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on Geographical Names
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for Asia and the Far East

Geographical Names

The paper "United Nations Support of Geographic Names" (E/CONF.57/L.25) prepared by Dr. M.F. Burrill, Chairman of the United Nations Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Geographical Names, summarized recent activity relating to standardization of place names and referred to the report of the Second Session of an Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Geographical Names (ESA/RT/C/GN/L) which was also distributed to the delegates. The paper also stressed the need for countries in which there is no designated recipient for names information and material from the Group of Experts to provide the name and address of an agency or individual who could receive it, and, in addition, gave details of preliminary meetings and arrangements relating to the second United Nations Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names, which will be held in London, England in the early part of 1972.

In the paper "Geographical Names" (E/CONF.57/L.45) submitted by the Secretariat of the United Nations, developments since the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in 1967 in Geneva, Switzerland, were summarized. Reference was made to sessions of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the provisional agenda for the third session of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names was included as an annex to the paper. In outlining this paper, the

Deputy Executive Secretary also referred to the report of the Second Session of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Geographical Names (ESA/RT/C/GN/1) and invited delegates to present comments on this paper at a later session of the Conference.

Indonesia's paper "Geographical Names for Indonesian Maps" (E/CONF.57/L.76) reviewed and summarized problems that have arisen in that country and presented a policy formulated for the future.

The Republic of VietNam presented the paper "Problems of Geographical Names in the Republic of VietNam" (E/CONF.57/L.85) outlining nomenclature problems experienced and giving specific examples.

The Committee heard with interest the paper entitled "Report on the Standardization of the Usage of Geographical Names in Hungary" (E/CONF.57/L.93) referring to the activities of a National Committee on Geographical Names which was established in Hungary in 1964.

In its paper on Geographical Names "Concerning the Experience in domestic standardization of Geographical Names in the USSR" (E/CONF.57/L.111) the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics detailed some of the problems that have been overcome in the standardization of place names for the many national languages within the Soviet Union.

In the Committee discussions following the presentation of the papers on Geographical Names, the Chairman noted that this subject has gained momentum since the United Nations had established the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Geographical Names. He expressed the hope that countries that had not previously taken an active interest on the subject would now become more interested on the basis of recent international experiences and the papers presented to this Conference, as well as the discussions taking place in the Committee.

The delegate from India outlined two criteria for ^{the} spelling of place names in his country.

Thailand referred to the report of the first Conference in Geneva and gave details of action that has been taken for the romanization of place names in Thailand and the compilation of a national gazetteer.

The delegation from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland expressed the hope that as many as possible of the countries represented at the Conference would send delegates to the second United Nations Conference on Geographical Names.

The delegate from Afghanistan referred to a transliteration system that has been developed for his country for 40 letters and for all kinds of sounds. This has been distributed as Annex 2 to his country's progress report (E/CONF.57/L.61). In addition a glossary of DARI and PUSHTU names had been distributed as Annex 1 to the same report. Malaysia stated that it has set up a geographic names committee in each of its 13 states and that similar problems as found in other countries are being experienced especially over the duplication of place names.

Appreciation was expressed by the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations for taking up the problem of Geographical Names.

Reference was made by the delegate from Thailand to the fact that, in many of the maps displayed at the Map Exhibition associated with the conference, other countries have used incorrect names for the provinces of that country as well as other features.

It was explained to the Conference by the delegate from Cyprus that their problem is probably no different from that experienced by other countries with more than one language. In their case, it is overcome by issuing three separate series of maps, each series having geographical names in a different language.

Reference was made by the delegate from Iraq to the difficulty experienced, particularly by Europeans, in pronouncing names from maps of Iraq. In his country,

the geographic names standardization problem has not yet been solved but there is agreement in some sectors, for instance in the universities, in the spellings to be used in textbooks and atlases.

The delegate from India suggested that the problem referred to above could be overcome in part by exchange of tape recordings.

Japan advised the Conference that the Geographical Survey Institute and the Hydrographic Office have agreed to unify the presentation of names on the IMW 1:1,000,000 maps and other series. A draft resolution was presented to the Conference for adoption. k/

k/ Adopted as resolution 19, "Geographical Names"