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ON THE PROGRESS MADE BY THE USSR
IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
AFTER THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, 1967

submitted by the USSR

§. On the progress made by
the USSR in the standardization
of geographical names after
the Geneva Conference, 1967.

(by A.M. KOMKOV)

The United Nations Conference on the standardization of geographical names held in Geneva in 1967 enabled all the countries-participants to get acquainted with the achievements in domestic standardization of geographical names in different countries, to exchange the experience and to work out some recommendations for a further improvement of this work both in national and international aspects.

After the Geneva Conference the work on domestic standardization in the USSR has been carried out by several lines. Scientific elaboration of the instructions (rules) for rendering geographical names from both national languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union and foreign languages as well as compilation of glossaries of geographical terms have remained the principal directions.

The instructions published in previous years were obligatory for the cartographic agencies only, the new elaborated instructions are now obligatory for all the organizations and agencies that publish scientific literature, informative and reference books, newspapers, magazines, etc. All new instructions for rendering geographical names from different national languages of the USSR are necessarily submitted to the local scientific and administrative bodies of the republics concerned for their approval. Thus, though we follow, in our work, the well-known principle that a receiver country takes

a final decision on what form borrowed names will have in its language, we feel it necessary to take into account the interests of a donor part.

As far as the compilation of dictionaries and glossaries is concerned we may point out the Dictionary of geographical names of the USSR, Moscow, 1968 intended for a great many organizations, a number of other dictionaries of geographical names that are being issued as well as a number of glossaries of national geographic terms. The glossaries of the Buryat, Komi, Nanai and Khakass geographic terms published in 1968-1969 may be pointed out as examples.

Since the Soviet Union is a multinational country not only the problems of rendering national and foreign names into Russian are important. The problems of rendering Russian, other national and foreign names into the languages of other nationalities of the Soviet Union are not less important. Scientific organizations of the Union republics are carrying out a great deal of interesting work in this field. A series of reference books on the orthography and orthoepy of foreign proper names in the Lettish language may serve as an example. The Institute of the Russian Language and Literature of the Latvian Academy of Sciences published in 1962-1968 a series of reference books on Lithuanian, Estonian, German, French, English and other proper names.

Similar work is now being carried out in other Union republics as well.

In the past few years a number of instructions for

rendering geographical names of foreign countries have been drawn up and published. Among them the instructions for geographical names of the Arab countries, the Philippines and of a number of countries of eastern and central Africa (Burundi, Zambia, Kenya, Congo (Kinshasa), Malawi, Ruanda, Tanzania, Uganda and others) may be cited.