

Ad Hoc Group of Experts on

the Standardization of

Geographical Names

New York, 10-20 March 1970

MINUTE N° 4

Meeting held on Friday 13 March 1970

32. A revision of Minute N°1 incorporating the working paper between the Chairman and Dr. Brou would be distributed.
33. Minute N°2 was adopted subject to a correction requested by the Executive Secretary concerning the role of Dr. Lurwill as consultant.
34. Col. Sharma observed that information document N° 4, presented by the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland, contains a factual inaccuracy in the second sentence of the second paragraph on page 35. He indicated that numerous states which are not Hindi-speaking, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Panjab, have already adopted Hindi as a second official language. He granted that there is some opposition to Hindi in southern India, but that fortunately this is on the decline.
35. Observations of Mr. Loxton, Geelan, Lewis and Komkov led to the deferral of consideration of the aims and functions of the Group of Experts until circulation of the report of the work group on *modus operandi*.
36. Consideration of item 4/C/1 of the agenda, dealing with unwritten African languages followed.
37. Mr. Geelan drew attention to the importance that English and French retained as administrative languages in Africa south of the Sahara.
38. Mr. Loxton reviewed briefly the geographical, historical and political background of the region and commented on the wording of Resolution 18 as follows :
- (a) the term "unwritten language" needs qualification. Most languages have been subject to more or less analysis and documentation which leads eventually to a full dictionary and grammar and literature. For our purpose we may regard a language as unwritten or incompletely written until it is possible to find in the works of reference any required information about the majority of geographic generic terms.
 - (b) accurate rendering of many sounds (such as the click in southern Bantu) into the roman alphabet using either the French or English systems is not possible. Some more comprehensive system, such as the "Africa Alphabet" is required, but it has not been found practicable to achieve this ideal.
39. Mr. Nédélec pointed out that a number of francophone states of west Africa had concluded bilateral agreements with the French authorities for cartographic application of the principles of transcription worked out by the Institut Géographique National in 1963.
40. Mr. Lewis recalled that Resolution 18 arose from a request by African countries and not by request of either France or the United Kingdom.

41. It was agreed that with a view to finding a solution to these problems Mr. Lortzen would prepare a paper suggesting guidelines and setting forth the conditions in which expert assistance from the group would be most effective. This note would be sent to all African countries in order to discover their position in this matter.
42. The Group of Experts next examined Item 4/C/11 of the agenda concerning minority languages. Mr. Novda, Komkov and Breu gave accounts of the situation in their respective countries.