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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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REPORTS SUBMITTED BY GOVERNMENTS ON THE STANDARDIZATION
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

(Submitted by the United Kingdom
Delegation)

In addition to the Ordnance Survey (See document E/CONF.53/L.58) the following organizations in the United Kingdom are concerned with geographical names:

I. Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland

(Armagh House, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast)

1. The rules for the spelling of names in Northern Ireland are similar to those of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain (see paper L.58).

II. Directorate of Overseas Surveys (Department of Technical Co-operation)

(Kingston Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey)

1. It is the general policy of the Directorate of Overseas Surveys to regard the Director of Survey of the country concerned as the final authority for the spelling of geographical names. Some territories have their own official place-name committees:-

(a) British Antarctic Territory, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Names here are spelled in accordance with decisions of the Antarctic Place-Names Committee, an inter-Departmental body including representatives of Australia, New Zealand, the Royal Geographical Society and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

(b) British Solomon Islands Protectorate. A Geographical Names Committee has recently been established and has already issued a list of approved spellings of the names of principal islands and island groups

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III. Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use

(c/o Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London, S.W.7)

1. The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN) is an advisory body, under independent Chairmanship, composed of representatives of the Admiralty, Colonial Office, Foreign Office, Ministry of Defence, War Office, Ordnance Survey, Ministry of Transport, Post Office, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.
2. Its principal function is to advise British official mapping and charting authorities on the writing of geographical names, excluding those of the United Kingdom and Colonies. It also studies and advises on international aspects of geographical nomenclature. It develops and keeps under review principles of geographical nomenclature; it recommends, and where necessary, devises systems of transliteration and transcription; it takes account of linguistic problems arising out of changes of sovereignty and administration; it records information about foreign orthography and geographical terminology; it corresponds with Commonwealth, foreign and international organizations concerned with relevant problems.
3. It publishes lists of approved geographical names in countries and regions overseas, and glossaries of foreign geographical terms.
4. The Committee's "Principles of Geographical Nomenclature" are as follows:-
 - (a) The spelling of the names of (1) regions and geographical features of continental or inter-national extension, (2) water-areas extending beyond the territorial limits of recognized government, and (3) countries, shall be in accordance with English conventional usage; e.g., (1) Sahara, Alps, Danube, (2) Bay of Biscay, (3) Italy.
 - (b) In the case of oceanographical features lying outside territorial waters, the descriptive terms entering into their names shall be in English; e.g., Challenger Bank, Dogger Bank, Walfisch Ridge (not Walfisch Rücken).
 - (c) The approved names of any administrative division of a state* or federation of states, or of any natural or artificial geographical feature or of any place lying wholly within one state, or federation of states, shall be that adopted by the supreme administering authority concerned with that state or federation of states: e.g.,

* For the purpose of applying these Principles, the term "state" shall be taken to include an independent country, or colonial territory, or protectorate, protected state, or trust territory.

Uttar Pradesh (not United Provinces); but, should a different name be current in English conventional usage, the latter may be given subordinate recognition: e.g., Cabo de Hornos (Cape Horn), Dhiórix Korínthou (Corinth Canal), Moskva (Moscow).

(d) Where any name of the kinds referred to in Section (c) above contains a descriptive term in a foreign language that term shall not be translated into English: e.g., Cabo de Hornos (not Cape de Hornos), Schloss Bellinghoven (not Bellinghoven Castle), Isola d'Ischia (not Island of Ischia); but, where a geographical term on a foreign map or chart stands in isolation and is neither a geographical proper name nor is attached to such a name, it may be translated: e.g., "bridge" (not German "Brücke"), "ford" (not Russian "brod").

(e) The names of places and of geographical features in countries which officially use varieties of the Roman alphabet shall be accepted in their official spelling, including the accents and diacritical marks used in the respective alphabets.

(f) The non-Roman letters in the official names of places and geographical features in countries which use partly-Roman alphabets may be transliterated into Roman letters in accordance with the conventions of the respective partly-Roman alphabets: e.g. Icelandie α and β are transliterated dh and th.

(g) In countries where the official alphabet of the administering authority is not Roman:

- (1) where an official Romanization acceptable to the Committee is in current use the spelling of names shall be in accordance with it, e.g.

Burma - Government of Burma 1908 rules

Cambodia - Modified Service Géographique Khmère 1959 System

Egypt - Survey of Egypt System

Israel - Survey of Israel System

Thailand - Thailand Royal Institute (General) System

- (2) where no acceptable official national Romanization exists but a system of Roman transliteration has been approved by the Committee for the country or language under consideration, the official forms of names shall be transliterated in accordance with it, e.g.

- Arabic - the BGN/PCGN System (see Annex I)
 Bulgarian - the BGN/PCGN System (see Annex II)
 Greek - the BGN/PCGN System (revised table in preparation)
 Persian - the BGN/PCGN System (see Annex III)
 Russian - the BGN/PCGN System (see Annex IV)

(3) where there is no system of Romanization, or none acceptable to the Committee, the official forms of names shall be transliterated into the conventional alphabet given below.

(h) In countries where the official script is not alphabetical the official forms of names shall be rendered in Roman letters in accordance with systems of transcription approved by the Committee: e.g.,

China: the Wade-Giles system as modified in 1942

Japan: the Hepburn system as recommended in 1942

Korea: the McCune-Roischauer system.

(j) In those territories where the foregoing Principles may prove to be inapplicable, geographical names should, whenever possible, be recorded in the alphabets officially used for the languages concerned, or be collected in the field by scientific methods employed for the phonetic recording of speech. Only when these names fail should they be recorded in the conventional alphabet given below:-

CONVENTIONAL ALPHABET

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Range of Sound Represented</u>
(Vowels) a	a in father; all the sounds represented by a in the French words <u>patte</u> , <u>pas</u> , <u>page</u> , <u>pâle</u> ; o in English <u>son</u> or u in <u>cut</u> ; also a shade of the unstressed neutral vowel (see under ö below).
e	the first part of the diphthong in <u>day</u> , e in French <u>thé</u> ; ai in <u>fair</u> , è in French <u>père</u> ; e in <u>bet</u> ; a shade of the unstressed neutral vowel (see under ö below)
i	ee in <u>fee</u> , i in French <u>si</u> ; i in Italian <u>via</u> ; i in <u>sit</u> ;
o	ou in <u>bought</u> , aw in <u>law</u> , o in <u>not</u> ; eau in French <u>beau</u> , o in <u>rotund</u>
ö	ö in German <u>schön</u> , eu in French <u>peu</u> ; eu in French <u>peur</u> , œ in French <u>œuf</u> ; ea in <u>earth</u> (the last is the stressed neutral vowel in English). The unstressed neutral vowel (the sound of a in <u>marine</u> , e in <u>often</u> , u in <u>difficult</u>) is better represented, according to its nearest approximation, by a or e

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Range of Sound Represented</u>
(Vowels)	
u	<u>oo</u> in <u>boot</u> ; <u>oo</u> in <u>foot</u> or <u>u</u> in <u>put</u> (but not in <u>but</u>)
ü	<u>ü</u> in German <u>über</u> , <u>u</u> in French <u>lune</u> .
y	the cavernous vowel, unknown in standard English, represented by 'y' in Russian and by <u>ı</u> in Turkish. Note that <u>y</u> is also used for a consonant-symbol (see below).
(Diphthongs)	may be represented by combinations of the vowel-symbols given above.
(Consonants)	
b	English <u>b</u> , any other sound recognized as a kind of <u>b</u> by English ears, as <u>b</u> in Spanish <u>saber</u> .
ch or c*	<u>ch</u> in <u>church</u> . <u>c</u> is established with this value in parts of Africa.
d	any sound recognized as a kind of <u>d</u> .
dh	the soft sound of English <u>th</u> in <u>this</u> , <u>they</u> , etc.
f	any kind of <u>f</u> .
g	<u>g</u> in <u>got</u> or <u>gift</u> .
gh	the soft guttural sound represented by { (ghain) in Arabic, which resembles that of Parisian <u>r</u> .
h	(i) the aspiration of vowels (the sounds preceding the vowels in <u>her hat</u>). (ii) the aspiration of consonants (emphatic <u>k</u> , <u>t</u> and <u>p</u> are aspirated in English; <u>b</u> is often aspirated in Irish English). In a conventional alphabet it is possible to distinguish between the digraphs (pairs of letters standing for single sounds) <u>dh</u> , <u>gh</u> , <u>kh</u> , <u>sh</u> , <u>th</u> and <u>zh</u> , and aspirated <u>d</u> , <u>g</u> , <u>k</u> , <u>s</u> , <u>t</u> and <u>z</u> , respectively, only by means of elaborate devices.
j	in <u>jib</u> or <u>g</u> in <u>gen</u> .
k	any kind of <u>k</u> -sound, as <u>c</u> in <u>cat</u> .
kh	<u>ch</u> in Scottish <u>loch</u> or German <u>ach</u> .

* See Instruction 6 below.

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Range of Sound Represented</u>
(Consonants)	
l	<u>l</u> in <u>leave</u> ; <u>ll</u> in <u>wall</u> ; <u>ll</u> in Welsh <u>llan</u> .
n	English <u>n</u> .
n	English <u>n</u> .
ñ or ny	as in Spanish <u>cañón</u> . Established in many parts of Africa.
ng	<u>ng</u> in <u>singer</u> ; <u>ng</u> in <u>finger</u> .
p	any kind of <u>p</u> .
q	the guttural sound represented by <u>ق</u> (qaf) in Arabic.
r	<u>r</u> as sounded in Scotland; any other clearly rolled or trilled <u>r</u> -sound, like <u>r</u> in Spanish <u>pero</u> .
s	<u>ss</u> in <u>hiss</u> (but not <u>s</u> in <u>his</u>).
sh or s ^h *	<u>sh</u> in <u>fish</u> .
t	any kind of <u>t</u> .
th	hard English <u>th</u> as in <u>thistle</u> .
v	English <u>v</u> .
w	English <u>w</u> .
x (* ks)	<u>x</u> in <u>extra</u> (not <u>x</u> in <u>exact</u>).
y	<u>y</u> in <u>yet</u> . Note that <u>y</u> is also used as a vowel-symbol (see above).
z	English <u>z</u> or the <u>s</u> in <u>was</u> .
zh (or z ^v)*	<u>j</u> in French <u>je</u> ; <u>s</u> in <u>measure</u> .
(')	(inverted comma) The Semitic sound represented by <u>ع</u> ('ain) in Arabic; the glottal stop. (In practice the two will not conflict.)

Instructions for spelling in the conventional alphabet

1. Standard native pronunciation is to be taken as the basis for spelling.
2. Each sound is to be represented by its closest corresponding symbol, and a symbol may be double only to indicate a clear repetition of the same sound.

* See Instruction 6 below.

3. If their representation be indispensable, a vowel-symbol may be marked with:-
 - (a) an acute accent (´) for stress.
 - (b) a macron (¯) for length.
 - (c) a tilde (˜) for nasalization.
4. Retroflex, emphatic, implosive or ejective consonants may be indicated by dots beneath the symbols representing them.
5. Palatalization of consonants as in Russian may, be indicated by an apostrophe (') after the symbol affected.
6. If it be imperative to distinguish between sh and zh (the symbols given above) and aspirated s and z respectively, the alternative symbols ^vs and ^vz may be used for the former pair. Similarly, c and ch could stand for the unaspirated and aspirated "ch" sounds respectively.
7. In the narrow rendering of names in, and their close transliteration into, the conventional alphabet, recommended for textual documents and particularly for gazetteers, the diacritical marks listed in 3, 4, 5 and 6 above, should be used. From the broad rendering in, and broad transliteration into the conventional alphabet, appropriate to maps and charts, these marks may be omitted. (This instruction applies only to the conventional alphabet and has no bearing whatever on (e) of the Principles of Nomenclature).

Alphabetical Order

The full conventional alphabet consists of the following thirty-seven symbols:

a, b, ch or c, d, dh, e, f, g, gn, h, i, j, k, kh, l, m, n, ñ or ny, ng, o, ö, p, q, r, s, sh or ^vs, t, th, u, ü, v, w, x, y, z, zh or ^vz, (')

but names written in it should be filed or arranged in common English alphabetical order disregarding (').

IV. Directorate of Military Survey (War Office and Ministry).

The Directorate of Military Survey is responsible for the spelling of names on maps and aeronautical charts. The principles followed are those stated in Chapters I, II, III or IV above, as appropriate.

V. Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty

The Hydrographic Department is the authority on the spelling of the names of features in waters of the United Kingdom falling between the low-water mark and the hundred fathom line. It is also responsible for the spelling of names on hydrographic charts, and follows the principles stated in Chapters I, II or III above, as appropriate.