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SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 13-22 January 1998

DRAFT REPORT

Note:
The draft report will be issiued in four sections:

Plenary meetings:	E/CONF.91/L.68
Meetings of Committee I:	E/CONF.91/L.68/Add.1
Meetings of Committee II:	E/CONF.91/L.68/Add.2
Meetings of Committee III:	E/CONF.91/L.68/Add.3

Chapter I

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Terms of reference

1. The Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 13-22 January 1998, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1997/213 of 1 May 1997.

B. Opening of the Conference

2. The Executive Secretary welcomed delegates, and spoke of the importance of the Conference and its relevance to the work of the United Nations. He then introduced Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

3. In opening the Conference, Mr. Desai welcomed the delegates and spoke of the history and development of the Conferences. He emphasized the importance of standardizing geographical names and described the value of having standardizd names in support of such activities as commerce, emergency preparedness, local and regional planning, peace-keeping, tourism, and preservation of cultural heritage. He also emphasized the need for toponymic training.

C. Attendance

4. The Conference was attended by 187 representatives and observers from 64 countries, 5 specialized agencies and 1 intergovernmental organization, 1 international scientific organization, and 6 from other organizations. The list of participants is contained in Annex I.

D. Election of the President

5. The Conference elected Peter Raper (South Africa) as President. Mr. Raper thanked the Conference for this honour.

E. Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

6. The Conference reviewed the Rules of Procedure contained in document E/CONF.91/2, and accepted them without change. The Rules of Procedure are attached to this report as Annex II.

F. Adoption of the agenda

7. The Conference adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CONF.91/1. The agenda is attached to this report as Annex III.

G. Election of officers other than the President

8. The Conference elected the following officers:

First Vice-President: Sylvie Lejeune (France)

Second Vice-President: Brahim Atoui (Algeria)

Rapporteur: Roger L. Payne (United States)

Editor-in-Chief: Helen Kerfoot (Canada)

H. Organization of work

9. Officers for the three committees of the Conference were also elected, as follows:

Committee I: national programmes

Chairman: Botolv Helleland (Norway)

Vice-Chairman: Bela Pokoly (Hungary)

Rapporteur: Randall Flynn (United States)

National Standardization (item 5)

Exonyms (Item 10)

Committee II:technical programmes

Chairman: Naftali Kadmon (Israel)

Vice-Chairman: John Parker (Australia)

Rapporteur: Gerd Quinting (United States)

Toponymic data files (item 6)

Terminology in the standardization of geographical names (item 7)

Committee III: international programmes and exchanges

Chairman: Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairman: Peeter Päll (Estonia)

Rapporteur: Juliette M. Moore (United Kingdom)

Features beyond a single sovereignty (item 11)

Writing systems and guides to pronunciation (item 12)

Toponymic websites (item 13)

Toponymic education and practice (item 14)

Cooperation with national and international agencies and other bodies (item 15)

Country names (item 16)

10. Items 8, 9 and 17-21 were considered in plenary meetings

I. Credentials of representatives to the Conference

11. The Credentials Committee, composed of the President, the two Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur, and the Deputy Executive Secretary, reported that the credentials of all representatives had been found to be in order.

12. Mr. Payne (United States) announced the passing away of Mr. Merridith "Pete" Burrill, one of the original founders of the

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and instrumental in its development. He was a highly respected scholar and had developed many aspects of applied toponymy. He had addressed the Sixth Conference in 1992. A minute of silence was observed for Mr. Burrill and other participants in the work of the Group of Experts who had passed away since 1992.

Chapter II

SUMMARY OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Plenary meetings

Reports by divisions and Governments on the situation in their regions and countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Sixth Conference (item 4)

13. It was noted that, as previously agreed, only summaries highlighting major topics of each paper should be presented; for detailed reports, the papers can be consulted.

14. The report of Estonia (E/CONF.91/L.3) stated that the Governmental Place Names Committee was founded in 1994 to advise the government on matters relating to geographical names. The Law on Place Names was passed by Parliament on 11 December 1996, providing a legal framework for standardization of geographical names. The Committee has prepared regulations, and the government has appointed the Institute of Estonian Language to conduct research into onomastics and to serve in an advisory capacity. Additional work and progress were reported regarding the cataloguing of names of populated places and the use of minority names. Considerable work had been accomplished in the nation's cartographic programme (at various map scales) and a digital geographical names database was established. Also, a geographical names web site has been developed.

15. The report of the Baltic Division (E/CONF.91/L.6) detailed the meetings of the Division; it was noted that much effort had been

concentrated on training. A course held in Riga, Latvia, emphasized automated data processing, as well as national and international standardization. Members of the Division had participated as observers in meetings of the Norden Division and of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division.

16. The report of Israel (E/CONF.91/L.7) indicated that the automated toponymic database is maintained on a regular basis. All geographical names appear vocalized, but in cartographic application, the vocalization marks are frequently lost; the same is true on road signs and similar notices. Ambiguity, especially with foreign names, can result, and vocalization is, therefore, often required. Even so, the new digitally derived topographic maps are displaying names in unvocalized spelling. The official romanization system for Hebrew is under review, and organizations other than the Survey of Israel are using unofficial versions. A special commission is analyzing the issue.

17. The report of the East-Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic) (E/CONF.91/L.8) pointed out considerable inter-divisional cooperation, including participation in training courses in South Africa and with the Dutch- and German-speaking Division on the Glossary of Toponymic Terminology. Lectures were presented at seminars held in Korea and New Zealand. A comprehensive textbook on toponymy has been prepared and will be printed in the near future. It was announced that Cyprus had requested membership in the Division.

18. Finland reported (E/CONF.91/L.15) that comprehensive field

collection of names continued with the addition of Swedish and Sámi names as well as Finnish. Almost 3 million names have been collected, including over 300,000 minority names.

19. The official treatment of names is the responsibility of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland which handles various issues, including correcting names on maps, municipality names and names of other administrative areas, training, foreign names, and evaluating the need for a law. The 1:20,000 scale maps (with names) are in digital form, and a web site is available. It was announced that as yet there is no response to a request to establish a national names authority. It was explained that the web site is available only to Finnish citizens, however, the web site of the Norden Database is available to all.

20. The Slovak Republic reported (E/CONF.91/L.20) that the standardization of names in the Slovak Republic is complete for those names shown on maps at a scale of 1:10,000. There has been no change in the organization that standardizes names, with four different bodies sharing the responsibility. Present policy allows minority names to be shown in parentheses on maps. The automated database of geographical names includes all names shown on the 1:10,000 and 1:50,000 scale maps. Standardized geographical names are also required to be used by the public media. The treatment of minority languages is set forth in the toponymic guidelines and addresses Hungarian and German. There is no use of Romany in cartographic applications.

21. The report of Canada (E/CONF.91/L.31) mentioned that the

Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names celebrated its centennial in September 1997. The Committee, made up of representatives from provinces, territories and the federal government, meets once a year. A strategic plan has been developed and put into place, addressing major themes such as data collection, automation, policy development, procedures and training, dissemination of information, and outreach. Field work now rests with the provincial and territorial governments. The automated database includes the official name, locative attributes, status, and other relevant fields relating to administration and history. Additional data fields may be maintained at the provincial and territorial levels. The federal government department responsible for the committee and some provincial governments maintain active geographical names web sites.

22. When the new territory of Nunavut becomes a reality in 1999, there will be some special toponymic problems, but the procedures already established in the Northwest Territories of Canada will be available. The legal authority for the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names is an Order in Council.

23. The United States/Canada Division in its report (E/CONF.91/L.32) mentioned that there are two meetings held annually in conjunction with the Western States Conference (now the National States Conference) and the meeting of the Canadian Permanent Committee. Other informal meetings may be held from time to time. Topics and areas of cooperation include transboundary issues, Aboriginal names policies, digital databases and the

Internet, use of diacritical marks, and training issues.

24. In the report of Germany (E/CONF.91/L.24) it was stated that the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (StAGN) includes experts from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, with collaboration from German-speaking areas of Belgium and Southern Tyrol. The Committee holds regular meetings. The Gazetteer of Germany includes names shown at a map scale of 1:500,000 and is available in both conventional and digital form. It has been expanded to names shown at a map scale of 1:250,000 but that version is available in digital form only. Work on a concise gazetteer is in progress, and a list of names in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States has been compiled. A digital Automated database of German language names is being established. Work is continuing to rectify minor discrepancies among names used in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. However, some still exist as a result of decisions in the various foreign offices.

25. The report of Sweden (E/CONF.91/L.45) stated that while Swedish is the only official language, minority names from Finnish and Sami occur in areas where these languages are spoken. Several government organizations have the authority to standardize certain categories of names; collaboration exists between the National Land Survey and the Institute for Language and Folklore Research. There is no official Swedish gazetteer, although the database at the National Land Survey is based on a map scale of 1:50,000.

26. Latvia reported (E/CONF.91/L.49) that the toponymic landscape of Latvia is complex, potentially containing layers of names from

four languages. Livonian (which is primarily historical), German, Russian, and Latvian. The German and Russian aspects have now been virtually replaced by Latvian. Latvian experts have participated in activities of the Baltic Division and a training symposium was hosted in Latvia in 1997. An automated database is being developed, based primarily on a map scale of 1:50,000. Livonian names are accepted especially for historical purposes, and names of the Latgallin dialect are accepted where appropriate. The main issue at hand is standardization of the names of "villages".

27. The report of the Islamic Republic of Iran (E/CONF.91/L.58) stated that the National Gazetteer was compiled based on a map scale of 1:250,000, and is being completely revised. The first part of the project is the Province of Yazel. There have been five meetings of the Southwest Asia (other than Arabic) Division in Tehran, the last of which was in 1994. Additional activity includes preparing specialized gazetteers of townships, "mountains", and "rivers". The responsibility of standardizing names lies with the Home Office, but if there are serious problems with the names of administrative divisions or major cities, then Parliamentary action may be necessary.

28. In the report of Hungary (E/CONF.91/L.44) it was stated that the Committee on Geographical Names is an inter-departmental body housed in the Ministry of Agriculture. The new act relating to surveying and mapping increased an awareness of the names committee. There has been a new and comprehensive set of orthographic guidelines established. Work continues on the

development of an automated database of names based on a map scale of 1:10,000. An act relating to ethnic and national minorities passed in 1993, allows for preservation of culture and language, hence names as well.

29. In the report of the Czech Republic (E/CONF.91/L.50) it was stated that the national standardization of names is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Regional Development; Office of Surveying, and Mapping, and Cadastre; and Cadastral offices. The Toponymic Guidelines for Map and other Editors was recently published (1997). A digital database was created in 1994, based on the national base map series at 1:10,000. There was regular participation in the East, Central and South-East Europe Division as well as at an international symposium on geographical names held in Vienna in 1996.

30. The report of Ukraine (E/CONF.91/L.51) stated that in 1993 a National Council on Geographical Names was established; it is responsible for all aspects of names standardization in the country. Glossaries of major geographical names worldwide have been issued for use in schools. The romanization system for transcription of the Ukrainian cyrillic alphabet was presented to UNGEGN in 1996, and will soon be submitted to the government of Ukraine.

31. South Africa reported (E/CONF.91/L.53) that since 1994, the number of provinces had increased from four to nine, and official languages from two to eleven. This has had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on toponymy in South Africa. All names

from the eleven official languages are endonyms because they are from within the country; generally the name from the prevalent local language is used. This type of language question is likely reflected throughout Africa. In South Africa, each of the languages now has a standard written orthography.

32. The report of Poland (E/Conf.91/L.54) stated that thus far, there is no official body responsible for standardizing geographical names, although there are two commissions that establish names: one for names within Poland and one for foreign names. Names are being collected for an automated database relative to a map scale of 1:10,000. Several publications containing lists of names and guidelines were published. There was participation in several meetings of the East, Central and South-East Europe Division as well participation with observer status at the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division and at the Baltic Division meetings. In 1994, the Cartographic Commission of the Polish Geographic Society held a special session entitled "Database of Geographical Names as an Element of Editing Topographic Maps".

33. Austria reported (E/CONF.91/L.61) that the Board on Geographical Names held several meetings over the past two years. A "Symposium on Geographical Names" was held on the occasion of the 100th meeting of the Board and the celebration of the millennium of Austria. In addition to official names and locative attributes, the automated database contains instructions relating to cartographic type placement. There has been considerable progress

made on the revised edition of the "Historical Place-Names Book of Burgenland" and it is hoped that it will be published in about three years. There are also local projects for historical maps and the publication of work on the tradition of place names of Austria and Southern Tyrol since 1200.

34. The report of Australia (E/CONF.91/L.66) stated that the Committee on Geographical Names in Australia (CGNA) has a coordinating role in Australian naming activities. Each Australian State and Territory is responsible for geographical naming and has legislative policy and procedures to support the process. The mission of the Committee is to "develop national standards and guidelines for geographical names to support the national spatial data infrastructure of Australia" (ASDI). Its activities are reported to the Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping (ICSM) of Australia and include activities from its biennial meetings. Activities have included a national gazetteer, toponymic guidelines, Internet information, Indigenous place names, a national place names project, international development, and the development of a strategic plan.

35. The Asia, South-East and Pacific, South-West Division (E/CONF.91/L.67) reported that three meetings were held, including presentations of papers, and a review of projects such as the 1:10,500,000 scale Division's Place Names Map. The toponymic training course scheduled for Darwin in 1997 was postponed, but hopefully can be held in mid-1998.

36. The report of China (E/CONF.91/INF/23) stated that the

standardization efforts for names in China have been transferred to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and responsibilities at the provincial, municipal, and county levels have been incorporated into local governments. Numerous publications about various aspects of naming were issued. Since 1989, ten training courses have been held with about 1,100 students in attendance; all aspects of applied toponymy, including romanization are covered in these courses. There exists an automated database of names based on a map scale of 1:1,000,000 with an upgrade to 1:250,000 now in progress. In 1994, a conference was held on national minority names in Yunnan Province; more than 50 papers were read.

37. In the report of Japan (E/CONF.91/INF.4), it was indicated that there may be more than 10 million names in use in Japan, but that only about 1 million of these have been collected from maps at a scale of 1:25,000. There is presently no single authority for geographical names, although various agencies are attempting to cooperate and coordinate activities. However, there are rules for standardizing names of populated areas, "mountains", undersea features, and features in Antarctica. In 1997, a concise gazetteer was prepared from maps at a scale of 1:1,000,000.

38. Argentina reported (E/CONF.91/INF/6) that the Military Institute is responsible for all aspects of national geographical activity, and there are official maps at a variety of scales. Many provinces produce maps at very large scales. The office of Naval Services is responsible for the names of maritime features, names of features in Antarctica, and foreign names.

39. The report of the United States (E/CONF.91/INF/7) stated that the United States Board on Geographic Names was originally created in 1890, but was created in its present form by public law in 1947. It is divided into domestic and foreign committees with Advisory Committees for names of undersea features, names in Antarctica, and names of extraterrestrial features. Most foreign names activities involve database development and enhancement, as well as the creation of a fully searchable Internet web site. There have been over twenty revised, conventional foreign gazetteers released since in 1992 and a review of the guide to romanization systems. Domestic activity included a major revision of the publication Principles, Policies, and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names, and action on more than 1,500 names proposed since 1992. More than 400,000 additional entries were added to the national automated names database. The National Digital Gazetteer was released, and a fully searchable Internet web site was made operational. There was active participation in training courses in Central and South America as well as in Latvia and South Africa. Experts also attended meetings (as observers) of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division and of the Baltic Division.

40. With regard to the change in the domestic policy on the use of diacritical marks, all such marks may be used if included in the Roman alphabet. "Insignificant features" are considered by some US States as features too small to be named; the Federal Board has no such policy.

41. The report of the United Kingdom (E/CONF.91/INF/17) explained the new system of administrative organization. While this has been completed in Wales, it is not expected to be completed in England until April 1998. The reason was explained for a two-tiered system in some areas and a one-tiered system in other areas. The new system has been implemented gradually, so there is not yet an official set of maps showing the administrative units.

42. The report of Switzerland (E/CONF.91/CRP.3) indicated that there is no central authority for standardization of geographical names, but that there are four different authorities at the federal level. Most of the activity is at the cantonal and local levels. There has been continued work in populating the automated names database at the federal level, and data fields include the name as it appears on the national map, altitude (in most cases), locative attributes, and map reference. In 1996, Rhaeto-Roman became the fourth official language in Switzerland. However, the law does not specifically reference activity with regard to geographical names, largely because they have been in use and are already official. There has been much cooperation with StAGN, the organization for names standardization in the German language. It has to be verified whether the name of the country will be rendered in Rheato-Roman.

43. In the report of Korea (E/CONF.91/CRP.6) it was stated that the official government authority for standardization of geographical names was established in 1981 based on a surveying law. There are three levels: a central committee; special city,

metropolitan area, and province committees; and city, district, and county committees. Korea has held eight seminars and conferences on international issues, since 1992.

44. The report of France (E/CONF.91/CRP.10) noted work on the standard base map review, and tourist maps at a large scale. There has been continued development of an administrative automated database focusing on names of communes, departments and regions that all agencies are required to use. The list of countries and capitals of the world has been maintained, and a glossary of dialect terms compiled. Also, the translation of the UNGEGN Glossary of Terminology is in progress with cooperation from the Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada.

45. Discussion ensued about the transliteration system used for countries of North Africa. At present, there are two systems being used: for North Africa, it is a French system agreed to by the affected parties; for the remainder of the Arab-speaking world, it is the amended Beirut System. It was explained that the Arab League wishes to propose acceptance of a universal transliteration system that has been finalized, except for minor discrepancies involving four characters.

46. Greece reported (E/CONF.91/CRP.12) that as yet there is no centralized function for collecting and standardizing geographical names, but that different organizations have responsibility for different categories of names. A working group was established in 1997 to study the status, structure, and functions of a national names authority. Official maps (and names) are produced by the

Hellenic Military Geographic Service and the Hellenic Naval Hydrographic Service. A new edition of the Gazetteer of Greece was published in the mid 1980s, and there is a corresponding automated database that is continually updated. Geographical names in the gazetteer may appear in "dimotiki" or "kathareuousa" and even in foreign forms, in some cases.

47. The Netherlands (E/CONF.91/CRP.13) reported that since 1988, official names have been available in digital form based on a map scale of 1:50,000, but have now been enhanced to a map scale of 1:25,000. There has been much work on training courses, including participation in courses in South Africa and advising on courses for the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division. There is increased use of Frisian names; they are becoming official and are reflected on topographic maps.

48. The report of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (E/CONF.91/CRP.14) indicated that there had been five Divisional meetings since 1992. Agenda items included toponymic guidelines, glossary of terminology, training, exonyms, and country names, as well as various toponymic activities within the member countries. There was participation in the symposium held on the occasion of the 100th meeting of StAGN (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names), and participation in activities celebrating the millenium of Austria. The German Glossary of Toponymic Terminology, based on the UNGEGN glossary version 2 was published.

49. The report of Norway (E/CONF.91/CRP.15) stressed that the primary principles inherent in the Norwegian Place Name Act of 1990

are local pronunciation and current spelling principles. The same principles apply to names in multilingual areas. The Norwegian mapping authority has organized local names advisory services to assist in names standardization. Almost 750,000 names have been collected, many of which are for "microtoponyms". The names on the 1:50,000 scale maps have not yet been evaluated to determine whether they comply with the Place Name Act. The Norwegian Mapping Authority is now responsible for establishing a database of names that do comply with the Act; the database will be available to the public. Names in multilingual areas are to be treated in the same way as Norwegian names, but questions still exist concerning minority languages, including North Saami, Lule Saami, South Saami, and Kven (Finnish). A Conference sponsored by the Norden Division on "Foreign Names in Nordic countries" was held in Oslo in May 1997. "Microtoponyms" refer to small features such as municipal parks which may not necessarily be named on maps. This should be a topic for discussion at a later time. It was noted that this term was not part of the UNGEGN Glossary of Terminology.

50. In the report of the Russian Federation (E/CONF.91/CRP.18), it was indicated that there have been major changes in toponymic standardization procedures since 1992, with priorities set for improving procedures, developing a proposal for legislation compiling manuals and references, revising the application of the transliteration system for cartographic application, developing a digital database, and cooperating with other countries. In 1994, an inter-departmental committee was created to standardize

geographical name usage. The committee developed principles and procedures for data collection. A draft law on naming geographical features was submitted to the Duma and was approved in March 1997. Now there is a legal basis for naming in the Russian Federation.

51. The report of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (E/CONF.91/CRP.23) stated that about 300,000 geographical names have been collected from maps at various scales, including 1:25,000 and smaller. A digital database is being prepared for these geographical names. There was also participation in the Fourteenth Session of the East, Central and South-East Europe Division in Budapest in 1997.

52. The report of Cuba (E/CONF.91/CRP.24) indicated that there has been a National Committee of Geographical Names since 1987. Decree 150 of 1989 called for re-organizing geographical names in Cuba by expanding procedures, providing a legal basis, and a process of approval for names. Procedures for investigating and collecting geographical names have been implemented. A geographical dictionary will be published in 1998, and a digital database is being established that should be available later in 1998.

53. The report of Cyprus (E/CONF.91/CRP.25) stated that the authority for making names official was established in 1983 and made official for all publications in 1988. Many names have a cultural basis and are ancient names dating back 2,500 years. Tourist maps utilizing official names have been designed at map scales of 1:5,000; 1:15,000; and 1:50,000. An official Gazetteer of Cyprus (Volume I) has been completed and is available to the

public. Also, a concise gazetteer containing about 5,000 names is available and numerous topical glossaries are being prepared. ELOT 740, the transliteration system approved by UNGEGN is being used.

Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names (item 8)

54. In the report E/CONF.91/INF/12, the system of State Names Authorities in the United States was explained. Forty-two of the fifty States have such an authority. The Federal Board relies on recommendations from these authorities to assure local use and acceptance, which is the names policy of paramount importance. In the eight States where there is no such authority, there is direct contact with local governments.

55. The report on United Nations Resolutions (E/CONF.91/CRP.1) was presented, and the delegate from Canada indicated that the collection of resolutions adopted at each of the six United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names has been updated. The resolutions are listed by subject and cross-referenced by Conference. They are also available in English and French on the Canadian Geographical Names Internet Web site.

Meetings and conferences: United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (item 17(a))

56. No documents were submitted for item 17 (a).

57. The President noted that there have been two meetings of UNGEGN, in 1994 and 1996 in New York and Geneva respectively. The

work of the Working Groups was discussed and it was noted that much has been accomplished regarding training, toponymic guidelines, gazetteers, and the development of Internet sites. It was also mentioned that numerous countries had been successful in establishing national names authorities since the last Conference. There has been cooperation with professional organizations including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa that is interested in working towards revitalizing the Divisions of UNGEGN in Africa. There was cooperation with the International Cartographic Association (ICA) and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), as well as with the Place Names Survey of the United States (PLANSUS), which had asked that its Vice-President, Mr. Payne (United States), serve as liaison with UNGEGN.

Meetings and conferences: Divisional and interdivisional meetings and programmes (item 17(b))

58. No documents were submitted for item 17(b).

Meetings and conferences: National names meetings, conferences and symposiums (item 17(c))

59. The delegate from the United States discussed the history, establishment and growth of the Western States Geographic Names Council indicating that it was founded in 1976 as a small group providing a forum for the Rocky Mountain States to discuss problems relating to cartographic application of names. After two years, the group expanded to include all western States, and in 1991 voted to all States west of the Mississippi River. In 1997, the group

became national, including all States. The Council's annual conference in applied toponymy now attracts almost 100 participants. The Place Names Survey of the United States (PLANSUS) was founded almost 35 years ago for systematic collection of names in the United States. As this is now being accomplished by the United States Government, PLANSUS has re-focused its goals to promote toponymic research, to provide methodological assistance and to establish minimum requirements for toponymic research.

Meetings and conferences: international names meetings, conferences and symposiums (item 17(d))

60. The observer from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) informed the delegates of an ISO group working on systems of romanization and noted the extreme importance for close collaboration. It was noted that there are likely other projects of ISO that would be of common interest.

61. The delegate of Austria (E/CONF.91/L.64) described the Symposium on the occasion of the 100th meeting of StAGN (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) and the celebration of Austria's millenium. Eleven experts lectured on various subjects, including geographical names in developing countries, names in multilingual areas, linguistic aspects of geographical names, and names standardization.

62. The delegate from Korea (E/CONF/91/CRP.9) discussed the eight sessions held on the question of Sea of Japan/East Sea. Many guest lecturers gave papers on current and historical aspects of the issue.

Economic and social benefits of the national and international standardization of geographical names (item 18)

63. No documents were presented for item 18.

64. The President noted the usefulness of the UNGEGN Newsletter as a forum for informational papers, announcements and notices. He also made reference of the explosion of information available from the Internet; that medium had become a most useful tool for toponymy, both for disseminating information and for interactive database retrieval.