

Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names  
Sixteenth Session  
New York, 13-24 June 1994

WP.20

Provisional Agenda Item 7

REPORT BY THE COVENOR OF THE  
WORKING GROUP ON ROMINIZATION SYSTEMS

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## SUMMARY

This report by the Convenor of the Working Group on Romanization Systems addresses the following issues: the jointly devised romanization system for Korean; implementation of the Russian GOST 1983 system; the proposed transcription system for Thai; and script conversion in the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union.

United Nations Group of  
Experts on Geographical Names

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Item No. 7 of the  
Provisional Agenda: Reports of the Working Groups

REPORT BY THE CONVENOR OF THE  
WORKING GROUP ON ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS

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This report covers the period since the Sixteenth Session of UNGEGN which was held in conjunction with the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York in 1992. During the Sixteenth Session, the Group held one private meeting dealing with organizational matters regarding information exchange among its members.

Material for this report has been compiled from miscellaneous print sources concerning the situation in the newly independent States that comprised the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In this regard it is necessary to obtain official information, where appropriate, from the respective countries on the possible adoption of new or changed romanization systems.

**KOREAN**

It is anticipated that consultations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea have now been concluded regarding the joint adoption of a single romanization system for Korean, which will be based on the guidelines the two countries had submitted previously.

The Convenor received an unofficial draft of the system at the Sixth UN Conference.

## RUSSIAN

Implementation of the GOST 1983 system is reflected in the recent map sources *USSR*, 1:8 million, 1990, and *Russia and Post-Soviet Republics*, 1:8 million, 1992. However, the status of the romanized version of the Atlas Mira (World Atlas) is unknown.

## THAI

Information has been received from the Royal Thai Survey Department stating that work on finalizing the proposed transcription system is being carried out by the Royal Institute. In the meantime, therefore, the system adopted at the First UN Conference in 1967 continues to be used.

## COUNTRIES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Several governments of the new countries have already instituted, by various decrees, the conversion from Cyrillic script to Roman script. Thus, Azerbaijan officially adopted a Roman alphabet shortly after attaining independence in 1992. Moldova had already re-introduced its Roman alphabet in 1989. Furthermore, the Central Asian countries of Azerbaijan (see above), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan held a conference in Turkey in 1993 where a joint agreement was reached to replace Cyrillic with Roman script. Some of these countries have established various transition periods for implementation of the new writing system. For example, the Turkmen Roman alphabet will take effect in 1996.

It remains important to attend to developments regarding any newly devised romanization systems in the countries that comprised the former Soviet Union which have not converted to Roman script. Of course, those languages which are now written in Roman script are thus outside of the scope of consideration of the Working Group.

## OTHER MATTERS

The United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) announces a new publication, ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS AND ROMAN-SCRIPT SPELLING CONVENTIONS, 1994. This manual was prepared by the Board's Foreign Names Committee Staff and was published by the Defense Mapping Agency.