UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL
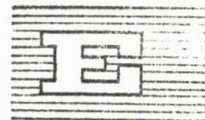
SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
  STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
London, 10-31 May 1972
Item 11(a)(i) of the provisional agenda

WRITING SYSTEMS - PRINCIPLES OF ROMANIZATION

Paper submitted by the Government of Hungary

LON.72-157

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PRINCIPLES OF ROMANIZATION

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1. The first U.N. Conference on the Standardization
of Geographical Names already showed that the greatest
discussion was on the question of romanization.
The Chairman of Commission III at that Conference ex-
pressed views on the so called receiver principle in
such a manner that the receivers /in this case countries
using the Roman alphabet/ should determine the system
for international standardization. However, a conside-
rable opposition could be seen already at that time
shown by the memorandum of nine countries /published as
Working Paper 5, 1970 meeting of the Group of Experts/which
stated that "... a final decision on romanization for
international use should be based on international
agreement, and that, of course, includes participation
and final consent and acceptance by the users of the
donor system as well." This shows clearly that the re-
ceiver principle is unacceptable.

2. Out of the resolutions of the first U.N. Conference
No. 13 and 14 dealt with romanization systems of Ira-
nian and Thai geographical names, resp. Both resolu-
tions approved a system for international use which
was suggested by the countries concerned, i.e. by the
donor. This shows the practical significance of the
donor principle.

3. Our country agrees, therefore, to the principles
expressed by Prof. Breu in his Circular No. 1 of 23
June 1970:

"If a country using non-Roman alphabet has officially
introduced a transcription of this alphabet and uses
it practically, especially on maps, we ought to recommend
this transcription for international cartographic use.

If a country uses officially different transliterations
for different applications, we should recommend that
transcription which is officially used in cartography,
or - if no transcription is used in cartography - which
is linguistically better one.

If in the country concerned no official transcription is introduced we ought to recommend the transcription of the International Organization of Standardization /ISO/ as of the competent international committee.

If also there does not exist an ISO-transcription either, we ought to recommend that transcription which is internationally used by linguists."

4. At the same time we are on the opinion that the above cited and agreed principles should be added by another item after the first paragraph, as follows:

If there are more transcription systems in a country, or there is none at all, then the Group of Experts, or the Cartographic Section of the ECOSOC, or the respective regional group should seek after a contact with official organizations responsible or supposed to be responsible for transcription matters, in order to urge on the selection or creation of such a system. All procedures expressed in the next paragraphs could only be followed if such a contact was unable to be established, or there is no perspective for the creation of a transcription system.