ON THE PROGRESS MADE BY THE USSR
IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
AFTER THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, 1967

submitted by the USSR

(by A.M. Komkov)

The United Nations Conference on the standardization of geographical names held in Geneva in 1967 enabled all the countries-participants to get acquainted with the achievements in domestic standardization of geographical names in different countries, to exchange the experience and to work out some recommendations for a further improvement of this work both in national and international aspects.

After the Geneva Conference the work on domestic standardization in the USSR has been carried out by several lines. Scientific elaboration of the instructions (rules) for rendering geographical names from both national languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union and foreign languages as well as compilation of glossaries of geographical terms have remained the principal directions.

The instructions published in previous years were obligatory for the cartographic agencies only, the new elaborated instructions are now obligatory for all the organizations and agencies that publish scientific literature, informative and reference books, newspapers, magazines, etc. All new instructions for rendering geographical names from different national languages of the USSR are necessarily submitted to the local scientific and administrative bodies of the republics concerned for their approval. Thus, though we follow, in our work, the well-known principle that a receiver country takes
a final decision on what form borrowed names will have in
its language, we feel it necessary to take into account the
interests of a donor part.

As far as the compilation of dictionaries and glossa-
ries is concerned we may point out the Dictionary of geographical
names of the USSR, Moscow, 1968 intended for a great
many organizations, a number of other dictionaries of geo-
graphical names that are being issued as well as a number
of glossaries of national geographic terms. The glossaries
of the Buryat, Komi, Nanai and Khakass geographic terms pub-
lished in 1968-1969 may be pointed out as examples.

Since the Soviet Union is a multinational country not
only the problems of rendering national and foreign names
into Russian are important. The problems of rendering Rus-
sian, other national and foreign names into the languages
of other nationalities of the Soviet Union are not less
important. Scientific organizations of the Union republics
are carrying out a great deal of interesting work in this
field. A series of reference books on the orthography and
orthoepy of foreign proper names in the Lettish language
may serve as an example. The Institute of the Russian Lan-
guage and Literature of the Latvian Academy of Sciences
published in 1962-1968 a series of reference books on Lit-
huanian, Estonian, German, French, English and other pro-
per names.

Similar work is now being carried out in other Union
republics as well.

In the past few years a number of instructions for
rendering geographical names of foreign countries have been drawn up and published. Among them the instructions for geographical names of the Arab countries, the Philippines and of a number of countries of eastern and central Africa (Burundi, Zambia, Kenya, Congo (Kinshasa), Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and others) may be cited.