

the report of the Government of Guatemala and in the information papers submitted to the Conference by the writer.

It should be noted that the geographical names of Central American countries which appear on the 1:2,000,000 map of Central America published by the National Geographical Institute of Guatemala, a copy

of which has been made available to the Conference, were taken from the revised official maps of the various cartographic agencies of the Central American region, in accordance with the decision taken at Geneva in December 1967.

The writer will be glad to give any further information that may be required.

## REPORT PRESENTED BY EGYPT\*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, in particular since the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held at Geneva in 1967, the problem of rendering geographical names from one language into another has become of great interest to Arabic-speaking countries.

The importance of the accumulation and recording of geographic names is realized and the activity on the national level is encouraged and accelerated by the activities of international organizations. It is clear that the nation-wide standardization of geographical names is of relevance to international cartographic work.

### BASIC MAPS AND THE COLLECTION OF NAMES

Adequate coverage by maps and charts on different scales is the basic condition for careful and systematic work on geographical names. They enable geographic co-ordinates to be determined and the suitability of generic terms to be assessed.

The map scale which is suitable for displaying all named features in desert areas ranges between 1:100,000 and 1:500,000, while in populated areas the suitable scale varies between 1:50,000 and 1:25,000. The maps on the scale 1:2,500 are used in cultivated areas and for property registers. A large number of toponyms appear in maps of these kinds.

The collection of names recorded on a map is made by a surveyor, with the help of a guide in the desert areas or a representative of the local authorities in towns and villages. The help of the inhabitants is indispensable. Then the first edition of an up-to-date map on a convenient scale becomes a most useful work of reference. The inclusion of names in such a map gives it a certain official character.

In Egypt and other Arab countries most of the place names are a part of the countries' cultural heritage, and constitute valuable historical material.

A thorough study of geographical entities included in official maps leads us to classify them as follows:

- (a) Hydrographic entities;
- (b) Relief features;
- (c) Political, administrative and cultural divisions, tribal concentrations, towns and villages;

\* The original text of this report was contained in document E/CONF.61/L.77.

- (d) Single buildings;
- (e) Roads, railways, airports etc.

### PERSONNEL CONCERNED

In Egypt the question of geographical names is the concern of the National Geographical Society through its committees on geographical nomenclature. These committees are composed of geographers, cartographers, historians, toponymists, linguists and archaeologists. The establishment of close co-operation between these experts is essential.

The following bureaux, among others, are concerned with the problem of geographical names:

1. Central Statistical Department;
2. Survey of Egypt;
3. Land and Property Register survey;
4. Hydrographic Survey;
5. Toponymists' Committee.

### EXTENSION OF THE ARAB WORLD

It is a known fact that the Arabic-speaking countries occupy a vast area extending between longitudes 10° west and 60° east and between parallels 4° and 37° north. They thus cover about one sixth of the circumference of the globe from east to west and about one tenth of its circumference through the poles.

This area includes several different countries where different dialects of the classical language are spoken.

Two different romanization systems are employed in the transliteration of geographical names for official use. It is found that the use of two different systems — one based on French orthography and the other on English — proves to be practicable.

### REGIONAL CONFERENCES

It is believed that regional conferences have to be held at appropriate intervals under Arab League auspices at which Arab countries are represented, in order to discuss common problems connected with the standardization of geographical names. There should be a uniform system for all Arab countries based on classical Arabic. It would probably be helpful for observers from countries with other writing systems to attend such conferences. The standardization of geographical terms and names depends on international co-operation between all countries.

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ARAB GROUP OF EXPERTS

Taking into account the resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Geneva in 1967, a meeting of Arab experts from 15 Arab countries was held in Beirut in 1971 and arrived at some rules for transliterating Arabic into Roman characters.

The Arabic-speaking countries have to provide complete documentation for all geographical names, including all the vowels and indicating the unvowelled and double consonants by means of Arabic diacritical marks such as vowel points, "shaddahs", "hamzahs" and "sukuns". The full indication of short vowels is necessary for rendering the spelling of Arabic names into other languages.

The attached annex is a list indicating the results of the study by Arab experts at the conference held in Beirut in 1971.

There is still a need for more detailed study through more co-operation between the Arab League countries. The next step will be the compilation of gazetteers and glossaries.

In conclusion we should like to state that we are following with interest the work of the Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical names and paying much attention to problems and progress in this field. We hope to learn more at the Conference about modern techniques of processing geographic names by computers.

The present conference may provide an opportunity for taking the following steps:

1. The approval of the transliteration system drawn up at the Beirut conference;
2. Forwarding a resolution to the Arab countries with a view to the preparation of a gazetteer and a map of their geographical names according to the new system of transliteration;
3. Suggesting a future Arab gathering to produce a regional gazetteer and a map of the area, applying the new system.

Annex

RESULTS OF THE STUDY BY ARAB EXPERTS AT THE CONFERENCE HELD AT BEIRUT IN 1971

Examples	Roman letters	Arabic letters
Arbīl	A	أ
Banhā	B	ب
Tadmur	T	ت
Tharthār	Th	ث
Jabal	J	ج
Himṣ	H	ح

Examples	Roman letters	Arabic letters
Khaybar	Kh	خ
Dammām	D	د
Dhahbān	Dh	ذ
Rafāh	R	ر
Zabīd	Z	ز
Sinā	S	س
Shibīn	Sh	ش
Safad	S	ص
Dabah	D	ض
Tanṭā	T	ط
Zhahṛān	Zh	ظ
Ākkā	Ā	ع بالفتحة
Īrāq	Ī	ع بالكسرة
Ūmān	Ū	ع بالضممة
Bā'labak	...	ع بالسكون
Ghadīr	Gh	غ
Fālūjah	F	ف
Qaṭar	Q	ق
Kūt	K	ك
Libyā	L	ل
Miṣr	M	م
Najd	N	ن
Hīt	H	ه
Wahrān	W	و
Yaman	Y	ي
	...	وتوضع على الحروف المطلوبة في الوسط وفي آخر الكلمة مثل بئر
Bir Karbalā		المهزبة — كرنلاء
Tall	A	الفتحة
Irbid	I	الكسرة
Al Quds	U	الضممة
Bāb Al Mandab	Ā	الفتحة مع الالف
Al Modīnah	I	الكسرة مع الياء
Sūr	O	الضممة مع الواو
		التاء المربوطة
Tarhūnah	H	في آخر الكلمة ه
		التاء المربوطة
Birkat as-Sabā	T	في الكلمة المركبة

أل للتمريم:

بالنسبة للكلمات الشمسية يكتب الحرف الاول مكرر مع فاصل (شرطه) بين الحرفين مثل  
 as-Syyidah السيده  
 ash-Shāriqah الشارقة  
 وبالنسبة للكلمات القمرية تكتب الالف واللام ال — مثل  
 Al Jabal الجبل  
 Al Wādī الوادي