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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL
NAMES

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REPORTS BY GOVERNMENTS ON PROGRESS MADE IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Submitted by the Government of Nigeria

In Nigeria the national mapping agency, the Federal Surveys, which now forms part of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, is responsible for the standardization of geographical names. This is done in close collaboration with the Survey Departments of the states of Nigeria.

Before Nigeria attained independence the spelling of geographical names was based on what was termed the R.G.S. II System of the United Kingdom Royal Geographical Society. This created a problem because the spelling of some names on published maps did not agree with the local spelling, e.g. Idogo and Sawonjo were shown as Idawgaw and Shawanjaw respectively. This problem was later solved by adopting the local spelling for all geographical names on published maps.

Nigeria is already covered by a map in fifteen sheets on a scale of 1:500,000. This map was originally published in 1924 and it is a compilation from data supplied by military intelligence officers, administrative officers, explorers' sketches and from the then existing records of the survey departments of Nigeria. This map cannot therefore be relied upon to be accurate.

Nigeria is now being accurately mapped on a scale of 1:500,000 and it is from this map that other smaller-scale maps are compiled. The standardization of geographical names is now based on this map series.

All geographical names are collected in the field and are based on the local spelling. The names are then submitted to the Surveyor-General of the state in which

the area lies and he, in turn, sends them to the appropriate local authority. Both the Surveyor-General and the local authority certify the names before they are accepted for showing on maps.

The Director of Federal Surveys and all the Surveyors-General constitute the Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

A gazetteer of geographical names has been published in two volumes.^{1/} This gazetteer is based on the 1:50,000 map series. As soon as each map sheet is published the names are extracted and, through automatic data processing, are arranged for publication.

^{1/} Copies of these two gazetteers, presented by the Government of Nigeria, are available for reference in the Map Collection of the United Nations.