote as a whole. If all the operative parts of a

proposal have been rejected, the proposal is considered rejected as a whole.

Rule 9.6. When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment is voted on first.

Rule 9.7. When two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Group of Experts first votes on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote. When, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter amendment is not put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal is then voted upon.

Rule 9.8. If two or more proposals relate to the same question, they are, unless the Group of Experts decides otherwise, voted on in the order in which they were submitted.

The Group of Experts may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.

Rule 9.9. Revised proposals are voted on in the order in which the original proposals were submitted, unless the revision substantially departs from the original proposal. In that case, the original proposal is considered as withdrawn and the revised proposal is treated as a new proposal.

Rule 9.10. A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal has priority over that proposal.

10. Elections

Rule 10.1. All elections are held by secret ballot unless the Group of Experts decides otherwise.

Rule 10.2. When candidates are to be nominated, each nomination is made by only one expert, after which the Group of Experts immediately proceeds to the election.

Rule 10.3. When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, each expert may cast a vote for as many candidates as there are places to be filled, and those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of votes cast and the largest number of votes are elected.

Rule 10.4. If the number of candidates so elected is less than the number of places to be filled, additional ballots are held to fill the remaining places. From such ballots the candidates obtaining the least number of votes in the previous ballot may be eliminated on the proposal of the

Chairman.

Rule 10.5. In case of a tie among candidates obtaining a majority of the votes cast, a second ballot is held among them. If the votes remain equally divided, the elder or eldest candidate is elected.

11. Languages

Rule 11.1. Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages and English, French and Spanish are the working languages of the session. Working papers are submitted in one of the working languages.

Rule 11.2. Speeches made in an official language are interpreted into the other official languages of the session.

Rule 11.3. Any expert may make a speech in a language other than an official language of the session if he provides for interpretation into one such language.

Interpretation into the other official languages of the session by the interpreters of the secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first such language.

12. Records of the meetings and of the sessions

Rule 12.1. The Secretariat of the Group of Experts circulates copies of working papers submitted by linguistic/geographical divisions and experts to the participants of the session.

The title-page of each working paper should be provided with the following disclaimer:

- consideration of the present paper by the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names does not imply its approving and adoption.
- consideration of the present paper at the session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names cannot be used by any body for interpretation of any political matter.

Rule 12.2. Sound recordings of the plenary meetings of the session are made and kept by the secretariat.

Rule 12.3. The Group of Experts prepares a final report in English as the record of the session. This report is distributed by the secretariat as soon as possible after the closing of the session.

13. Privacy of meetings

The meetings of the Group of Experts and meetings of its working groups are held in private.

14. Invitation of specialists

Rule 14.1. Specialists on particular aspects of the standardization of geographical names may be invited to take part in the work of the Group of Experts only when official approval of the invitation has been obtained from their Governments.

Rule 14.2. The invited specialists may participate in the discussions of the Group of Experts without the right to vote.

Written documents submitted by these specialists are distributed by the secretariat to all participants in the session.

15. Approval of the Statute of the United Nations Group of Experts

Rule 15.1. The Statute of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names comes into effect after it has been approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Rule 15.2. The Group of Experts may move amendments to the Statute at its subsequent sessions. The amendments must be approved by two thirds majority of the divisional representatives present and voting.

No amendment becomes effective until it has been approved by the Economic and Social Council.