

DRAFT REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
ON THE WORK OF ITS FOURTEENTH SESSION

UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC CONFERENCES

74. Mr. Randall reported that most of the twenty-two countries who had replied to the questionnaire prepared by the working group on evaluation had advocated closer co-operation with Regional Cartographic Conferences. He drew attention to the fact that the previous four Regional Cartographic Conferences had resulted in resolutions calling for closer cooperation with UNGEGN. Mr. Sievers expressed his belief that greater co-operation was necessary in view of the increase in cartographic technology. This view was endorsed by Mr. Kadmon, who referred to resolution 11 of the Fifth United Nations Conference and stressed the desirability of co-operation between cartographers and toponymists in the area of non-toponymic text on mapping.

75. Mr. Njuki suggested that the UNGEGN should consider co-operation with surveying and mapping bodies in East Africa, in order to promote the inclusion of names on the agendas of their regional meetings.

76. The question of co-operation with the International Cartographical Association (ICA) was discussed: Mr. Randall, Mr. Kadmon and Mr. Lewis felt that past difficulties experienced in attempting to encourage inclusion of toponymy in the Association's agenda should not prohibit the Group from further seeking such co-operation. Mr. Randall suggested that the session prepare some form of communication, expressing such a view, for submission to the Regional Cartographic Conference staff.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON EVALUATION : IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

77. Mr. Randall, as convenor of the ad hoc working group, introduced the subject by referring to resolution 4 of the Fifth United Nations Conference which had recommended its establishment. He stated that the standardization of geographical names had taken place under United Nations auspices for twenty-two years, and that a need had been felt to evaluate the effectiveness of the work. A questionnaire had been drawn up and distributed, and had generated twenty-two responses as of 1 May 1989.

78. Mr. Dorion stated his belief that the questionnaire had been a subjective survey and that a further, objective, survey was needed to provide an inventory of facts. Mr. Tazi congratulated the working group on the progress made so far, and stressed the general opinion that there was an urgent need to inform the public of, and increase awareness in, geographical names.

79. Mr. Randall drew attention to Working Paper No.31, and put forward recommendations for action:

- (a) Re-structuring of the Group. Mr. Randall believed that the structure of divisions should be adhered to, but should be more flexible. He suggested that divisions should arrange to meet as soon as possible to determine their own structure and develop, as desired, collaboration with other divisions and organizations. Mr. Randall stated that resolution 5 of the Fifth United Nations Conference encouraged such work. Mr. Dmitrocnkov felt that the aim of standardization of geographical names dictated that the group be divided into the existing geographical divisions.
- (b) Co-ordination with other technical and professional groups. Possible groups included the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, UN Regional Cartographic Conferences, the International cartographic Association, and the World Bank. Mr. Raper and Mr. Mbika-Mbonguila offered to study possible co-ordination with other groups, and Ms. Närhi stated that she was willing to aid co-ordination with the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences. Mr. Sievers recommended that the ICA observer, Mr. Ormeling Jr., be asked to be convenor. Mr. Sievers agreed to discuss this with Mr. Ormeling and report the results to the convenor as soon as possible.

- (c) Re-defining the objectives of the Group. Mr. Randall stated that a factual assessment of the success of the Group's work would be a major part of the work. This assessment should primarily ask about the extent to which countries were implementing resolutions. Other topics would be whether the Group was a meeting of experts or country representatives, and whether the Group's work was becoming too sophisticated for some countries in certain areas. Mr.°Dmitrocnkov agreed with the need for more statistical information and reminded the Group that it should not lose sight of the aim of standardization of names. Ms. Mattison agreed to study the factual assessment of the Group's achievements with Mr. Dorion. The ad hoc working group would deal with other questions.
- (d) Investigation of possible sources of funding. Mr. Njuki drew attention to the effects of lack of finance on the attendance of African countries: the low attendance was not due to apathy but the lack of resources needed elsewhere. Mr. Randall suggested that all participants could help in identifying sources of funding, and Mr.°Dorion felt that contact with international regional organizations may help in this area. Mr. Mbika-Monguila offered to investigate possible funding mechanisms for his division.
- (e) Publicity and promotion of the Group's work. Several experts spoke of possible means of publicising and disseminating information. Ms. Karamitsanis reported on methods of promoting names in Alberta, Canada: through radio, bulletins of public interest, and a board game for young children. Mr. Tazi, Mr. Mbika-Mbonguila and Mr. O'Maolfabhail all expressed support for the idea of a United Nations Geographical Names Day as a means of promoting the Group's work and making the public aware of geographical names. Mr. Raper believed that the best way of achieving publicity was by approaching national authorities, by publishing relevant United Nations resolutions in books and other documents, and by the production of maps and atlases. Mr. Lewis agreed that the practical application of

United Nations resolutions was the most effective means of achieving publicity. Mr. Randall referred to two catalogues of United Nations Publications and recommended that efforts be made to publish a book on geographical names, designed to appeal to a broad audience. Mr.°Dorion agreed that a short book on the subject would help. Mr.°Payne suggested the sale and distribution of names data to the public. Digital data could be tailored to the individual needs of the other user, and it had the added advantage of providing "user feedback": the identification of errors and an idea of market needs. It was proposed that the UNGEGN Newsletter be used as a vehicle for eliciting further ideas on the subject of publicity. Mr. Park agreed to assist in this programme.

- (f) Study of resolutions. Mr. Randall drew attention to Annex C of Working Paper 31 in which the resolutions of the first four United Nations Conferences had been grouped into the following categories: those which were no longer relevant; those which needed revision, combination or clarification; and those which were still currently operational. Mr. Dmitrocenkov felt that the assessment of resolutions in great detail was not necessary. It was agreed that the ad hoc working group would further study the subject of resolutions.

80. It was felt that redefinition of strategy was important to the progress of the UNGEGN, and that training played a major role in this. Mr. Dorion suggested that the ad hoc working group on evaluation concern itself with this topic, with the help of several experts who were members of the working group on training.

81. It was generally agreed that the efforts made so far in evaluating the work of the group were highly commendable, and that further work in this area was necessary. Persons, and convenors of working groups, responsible for these action items were requested to report to Mr. Randall by 1 December 1989 on progress achieved by that date. Further action might be required to ensure accomplishment of goals.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES AND CO-OPERATION

82. Mr. Payne reported that the last conference of the American Congress of Surveying and Mapping, held in September 1988 in Virginia, USA, had devoted an entire session to the discussion of geographical names. A further session on names was planned for the next regional meeting on surveying and mapping. Mr. Lewis stated that geographical names had been an agenda item at the recent Conference on GIS, held in Ottawa, Canada.

83. Mr. Raper mentioned several meetings at which discussion of geographical names had taken place, or was planned: the Conference of the Names Society of Southern Africa in 1987, the ICOS meeting in Helsinki, Finland. Mr. Vallières reported on bilateral co-operation between Quebec, Canada and Morocco, and Mr. Dorion expressed his belief that bilateral co-operation was an effective way of exchanging knowledge on the technology associated with geographical names.

84. Mr. Hornansky told the Group that seven documents had been submitted to a conference on onomastics, held in Czechoslovakia two years previously, while Mr. Kadmon and Mr. Lewis spoke of the presentation of working papers on the subject at the last ICA Conference in Morelia, Mexico.

UNGEGN NEWSLETTER

85. The Chairman of the Group expressed his opinion that resolution 24 of the Fifth Conference, recommending the distribution by the United Nations Secretariat of a semi-annual information bulletin containing toponymic information received from the Group's divisions, had been a positive and valuable step. He clarified that there was no onus on each division necessarily to contribute to each edition; an annual contribution would be sufficient. The session agreed that the Newsletter was a most valuable source of information and also a useful instrument for publicizing the work of the Group.

EXONYMS

86. Recalling resolutions 29 of the Second Conference and 13 of the Fifth Conference, Mr. Raper referred to the complexity of the various types of exonym which had been identified. Both he and Mr. Lakshman stressed that it was not possible to eliminate exonyms in all instances, and Mr. Lewis noted the value and necessity of using exonyms in elementary education, a view shared by Mr. Kadmon. Mr. Hornansky, introducing Working Paper No.58, felt there was a need for multilateral inter-governmental agreement to enforce the recommendations of resolution 29 of the Second Conference. Ms. Kerfoot reported that Canadian guidelines were to avoid the use of exonyms except for international features, and Mr. Randall noted that the policy of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names was to reduce the number of approved conventional names. Mr. Lewis considered that "conventional name" was a more appropriate term than exonym for the subject under discussion; he felt that "exonym" had a wider meaning. Mrs. Caldeira drew the attention of the session to a recently-published list of Portuguese exonyms in Europe and Latin America. The Vice-Chairman reported that his country endeavoured to eliminate exonyms if they were foreign to Morocco's customs and traditions, but retained them if they represented a significant historical event.

STANDARDIZATION IN MULTILINGUAL AREAS

87. Introducing Working Paper No.26, Ms.Kerfoot informed the session of the categories of "parallel" or "unofficial alternate" names in Canada. Mr. Smart reported on Ontario's new policy for the treatment of alternate French language names on official maps, signs and documents (see Working Paper No.30). This was largely a result of the enactment of the French Language Services legislation in 1986. Mr. Vallières reported that the procedures and criteria for deciding upon names in Quebec were based to a significant extent on the recommendations of the Group and the Conferences, of which one important component is local usage. Ms. Kerfoot commented that each province or territory had the authority to determine its own standardized names. English and French were official languages at the national level, with equality of status, but the position in the provinces and territories varied.

88. Mr. Freeman announced that the Northwest Territories were actively pursuing a policy of approving Amerindian and Inuit names as official names (see Working Paper No.43). This was important since most of the current official names were not recognized by the local people. Modified Roman alphabets were being devised for the various Amerindian languages, while Inuit could be written either in Roman or in syllabic script; both would be approved. Efforts would be made to automate the new official names. The orthographies drew comments from several experts. Mr. Lewis felt that a pronunciation guide on each sheet would be required if such spellings were ever to be used on official maps. He felt that the proposed Amerindian orthographies would prove a barrier to communications in Canada as a whole. The Chairman of the Group noted that resolution 10 of the First Conference, recommending the retention of diacritical marks, referred to existing alphabets only. He foresaw practical difficulties in maps and gazetteers if these proposed new orthographies were adopted.

89. Mrs. Närhi informed the session that Finnish and Swedish were both official languages in Finland. Along the coasts lived some 300,000 Swedish-speaking inhabitants, and the minority name (whether Swedish or Finnish) was official if the minority population constituted over 8% of, or 3,000 people in, a settlement. Maps and road signs would then carry both names, with the name in the majority language in primary position. Lappish did not have official status in Finland, but names in the new North Lappish orthography did now appear on maps. Mr. O'Maolfabhail reported that Ireland had an official bilingual policy; usually the name was the same in Irish and English but the orthographical conversions differed markedly between the two. Mr. Payne drew attention to Working Paper No.29, which included a draft policy for treating names of native American origin.

90. Brief mention was made of Antarctica as being a multilingual area through scientific exploration, despite the lack of any indigenous population. Experts from several countries reported that they were active in names collection in Antarctica.

91. Mr. Wang reminded the session of the 56 different nations which lived in China. Many of these had their own written languages; others used Chinese characters. For all languages except Tibetan, Uighur and Mongol, however, standardization was based on Chinese characters.

92. Mr. Zemcev informed the session that the USSR was also a multilingual nation, with over 100 ethnic groups and languages. Russian was the official language of communication, but school education was conducted in the appropriate national language. As far as standardization was concerned, each of the 15 republics had its own national names council. Dealing with these was an all-union standing commission, which would send specialists to the republics and autonomous republics. Once names had been approved at the republic level, they then became official.

TERMINOLOGY

93. The Chairman of the Group noted that several experts felt there was a need to consider again the Glossary No.330 ("Technical Terminology Employed in the Standardization of Geographical Names"). Mr. Spiess had already commented on this (see para.23), and both Mr. Kadmon (Working Paper No.4) and the East, Central and South-East Europe Division (Working Paper No.57) had submitted written suggestions. The common feeling among these experts was that some terms included in the Glossary were redundant and that others needed revision. Also, the Glossary would benefit from the addition of certain terms not currently included. After some discussion, it was agreed to reconstitute the Working Group on Terminology, with Mr. Kadmon as vonvenor and Messrs. González, Lapierre, Lewis and Raper as members. Mr. Kadmon reported that the working group would assess the content, extent and degree of uniformity of the Glossary, working at first on the English-language version only.

CONCISE NATIONAL GAZETTEERS

94. Mr. Sievers commented on Working Paper No.51, which presented a proposed method of producing a concise national gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany using selected information from the more comprehensive gazetteer based on the 1:500,000 scale maps. Extraction of the features to be included in this concise gazetteer could be handled by the toponymic database.

95. Mr. Payne reported that the concise national gazetteer of the United States had been completed except for the introductory text (see Working Paper No.47). It included 45,000 entries, of which 28,000 related to populated places, 10,000 to physical features, and 7,000 to administrative and miscellaneous names. Alongside the official name would appear the type of feature, first and second-order administrative division, geographical co-ordinates to degrees, minutes and seconds, and usually the elevation of the feature. Mr. O Maolfabhail announced that a concise gazetteer of Ireland, containing the names of 3,000 settlements and 500 features, was with the printers. Mr. Njuki reported that the fourth edition of the National Atlas of Kenya, to be published within the next year, would include a concise gazetteer of 4,000 names.

96. Mr. Hornansky informed the session that a concise gazetteer of 28,000 names of Poland would soon be published. Also, Czechoslovakia would publish in 1990 a concise gazetteer of 6,000 names taken from the 1:750,000 scale map series (see Working Paper No.56). Mr. Haack reported that the German Democratic Republic has documented a standardized list of inland waters relating to the 1:100,000 scale map series (see Working Paper No.50). Further, a revised and expanded edition of the "General Guidelines for the Spelling of Names in the GDR", which was considered a concise gazetteer, would be published later in 1989.

TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES

97. The Secretary to the Group regretted that toponymic guidelines could not all be published together in a single volume. Funds would not allow this. However, he reminded the session that those guidelines distributed at Conferences would be included in Volume II of the Report. New or revised guidelines were reported on by Mr. Vallières for Quebec (Working Paper No.13), Mr. Payne for the United States (Working Paper No.28), Mme Lejeune for France (Working Paper No.44), Ms. Kerfoot for Canada (Working Paper No.48) and Mr. Hornansky for Czechoslovakia (Working Paper No.59). The document for France drew particular attention from the Group, especially with regard to the various regional languages of the country. In discussion Mme Lejeune

confirmed that the département rather than the région constituted the first-order administrative division of France. It was also reported that Morocco was compiling a list of provinces, prefectures and 2,400 communes, which would include a historical/geographical glossary of settlement names.

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

98. The Secretary reminded the Group that the Sixth Conference would be held in the second half of 1992 (see para. 9). Notwithstanding resolution 1 of the Fifth Conference, it was possible that the Sixth Conference might be held in Geneva.

FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

99. The Secretary announced that the Fifteenth Session of the Group of Experts would be convened in Geneva in 1991. A draft provisional agenda is attached at Annex III.

OTHER MATTERS

100. Mr. Meyrand introduced Working Papers Nos.8, 9, 10 and 11 which were designed to promote awareness of the cultural aspects of toponymy. For example, it was important to instil an interest in toponymy in young children. Working Paper 10 related to activities in the application of more than 7,000 new names in Quebec. Ms. Kerfoot, in connection with Working Paper No.39, outlined the mandate, composition, role and activities of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN).

101. Mme Lejeune reported on Working Paper No.46, which listed certain discrepancies in the French-language forms of certain country names and state titles between the 1986 document produced by the Group and the 1985 United Nations Terminology Bulletin No.333.

102. Mr. Sievers drew the attention of the session to Working Papers Nos.53 and 54. The first document illustrated the means by which toponymic and non-toponymic text are differentiated on the national topographic map series of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Second document showed the format of data records on the magnetic tape of the national toponymic database. Mr.°Hornansky commented that Working Paper No.59 also contained information concerning the distinction between toponymic and non-toponymic text.

103. Mr. Zhou commented on the fact that, throughout the nations of the world, there were many frequent changes in the names of administrative divisions. These were difficult to monitor outside the country concerned, and he hoped that national authorities might be encouraged to collect these for dissemination to interested authorities in other countries. It was pointed out that, to some extent, the Hungarian publication "Cartactual" already provided information along these lines. Mr. Lewis pointed out the value of accompanying map information in any publication dealing with administrative divisions.

ANNEXES

- I List of Participants
- II List of Documents
- III Draft Provisional Agenda for the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTEENTH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Report of the Chairman
4. Report of the Secretary
5. Reports of the Divisions
6. Reports of the Liaison Officers
7. Regional Meetings
8. Report of the Working Group on Evaluation
9. Factual assessment of the implementation of the resolutions of the five Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names
10. Action Plan (based on the resolutions, according to priority)
11. Communication Plan
12. Co-ordination with International Organizations
13. Report of the Working Group on Courses in Applied Toponymy
14. Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Date Files; Gazetteers
15. Concise National Gazetteers
16. Toponymic Guidelines
17. Report of the Working Group on Terminology
18. Report of the Working Group on Romanization Systems
19. Country Names
20. Standardization in Multilingual Areas
21. Exonyms
22. Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
23. Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
24. Other Matters
25. Adoption of the Report.