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**REPORT OF THE
EAST MEDITERRANEAN DIVISION
(OTHER THAN ARABIC)**

Report presented by Naftali Kadmon (Israel)

REPORT OF THE EAST MEDITERRANEAN DIVISION (OTHER THAN ARABIC)

1. The National Toponymic Database of Israel

The Survey of Israel, national surveying and mapping authority, is proceeding with several digital map series in parallel. The toponymic files for these series differ, as follows.

The new 1:40,000 scale topographic map series started recently is based – as regards place names – on the national toponymic data base, which includes only those names conferred or ratified by the Government Names Commission and which, therefore, have legal status¹. These are the names of all populated places, of all archaeological sites and ruins, all natural topographic features (orographic, hydrographic etc.) including nature reserves and national parks, as well as names of interurban road and transport systems such as road interchanges.

New digital town maps and plans carry names received from the respective municipalities, not necessarily in digital file format. Street and other names within the areas of municipalities and other local authorities are not governed by the Government Names Commission and are, in most cases, conferred by municipal names boards, sometimes lacking the uniformity accorded by decisions by the national names authority.

Thematic maps, e.g. the geological map series on 1:50,000 scale, carry the names of the topographic base maps as taken from the national toponymic data base (see above), whereas names pertaining to the thematic component of the maps (viz. chiefly geological terminology) are supplied by the Geological Survey of Israel.

2. Recent Additions to the National Database

Activity of the Government Names Commission of Israel during the period since the Sixteenth Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names consisted mainly in conferring names to (1) nature reserves, and (2) road interchanges and other items in the dense national road net and transportation system.

3. Transliteration

The Academy of the Hebrew Language has decided on some minor changes to the transliteration method from Arabic to Hebrew, governing names in Israel. These affect (1) the consonant letter ξ , to be transliterated by \aleph and not by $\prime\upsilon$; (2) the transliteration of ʿ by \aleph (and not by the *kammatz*, , , as used hitherto in maps). However, it will take several years until these changes will be implemented in the numerous maps of the official mapping authority. They do not affect romanization systems.

4. New Literature: the Official Gazetteer of Israel

The gazetteer of Israel, available till recently only in digital form or as a printout of the same, has now appeared also in form. This is the *Toponomasticon – Geographical Gazetteer of Israel* by N. Kadmon².

The East Mediterranean Division is also represented in two publications produced by the University of Pretoria, South Africa (a member of the Africa, South, division of UNGEGN).

Concerning these three publications, see also the report *New Training Literature in Toponymy*, paper presented to the Seventeenth Session of UNGEGN.

5. Education and Other Cultural Activity in Toponymy

Courses in toponymy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel (reported upon in detail to the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1987³), continued. A new training manual for these courses has been prepared.

At the last Annual General Meeting of the Israeli Cartographic Society, held together with the Israeli Geographical Association, a session was devoted to toponymy, with talks by lecturers from within the official cartographic industry and from the private sector.

6. Inter-Divisional Cooperation

In continuation of the first UNGEGN training course in toponymy for Southern African countries held in 1992 in Pretoria, South Africa, the East Mediterranean Division was again involved in the second course. The divisional chairman was one of the lecturers at the course held in Pretoria, Transvaal (with fieldwork in the Orange Free State and in Lesotho), presenting talks on, and practical exercises in, (1) *Introduction to Toponymy*, (2) *Recording and Storage of Geographical Names*, (3) *Name Lists and Gazetteers*, (4) *The Standardization of Toponymic Terminology*, (5) *Languages and Scripts of the World*, (6) *Translation, Transliteration and Transcription in Maps and Atlases*, and (7) *Toponymy as a Political Tool*.

The *Dictionary of Toponymic Terminology*, Part 1 (English), edited in Jerusalem, Israel, by the convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, has been provisionally translated into German by the Dutch- and German-Speaking Division. At the time of writing it is being translated into Chinese by the China Division of UNGEGN.

References

1. See *The Legal Status of Official Endonyms in Israel*. Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1992, document E/CONF.85/L.4.
2. N. Kadmon, *Toponomasticon - Geographical Gazetteer of Israel*. Hebrew and Romanized name lists, and bilingual introductory texts in Hebrew and English. Survey of Israel and Carta, Jerusalem, 1994.
3. See "Toponymy Courses at the University of Jerusalem". Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1987, Vol. II: Technical Papers (E/CONF.79/5/Add.1), pp. 467-469.