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**Group of Experts on
Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

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**Item 6
of the Provisional Agenda**

**Reports of the liaison officers, regional meetings
and international organizations**

**Report on the UNGEGN liaison with the
Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)**

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**Report of the UNGEGN liaison with the
Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)**

Resolution 12 of the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recommends that UNGEGN:

(a) Recognize the working procedures on Antarctic place-names being established by the SCAR Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information;

(b) Establish liaison with SCAR for the purpose of promoting communication between the two bodies and providing UNGEGN periodically with a written report on relevant activities of SCAR.

At present there are more than 40 signatory countries to the Antarctic Treaty, and place-names appear in 15 or more languages and five scripts. Gazetteers or lists of geographical names and guidelines for naming features in the Antarctic have been issued by some 15 countries in various grades of completeness. However, internationally agreed guidelines for proposing new names and for using existing place-names have not as yet been set up. In many cases unintentional multiple naming of features, and either translation or mistranslation of place-names have caused ambiguity and confusion in their current usage in the Antarctic.

SCAR is the scientific advisory body to the Antarctic Treaty System. At present more than 20 SCAR member countries are actively conducting mapping programmes in the Antarctic and as such are being practically involved in problems of geographical naming. These countries are collaborating in the SCAR Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information (WG-GGI).

At the XXII SCAR Meeting held in Argentina in 1992, a work programme "Antarctic place-names" was set up by the WG-GGI and approved by SCAR. The work programme is co-convened by Germany and Italy and covers the following main items:

- (1) Facilitate the correct and unambiguous identification of geographic features in the Antarctic;**
- (2) Develop guidelines to be internationally used for the naming of features and for the use of already existing place-names in the Antarctic;**
- (3) Consider all land features, ice shelves, subglacial features, and inshore features of the continental shelf south of 60°S;**
- (4) Deal with the writing of place-names in the Roman script including diacritical marks, but not the pronunciation;**

(5) Adhere to the resolutions and recommendations prepared by UNGEGN and adopted by the UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names;

(6) Collect all available Antarctic gazetteers and lists of geographical names preferably in digital form, issued or published by different countries.

The work on preparing toponymic guidelines, convened by Germany, and on collecting and evaluating gazetteers, convened by Italy, is in progress. Relevant papers were submitted to and discussed at the formal meeting of the SCAR Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information held at the XXIII SCAR Meeting in Rome in autumn 1994.

After discussion of the tabled paper *Proposed International Toponymic Guidelines for the Antarctic*, the WG-GGI submitted this document (Version: Rome, 31 August 1994) with minor amendments as the following recommendation to SCAR for consideration by XXIV SCAR, to be held at Cambridge in August 1996:

Recognising the importance of unambiguous naming of geographic features, for both scientific and operational purposes;

Noting that many Antarctic features now have multiple names, and that there are no international procedures in place to limit future multiple naming, or to guide in the selection of which name should be used on a map or in a scientific or logistic publication;

The SCAR Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information

Recommends that SCAR consider:

- the content of its proposed guidelines; and
- the process for their review, adoption and implementation.

Work on a *Composite Gazetteer of the Antarctic*, coordinated by Italy, is in progress. The gazetteer consists of two volumes. The first volume contains some 32 000 alphabetically ordered geographical names (with the attributes: coordinates, feature class, issuing country, etc.). The second part lists synoptically all variant names which exist for about 16 000 single features named in the Antarctic. Gazetteers or geographical names lists have been considered of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, China, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA.

The two volumes of the gazetteer will be tabled at the WG-GGI Meeting held during XXIV SCAR at Cambridge in August 1996.