

New York, 26 February - 9 March 1979  
Agenda item No. 6

REPORT OF AFRICA EAST DIVISION

(Submitted by W.J. Absaloms)

My thanks first go to the Chairman of the Group of Experts for the amount of effort he put in to inform all divisional chairmen of what was going on through circular letters. The circular letters apart from being informative, were quite thought-provoking, especially circular letter No. 2, and set some of us thinking seriously.

The division has not held any formal meetings since the Athens conference during which the first meeting of the division was held. The meeting in Athens was held on 5 September 1977 and was attended by delegates from Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and Zambia. At the meeting Mr. W.J. Absaloms (Kenya) was elected Chairman of the division, Mr. E. Andrianarivo (Madagascar) was elected vice-chairman and Mr. C.M. Mubita (Zambia) was elected rapporteur. It was proposed then that the second meeting would be held during the Fourth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa which was to be held in Abidjan last year but was postponed.

There were however informal contact between some member countries of the division, notably Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In Zambia the Survey Department has been exploring ways of revitalizing their names committee which has not been very active in the recent years.

As programmes for large scale topographical mapping in the region are expanded, the need for stepping up activities in the field of names collection and treatment has become important and all countries in the region are taking steps to meet the need.

The problem with holding meetings in the region has been aggravated by the cut down in communication due to political problems. This has been in addition to the low priority the developing countries attach to the subject of standardization of geographical names. The second problem is partly being overcome by the realization that topographical maps are required for proper planning of all rural development programmes and these maps were not complete unless the names on them are properly processed.

It is still the intention that the second meeting of the division will be held during the Fourth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa to be held later this year. If however this conference will be postponed again then efforts will be made to hold a separate meeting given the right political atmosphere in the region.