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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN
THE USSR BETWEEN 1982 AND 1984
(Submitted by the USSR)

After the Fourth UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names activities in this field developed in the USSR in the trends, stipulated both by the internal needs of this country and the resolutions of the UN conferences.

As previously, the main trends remain the same, that is:

- development and revision of methodic aids on various aspects of geographical names treatment;
- compilation of normative dictionaries of geographical names;
- compilation of glossaries of toponymic vocabulary;
- control over naming and renaming of features;
- international co-operation.

As it has been already mentioned at the previous meetings, methodic aids are developed primarily for Russian, as the language of inter-nation communication. In this domain the fundamental "Guidelines for initial collection and recording of geographical names under topographic survey" have been extensively revised and added. Though its main purpose corresponds with its title, the Guidelines can be as well used as a training aid in courses of topography..

Instructions for Russian rendering of geographical names of Bashkir ASSR, Roumania, China, Finland have been revised and reissued during the previous two years. Similar instructions for Afghanistan, Angola and Mozambique have been prepared for the first time.

Extension of Soviet and international exploring of the Antarctic and World Ocean considerably increases the amount of new place-names. These names are often selected and given by explorers, who lack toponymic knowledge. With a view to standardize in the Russian language the toponymy of regions beyond a single sovereignty the "Guidelines for normalization of geographical names of the Antarctic" and the "Guidelines for normalization of geographical names of World Ocean" have been prepared.

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Both documents contain basic criteria for selection of names for unnamed features and rules for Russian rendering of foreign place-names.

Another, no less important way to introduce normalized geographical names and, thus, to ensure normalization on national level, is the development of normative dictionaries of geographical names. In 1983 the second edition of the "Dictionary of geographical names of the USSR" was published (includes about 17.000 units). The Dictionary contains the names of all cities, urban localities and regional centres, administrative units of the 1st and 2nd order, as well as physiogeographic features, appearing on reference maps. For all features administrative units are indicated. For physiogeographic features additional description of their location is given. The Dictionary has been considerably revised and added in comparison with the first edition (1968). All changes in place-names and administrative division, as well as revision of some rules for Russian rendering of names from languages of the USSR peoples have been taken into consideration. The Dictionary is useful for information agencies and publishing houses staff, cartographers, as well as for those, engaged in national economy, and mass readership.

At the same time work on compiling regional dictionaries of geographical names for the USSR territory has been continued. The dictionaries of geographical names of Mari ASSR, Belgorod oblast', Pskov oblast' were accomplished. The distinction between regional dictionaries in coverage of territory, volume, format and contents is stipulated by the peculiarities of areas, ethnic composition, availability of toponymic data. However, all the dictionaries provide normalized names of a region and indication of administrative units for all features.

Similar work has been carried out with respect to foreign countries. In 1982-84 the dictionaries names of Austria, Somaly, Portugal, France and China were issued. Compilation of the dictionaries of Kenya, Roumania, Australia, Afghanistan, Laos is finished. The dictionary of place-names of Czechoslovakia is under publication. These dictionaries also varying to some extent in contents and format are aimed at providing uniformity in Russian rendering and spelling of place-names in publications.

It is necessary to emphasize, that compilation of dictionaries is preceded by thorough and labour-consuming work on maintenance and verification of names data base, ascertainment of correct forms of names, variants of names, allonyms etc.

This year the "List of names of countries and territo-

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ries of the World" is being republished (1st edition - 1979).

The work on compilation of glossaries of toponymic vocabulary goes on. The glossaries have rather specific contents. Usually they contain a wide range of vacables, namely, current generic geographical terms, local and dialectal terms used as appellatives, as well as obsolete words (or roots) preserved only in toponymy as toponymic stems or elements. As a rule, these words concern geographical peculiarities of a given area, economic and cultural activity of its population. Usually glossaries described cite phonetic or spelling variants of words, interpret obsolete words, or words which lost their primary meaning, indicate semantic ranges of current words. Often areal distribution of terms, their etymology and language affiliation is also given. The glossaries of toponymic vocabulary are intended for specialists, engaged in collection and treatment of place-names. They are as well can be useful for geographers, ethnographers and linguists. Now the "Glossary of Russian toponymic vocabulary of the European part of the RSFSR" is nearing completion. The "Glossary of toponymic vocabulary of Latin America" is published.

The USSR service on geographical names and its central body - Permanent Joint Commission on Geographical Names supervises naming and renaming of features.

The Commission receives written proposals, made according to a standard form, for new names of mountains, newly built stations on Baikalo-Amurskaja railway and other railways, undersea features discovered or explored by Soviet exploratory or fishing vessels, and so on.

The proposals concerning changes of names of physiographic features are also under supervision of the Commission. All proposals are thoroughly considered and either adopted or rejected. In the second case the Commission decision is comprehensively motivated. A special trend in the field of geographical names is the development and introduction of automated systems of collection, processing, storage and retrieval of names data. The AIRST system (Automated Information Retrieval System for Toponyms) is being used for producing indexes and listing of names in map-making. Simultaneously researches on the expansion of names data file and its use for reduction of manual labour are carried on.

As for international co-operation, the following branches of work and results should be mentioned.

In 1983 the methodic guidelines for the use of the state standard of the USSR № 16786-71 (COMECON ST № 1362-78) "Romanization System for the Cyrillic Alphabet" were elaborated. This document guides the use in cartography of the

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COMECON standard, which was in 1981 adopted as the USSR state standard. Now the new Romanization system is being introduced. The reference maps of the USSR with names in the standard Roman alphabet are under publication.

According to the resolutions of the tenth session of the UN Group of Experts and the programmes of corresponding working groups, verified list of Russian forms for country names and Russian version of the "Glossary of technical terminology used in the standardization of geographical names" have been prepared.