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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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REPORTS ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES:

(Submitted by the National Names Authority of Norway)

1. History and Development

Since the 1890s, the Royal Ministry of Education has been responsible for the standardization of the spelling of geographical names. It is assisted by an officially appointed Board of Advisors. This Ministry is also the Authority responsible for the spelling of geographical names in the Norwegian Territories in the Arctic (Svalbard and Jan Mayen) and the Norwegian Antarctic Territory. The Board of Advisors is charged with the task of giving advice on the spelling of geographical names to all Government Offices and institutions (Norges geografiske oppmåling; Norges sjøkartverk, Norsk polarinstitutt, the Ministries of Post and Telegraph, Roads, etc.).

In 1913 special instructions were issued, laying down that all Norwegian place-names should be written in accordance with an orthographic system suitable for the standardization of genuine Norwegian dialect material. All later Rules for the standardization of the spelling of place-names are derived from the Instructions of 1913. The latest Instructions were issued in 1933 and 1957, and deal with specific details of standardization.

2. Plan and Work

From the beginning, the Board of Advisors have been able to base their advice on the spelling of place-names on a very famous work, Norsk Gaardnavne (Norwegian Farm-Names, 20 volumes, Introduction and Index), in which are listed all names of

farms and subdivisions of farms, with a selection of written forms from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, all known medieval forms, and present-day local pronunciation. Since 1940, all names on new topographical maps published by Norges geografiske oppmåling are written down in phonetic script and checked by specialists. Standardization of the written forms on the maps is based on this material.

3. Linguistic Minority

In Northern Norway there is a Lapp minority. There is a special Government Advisor on Lapp place-names. In the two northernmost counties, Finnmark and Troms, there are maps where almost all the names are of Lapp origin, and in border districts between Norwegians and Lapps, there are many places with two different names, one Lapp and one Norwegian.

4. National Gazetteer

There is as yet no Norwegian National Gazetteer. Plans have been worked out for a Gazetteer, which can be based on the maps in 1:250.000 (about 100 000 names).

5. Arctic and Antarctic Areas

Norsk polarinstitutt applies the official Rules for the standardization of place-names on their maps. Names of special features originally given and used by explorers of other nationalities and in use in other countries are very seldom changed into Norwegian names in the Norwegian Arctic and Antarctic Territories. For the Arctic Svalbard region see the volumes The Place-names of Svalbard and Supplement to the Place-Names of Svalbard (1942/1958).

6. National Names Authority

The National Names Authority is The Board of Advisors on Place-Names, and the Royal Ministry of Education is the Executive Authority.

Norsk Stadnamarkiv (Norwegian Place-Names Archives) is the institution responsible for the collecting of place-name material and directs the research work carried out in this field.