

UNITED NATIONS

---

**Group of Experts on  
Geographical names**

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

---

**WORKING PAPER** No.68

2 October 1986

Agenda Item 5

Report of the Working Group on Gazetteers and Geographic  
Names of the Pan American Institute on Geography and History (PAIGH)

Submitted by Richard R. Randall



REPORT ON THE WORKING GROUP ON GAZETTEERS AND GEOGRAPHIC  
NAMES OF THE PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE ON GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY (PAIGH)

This Working Paper consists of a report of the Working Group on Gazetteers and Geographic Names of the Pan American Institute on Geography and History that was prepared by the undersigned as Chairman. The report summarizes activities during the first several months of 1986. Accompanying is a resolution adopted by PAIGH authorities that concerns the creation of a Liaison with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, specifically its Latin American Division. The Vice-Chairman of the Working Group, Miguel Cano, Director of the Dirección Cartográfico Nacional of Venezuela, functions also as PAIGH Liaison to the UNGEEN. A major factor in establishing the PAIGH Working Group was the agreement some years ago to produce a PAIGH topographic map series at 1:250,000. Production of national gazetteers based on names on the maps was seen as a logical next step. Processing of names for maps and gazetteers also lead to the expansion of the Working Group's mission to include the full range of national names standardization programmes. For these reasons, the PAIGH authorities support the described activities of the Working Group.

Submitted by  
Richard R. Randall  
Chairman  
PAIGH Working Group on Gazetteers  
and Geographic Names



PAIGH WORKING GROUP ON GAZETTEERS AND GEOGRAPHIC NAMES  
CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 8  
2 June 1986

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF WORKING GROUP

1. This letter describes events of the past several months and outlines plans for the future. As stated in my last Circular Letter dated 17 February, I believe the Working Group is in good health and will accomplish its goals.

2. At the XVth Consultation of the PAIGH Commission on Cartography in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 6-12 April, I met with several members of the Working Group and other individuals to discuss our program and to seek further support for our objectives. These meetings and ensuing discussions gave me an opportunity to illustrate in some detail the practical benefits and the importance of our names program, while at the same time showing the progress we have made in recent months. As a result of these sessions, we accomplished the following:

a. We agreed to change the structure of the Working Group by abolishing the positions of Regional Project Coordinators, by appointing a Vice Chairman, and by changing my title to Chairman.

b. Venezuela agreed to name Lic. Miguel Cano as Vice Chairman. He is the Director of the Instituto Cartografico Nacional of Venezuela and has been an active supporter of our program. We are fortunate to have him in this new role.

c. The Cartography Commission endorsed the program of the Working Group by supporting the budget proposal I described in my last Circular Letter. (The XIIIth PAIGH General Assembly meeting in Brasilia the following week also approved the proposal but with a reduction of funds for the first year to \$4000. Similar amounts are set aside for the next three years. Please see comments in paragraph 4. below.)

d. The Cartography Commission (and the General Assembly) also approved a resolution affirming the Working Group's program and calling for the appointment of a PAIGH liaison to the Latin American Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. This liaison will help assure the advancement of the goals of names standardization in Latin America. Attached to this letter is a copy of the resolution.

3. The results of the Rio meeting point the way to important program actions, some of which were already mentioned in the previous letter.

a. With the help of Mr. Rafael Petition of the Inter American Geodetic Survey, work on a new directory of names agencies will proceed. The plan is to obtain updated information from each PAIGH country and to publish the item by September 1 of this year. Several nations have submitted data and all others will be asked to provide current information.

b. Mr. Petiton will work with us to develop a names training course which, we hope, can begin in about a year's time. To reach this goal, we need to accomplish the following: find a country willing to provide training facilities; prepare a syllabus of courses; develop training materials (including texts or training manuals, documents on practical office and field procedures, and maps and items designed for field use); and obtain the services of qualified lecturers. I am pleased to inform you that IAGS has already received useful suggestions from several PAIGH countries.

c. Liaison with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names is an important matter. The PAIGH liaison will represent the organization as a whole in any UN programs in order to build the most useful ties to that international body. As suggested in the PAIGH resolution, however, members participating in UN work should also understand that the PAIGH program can provide an efficient vehicle for the promotion of names standardization in the region. In this connection, I have received information about a meeting of the UNEGN Latin American Division in Mexico next August, and I believe it vital for PAIGH to have representation on that occasion. Further, the UNEGN will hold its 12th session in Geneva, Switzerland from September 30 to October 8, 1986, and again PAIGH representation will be important. I will write again on this topic in the near future.

d. Meantime, work on the PAIGH gazetteer program should continue, and I encourage all members to promote this program. Mr. Petiton will also communicate with you on this matter.

4. Our good planning and hard work have won the confidence of PAIGH authorities who have generously provided funds to support our program. I will employ these funds to the best possible advantage to assure the success of our program. For example, the funds may be used to support a meeting to plan the training course. They may be used to pay for lecturers at the training course. They may pay for course materials.

5. In closing, I again say how pleased I have been to see our program move ahead. I look forward to a year of progress with you.

Richard R. Randall  
Chairman  
PAIGH Working Group on  
Gazetteers and Geographic Names

PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON ESTABLISHMENT OF LIAISON BETWEEN THE PAIGH WORKING GROUP ON GAZETTEERS AND GEOGRAPHIC NAMES (CARTOGRAPHY COMMISSION) AND THE LATIN AMERICAN DIVISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

PRESENTED AT XVTH CONSULTATION ON CARTOGRAPHY, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, APRIL, 1986 BY DR. RICHARD R. RANDALL, CHAIRMAN OF WORKING GROUP.

---

WHEREAS a number of Latin American member states of PAIGH have indicated a readiness to work on a coordinated program developed by the Working Group on Gazetteers and Geographic Names to produce national gazetteers and to establish or strengthen national bodies to standardize geographic names in their respective countries;

WHEREAS some states have initiated action to accomplish the objectives of the program;

WHEREAS these activities are increasingly recognized by participating member states as a natural function of PAIGH, whose concerns for geography, history, and cartography are essential components of the field of geographic names (or toponymy);

WHEREAS the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) through its Latin America Division also has a program on geographic names in this region;

WHEREAS few PAIGH member states have participated on a regular basis in United Nations names programs or the program of the UNGEGN Latin American Division; and

WHEREAS an additional number of PAIGH member states appear ready to support the program of the PAIGH Working Group on Gazetteers and Geographic Names;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

PAIGH member states continue to support the program of the cited Working Group;

PAIGH member states recognize the useful work carried out by United Nations in the field of geographic names and the contributions made by a number of distinguished individuals in Latin America over the years; and

PAIGH member states establish a formal liaison with the UNGEGN Latin American Division to keep that organization fully informed of PAIGH work, to collaborate with that division to help assure that the PAIGH program can reach its fullest potential, and otherwise to create the basis for the maximum advancement of the important goals of names standardization throughout Latin America.