

Ad-Hoc Group of Experts on  
the Standardization of  
Geographical Names

New York, 10-20 March 1970

MINUTE N°6

(Meeting held on Tuesday, March 17, 1970)

57. It was agreed that the following sentence should be added to paragraph 37 of Minute N° 4 :
- "He reviewed the difficulties that had been encountered in the past with regard to proposals for the standardization of unwritten languages in Africa and wondered if these would not encounter equal difficulties in the future".
58. It was agreed that the phrase "not possible" in line 3 of section (b) of paragraph 38 of Minute N° 4 should be amended to read "almost impossible".
59. In line 5 of paragraph 34 of Minute N° 4, the last two geographical names mentioned should read "Maharashtra, Punjab".
60. It was agreed that the following new paragraph should be inserted in Minute N° 4, following paragraph 38 :
- "Mr. Vadié drew the attention of the group to the importance of the recording of generic terms. He noted that in Africa north of the Sahara a large number of these terms were of Arabic origin aïn, wadi, savahel, etc..  
The meaning of these terms, having been misunderstood at the time of recording is lost, and they are deprived of their semantic content. Referring to paragraph 2 of resolution 18, he thought that in order to avoid such difficulties it would be preferable to adopt a system of phonetic notation instead of English or French orthography. In this way it would be possible to respect the toponyms concerned and not to distort generic terms"
61. It was agreed that the following new paragraph should be inserted in Minute N° 4, following paragraph 40 :
- "Dr. Nawabi felt that the elaboration of a single system of transcription would be more in accordance with the guidelines that ought to derive logically from the concept of international standardization".
62. Dr. Burrill handed over the chairmanship of the session to Mr. Komkov who gave a detailed description of the work on lunar mapping carried out by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, including an account of how the names problems that had arisen had been dealt with.
63. Mr. Lewis gave a complementary account of the topography of the moon, and an historical review of the methods of naming adopted to date.
64. After an intervention by Mr. Vadié concerning the rules followed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Komkov noted that the application of a terrestrial terminology to the lunar surface had been satisfactory in certain cases, but that elsewhere it had been a complex and difficult task. He added that it would be desirable for rules acceptable to everybody to be worked out. Discussion on this item of the agenda was completed by reference to the conclusions reached at the meeting of the day before.

65. Dr. Meynen was invited to give an account of the work of the Commission of which he was chairman, of the IGU charged with the preparation of a multilingual dictionary of technical terms in geography, which would be completed in six or seven years, and which we believed would greatly contribute to international standardization.
66. In discussion of item 4(C)(vi) of the agenda concerning Recommendation 9 of the Geneva Conference, Mr. Breu, Burdill, Geelan, Komkov, Lewis and Meynen restated their points of view presented at Geneva and in subsequent papers distributed to the Group of Experts. Before any decision could be reached, the Chairman temporarily suspended discussion of the item in order to deal with working paper n° 20 on aims, functions and modus operandi. This matter was still under discussion at the close of the session, following which the working group was to meet again.