

**Group of Experts on  
Geographical names**

**Twelfth Session  
Geneva, 29 September - 7 October 1986**

---

**WORKING PAPER No.39**

29 September 1986

Agenda Item 6(d)

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files

Report by the Convenor



(GAZETTEERS, COMPUTER ASSISTANCE)

Report by the Convenor

1. Response to the reports issued by the convenor of the Working Group since the last session of the Group of Experts has been modest indeed.

Major items of interest from the replies received are summarised below.

2. South Africa

a. The Office of Onomastic Research has been given the task of producing a dictionary of geographical Names which will be prepared from data provided by the National Place Names Committee (NPNC) and the Office of Surveys and Mapping.

b. Two gazetteers are in course of preparation - a national gazetteer for national use and a national gazetteer for international use representing respectively Type A and Type D in the classifications of the Third Conference on Geographical Names. Both will conform to the specifications of Recommendation E of Resolution 4 of the First Conference.

c. An IBM 4381 Model 1 computer is employed by ORC in the preparation of the gazetteers. As much toponymic data as possible will be included in the gazetteers including etymological data where the information is available.

d. There remain to be solved some of the problems of alphabetizing. The employment of English as the standard for alphabetizing and entry sequencing has removed one of the obstacles. Other languages are cross-referenced to the English language entry.

e. Pronunciation guides will not be included. Pronunciation varies with the language of the individual and that compounds the difficulty of furnishing pronunciations in this multi-lingual country.

3. Federal Republic of Germany

The Gazetteer of the Republic produced in 1981 and based on series 1404 is now beginning to point the way to the future. It was the first gazetteer of the country and consideration is now being given to other map scales as a basis for future work.

4. Sweden is establishing two massive data banks of names. The Swedish land data bank is being created at the Central Board for Real Estate Data (Centralnämnden för fastighetsdata" GÄVLE). Each property unit (there are about 4 million) is given a designation and entered into a register which records the municipality, the habitation-name and the register number. The final list will include all the villages and other habitation names (they may be simply the names of individual buildings in some cases) comprising about 125,000 in all from the rural areas. The records will cover the 284 municipalities and the 2,566 parishes. It will then be possible to select all the habitation names in a given municipality. About 35% of the data is now stored. Completion is anticipated in 1995. Before inclusion names undergo a linguistic examination.

a. The second data file is that of the Central Office of the National Land

Survey to which reference was made in E/Conf 74/2 46 of the Geneva Conference in 1982.

To date all the names on the 1:250 000 scale maps are accessioned. Names from the 1:50 000 and 1:100 000 (Northern Sweden) are being collated. When complete the names can be extracted by geographical coordinates or by administrative category eg country, municipality or parish. Names which are abbreviated are recorded in their full form in the data-base. Hyphenated names are recorded as a single, combined entry.

b. Coordinates are based on the name position on the map. They may be the lower-left corner of the name or the middle or the end of the name. A code identifies which is used. The coordinates are then used to express the location of the feature to which the name applies.

#### 5. Israel

Details of the bi-scriptual gazetteer of Israel are given in a paper submitted by the Expert from Israel at the present session.

#### 6. United Kingdom

The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names has now been provided with its computer.

The Ordnance Survey of Great Britain has finally issued its gazetteer in microfiche form. The gazetteer is updated annually.

#### 7. General

Experience of the past two years and previous years indicates the greater difficulty in achieving progress by correspondence as compared with discussion during sessions of the Group of Experts.