THE GROUNDS FOR ADOPTING TRANSLITERATION IN WRITING
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Submitted by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Korea
We have adopted transliteration system in converting Korean geographical names into Latin characters taking into account of the following linguistic problems.

1. If we use transcription system different writing proposals can be suggested depending on the degree of reflection of various phonetic varieties.

For example, Korean letter /\j/ can be transcribed as follows:

- Kang-dong (east of a river)
- Sägori-dong (new street)
- Song-mun-yeon (stone gate sub-county)
- Tok-hari (a village at a hill foot)
- Tap-ko-gi (a pass with a tower)
- Tar-i-ko (a valley with a bridge)
- Kwa-gok (iron ore) - here "k" is an internal plosive sound.

As seen above, if we represent phonetic varieties by transcription method various proposals can be made, namely there may be a proposal for transcribing only two varieties, other for 3-4 varieties and still other for all varieties. And there may occur such a case in which many notes are added since numerous varieties exist. This causes difficulties in practice.

Contrary to this, if transliteration system is adopted the letter /\j/ is represented by [k] in all cases, avoiding complexity.
2. Transcription method results in producing such an irrationality that a Korean geographical name Romanized by transcription may represent more than two Korean geographical names.

For example:

- 성남동 - stone-south village
- 성남동 - castle-south village
Both are transcribed as "songnamdong"
- 성문면 - stone gate sub-county
- 성문면 - castle-gate sub-county
Both are transcribed as "Songmunmyon"
- 봉래면 - grassy sub-county
- 봉래면 - blessed sub-county
Both are transcribed as "pongnammyon"
- 압남면 - angle - south sub-county
- 압남면 - river-south sub-county
Both are transcribed as "kangnammyon"

There are many geographical names which can be confused. This is the weak point of transcription.

Transliteration, however, is based on letter by letter conversion, which causes no confusion.

For Example:

- 석남동 - soknamtong
- 성남동 - songnamtong
3. Romanizing Korean geographical names by transcription it impossible for those who have no knowledge of Korean to correctly reverse into Korean original names.

For example;

\[\text{송리산} \text{ is transcribed as [songrisan]}
\[\text{[songrisan] is reversed as (송리산) different from original (송리산)}
\]

BUT if we use transliteration, we can easily distinguish 송리산 [songrisan] from 속리산 [sokrisan] as it is converted (or reversed) based on letter forms. Accordingly reconstitution is easy.

4. Transcription makes it difficult to fix the transcription form of the names of the Korean administrative units.

Assimilation can be found when we write the names of administrative unites of Korea (such as 군 [Kun], 동 [Tong], 구 [Ku] and 도 [To]).

For example;

\[\text{안동군} \text{ is transcribed as [Andonggun], 석남동 as [Songnumdong], 산구 as [Sogu] and 올릉도 as [Ullungdo] if we apply transcription.}
\]

The names of administrative units when they are transcribed independently and some other geographical names are transcribed as voiceless sound.

for example

\[\text{군 - [Kun], 족도 - [Chikto], 말도 - [Malto],}
\[\text{일등면 - [Iltoongmyon] and 삼등리 - [Samtongri].}
\]

But if we use transliteration 군, 동, 구, 도 are transliterated in all cases as (Kun), (Tong), (Ku) and (To), which means that transliteration form is not changed.

5. If we write Korean geographical names by transcription method Korean letters /ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅎ/ are transcribed as (t) when they are in the final position of syllables.
It is, therefore, difficult to reverse them into Korean and to fix the transcription form of geographical names.

For example;

\[ \frac{오}{나} 바위 \] [Otpauil] - a rock concerned with clothes
\[ \frac{족}{나} 바위 \] [Otpauil] - a rock concerned with a tree

As seen above when two names are written by transcription system it is difficult to distinguish them from each other. Confusion is inevitable when reconstitution is made.

But if we adopt transliteration system the transliteration form of \[ \frac{족}{나} 바위 \] can be fixed as [Ospaui] and \[ \frac{족}{나} 바위 \] as [Ochpaul] and their reconversion is also easy and the meaning of geographical names can easily be understood.