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THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN ISRAEL^{1/}

Paper submitted by the Government of Israel

Since the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Geneva in 1967, a number of developments have taken place in the domain of toponymy in Israel.

Attempts to formalize and standardize the rules governing the transformation of geographical names from one script to another, as recommended already by the First General Conference of the International Geographic Union a century ago, have, as yet, met with partial success only. Moreover, these attempts have raised two problems: the administrative one of setting up national authorities on geographical names, and the technical problem of constructing rules for transliteration (or transcription, as the case may be). In both respects Israel is in a favourable position. The Government Names Commission, affiliated to the Prime Minister's Office, is the sole authority on geographical names in the country. All Hebrew names have a definite official form which appears on all official maps, and an index system (to be replaced in future by an automated punch-card and printout register) is in existence. Transliteration rules, and particularly those from Hebrew into Roman script, have been accepted and legalized by the Government. However, the general public still uses some unofficial forms of names as well as various systems of transliteration; hence

^{1/} Figures in the margin refer to agenda items of the provisional agenda (E/CONF.61/1).