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Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

WORKING PAPER

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Provisional Agenda

Geographical Names Standardization
in the USSR in 1984-1986

Geographical names standardization since the XIth Session of the UN Expert Group on Geographical Names has been undertaken in the following basic directions:

- development and revision of methodical and normative instructions on various aspects of work with geographical names;
- geographical names dictionaries compilation;
- toponymic glossaries compilation;
- monitoring the activities on new objects naming and renaming;
- participation in international cooperation.

In the field of toponymic guidelines production
and updating

The Soviet toponymic guideline features and structure were characterized in the Working Paper No.39 presented at the XI Session of the UN Expert Group on Geographical Names. For two years since XIth Session the following documents have been added to the list of toponymic guideline valid on the USSR territory:

- Guideline on Antarctic Geographical Names Normalization (Moscow, 1984). It defines basic rules and technique of Antarctic geographical names normalization in cartographic, reference and other issues in the USSR;

- Guideline on Submarine World Ocean Objects Names Normalization (Moscow, 1985). Its objective is to regulate usage of existing submarine World Ocean objects names, naming the newly discovered objects,

spelling of Russian and right rendering of foreign names, Latin transliteration of Russian names. The Manual is intended first of all for expeditions, investigating ocean and sea bottom, fishing in the World Ocean waters, for hydrographers, cartographers and other specialists studying the World Ocean submarine entities. The Manual was developed in conformity with instructions of the International Oceanographical Commission monitored by the International Hydrographical Organization;

- Revised and enlarged Manual on Acquisition and Establishment of Geographical Names on Topographical Plans and Maps (Moscow, 1985). It contains general rules for geographical names acquisition and establishment in the process of compilation and revision topographical maps and plans in the scales from 1:500 to 1:1 000 000 included. The Manual holds requirements and technique of preliminary geographical names acquisition and analysis during the field and office works, large - scale maps and plans and 1:200 000 to 1:1 000 000 scale maps compilation and revision. It is intended to facilitate specialists in topographic work and can be used as a training toponymic textbook for topographers.

The following activities have been undertaken in the USSR in the field of names reproduction from languages of the Soviet peoples and foreign countries during last two years:

- revised "Instruction on Russian Rendering of Komi ASSR Geographical Names" was published (Moscow, 1986);
- compilation of the "Methodical Manual on the USSR Geographic Entities Nomination" is being completed;
- instructions on Russian transcription of Latvian SSR and Hungarian geographic names are being prepared for edition.

In the field of normative dictionaries preparation

The two-year period since the XI Session of the UN Expert Group has resulted with development and publication of Kenya (Moscow, 1984), China (Moscow, 1984) and Czechoslovakia (Moscow, 1984) geographical names dictionaries.

Kenya geographical names dictionary contains more than two thousand names most commonly used on maps, in geography literature and in reference editions. The dictionary includes names of administrative units (provinces and regions), the largest localities, railway stations, airports, hydro power stations, mineral deposits, major physical-geographical objects (rivers, lakes, islands, etc.) and object of tou-

rist interest. Names are given in Russian transcription and in Roman script. The objects administrative position and geographical coordinates are indicated. Along with that the dictionary Annex contains Kenya administrative territorial division and basic geographical terms and some other words most often forming parts of names.

China geographical names dictionary is published in three volumes. It includes more than ten thousand most often used geographical names: administrative units (provinces, autonomic regions, etc.) and centers names, names of the major localities and physical geographical entities and of some China sights.

Czechoslovakia geographical names dictionary contains more than five thousand names, about four thousand of which are locality names, more than hundred and twenty - administrative territorial units names, the rest - physical geographical entities names.

Dictionaries of geographical names of Antarctica, Australia and Yakut SSR are being prepared for edition.

Second print of the reference book "World States and Territories Names" was launched in 1986. It gives names of sovereign states, colonies and territories of special status and is intended for cartographic, publishing and various information services. Full official names of states and territories and corresponding abbreviations, their states or administrative centers names and the date of joining the UN are listed. States to which dependant territories belong are indicated. Full forms of names are followed by abbreviations used in Soviet editions.

The basic result in the field of toponymic glossaries compilation in 1984-1986 is the issue of the "Folk Geographical Terms Vocabulary" (Moscow, 1984).

Monitoring of geographical objects naming and renaming activities in the USSR is accomplished by the Permanent Interbranch Coordination Commission under Chief Administration on Geodesy and Cartography. The Commission maintains constant control of primary normalization and geographical names alteration, considers and works out suggestions for naming and renaming the USSR geographical entities, Antarctic and the World Ocean submerged objects discovered or firstly explored by the Soviet research expeditions.

A special branch of work in the field of geographical names is development of automated system for geographical data acquisition, processing , storage and output. Implementation of automated toponymical information - retrieval system is being continued. It was employed for

atlas geographical names indices preparation.

The following activities and results should be noted in international collaboration.

- In conformity with the XI Session of the UN Expert Group decisions the project of "Statute on the UN Expert Group on Geographical Names Activities" was improved. The project was the execution of the IV UN Conference on Geographical Names Standardization resolution No.22. The perfected version of this document is presented for discussion to the XII UN Expert Group Session according to the 13th item of the provisional agenda.

The "Statute" combines currently acting "Aims and Functions", "Modus operandi" and the Expert Group "Rules of Procedure". The "Statute" structure corresponds to the UN basic document structure - its Charter. The "Statute" conforms to the contents of the said documents to the highest possible degree and along with that contains the UN Expert Group aims and principles of its activity: collective nature, recommendation character of decisions, national standardization as a basis for international one, etc.

The Expert Group staff characteristics: structure, Group departments forming order, senior staff election are separated into a special item. This permitted to avoid duplication of this information, that exists in the acting documents.

The Expert Group Rules of procedure are formulated in accordance with the Economical and Social UN Council typical procedure rules considering characteristic features and current practice of the Group activities. Accurate definition of decision adoption principles is given. It is stated that decisions on technical problems are adopted by coordination (consensus) and on procedure - by voting.

Objectives and functions were detached into separate sections. Section 12 "Sessions and Meetings Documents" is added with instructions on session documentation rules that exclude possibility of session materials use for political interpretation without special affirmation.

- The USSR participated in the UN Expert Group on Geographical Names preparation of the state names list. Specified list taking into account changes of names since the XI Session is proposed for XII Session of the UN Expert Group.

- Practical employment of standard Romanization System was carried out.

The state standard "Romanization System for the Cyrillic Alphabet" (No.16876-71) was adopted in the USSR in 1980 and is used in cartographic and other issues intended for international circulation with restrictions imposed to facilitate geographical names standardization and defined in special "Methodical Instruction on GOST 16876-71 (COMECON ST.1362-78) Employment" assumed in 1983 by the Chief Administration on Geodesy and Cartography.

Such a Romanization System was utilized on Moscow and Leningrad plans issued in 1985 for the XII International Youth and Students Festival guests. The USSR 1:8 000 000 scale map was reissued with all geographical names except Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian ones given according to the state standard and the map name, legend and short geographical names list explanation are translated into English, French, Spanish and German.

The new Romanization system was used in the timetable of passenger trains connecting the USSR and foreign Europe and Asia towns for the first time in 1986.

Gradually the new system is being used on road signs on the USSR territory, primarily on foreign tourists routs.

Nowadays the new third edition of the World Atlas is being prepared. It will be issued, like the former, in two versions - in Russian for domestic use and in the adopted Latin (see Annex) for international use.

As it has been already mentioned at the previous meeting this system of Romanization is utilized as for Russian names transliteration so for all USSR republics except Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian names. Names of the latter republics are written in their national spelling.

Participating in the UN Expert Group revision of Glossary of Technical Terminology used in the Standardization of Geographical Names the Soviet specialists propose to add the terms used for geographical name standardization with the following words and their definitions:

Name ensemble - geographical names set, locally integrated and united by a general extralinguistic idea.

Astronym - space body name.

Hybrid name - geographical name consisting of different language elements.

The Great Britain suggestion made on the XI UN Expert Group on Geographical Names Session (working document No.35) about the terms "eponym", "eponymic name", "godonym" inclusion into the Dictionary is

supported. The following Russian equivalents are given:

Eponym - personal name giving rise to the term.

Eponymic name - geographical name formed from a personal name.

Godonym - the city linear object name.

Proposals are sent to the Expert Group secretary.