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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
Athens, 17 August-7 September 1977
Item 7 of the provisional agenda.

Reports by divisions and Governments on
the situation in their regions and
countries and on the progress made in
the standardization of geographical
names since the Second United Nations
Conference on the Standardization of
Geographical Names

REPORT BY THE HUNGARIAN COMMITTEE ON
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Paper submitted by Hungary

In the period between the Second and Third United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names dealt with the standardization of geographical names both inside and outside Hungary. Of these, the standardization of domestic names was considered to be the more important.

The ministerial decree enacted on 31 March 1974 was a significant achievement, as it specified that a national gazetteer was to be prepared. The decree also regulated the spheres of authority and the procedures regarding geographical names. According to this, the establishment and amendment of geographical names designating minor features of local importance fall within the competence of the local authorities. This means that priority is given to the local usage. Names of more important features (generally those covering a considerable area) fall within the competence of the Minister of Food and Agriculture, with the Committee acting as a consultative body. Names of administrative character are, as before, within the competence of the Council of Ministers.

It was decided to prepare the gazetteer in county volumes. The whole series will contain about 70,000 names. Each gazetteer will have a map supplement in the scale of 1:150,000 (the quantity of names originates from this scale). The names will be given both in alphabetical order and by settlements. The character of the feature will be given in the gazetteer, while the extent and position can be read from the supplemented map, as all names will be accompanied by the index figures and letters referring to the map.

Preparation of the various gazetteers will be carried out in stages, as follows:

Collection of names from maps and other sources, including published or unpublished field collections;

Verification of names by local and other authorities;

Linguistic check;

Committee approval;

Editorial work, typing, drawing and reproduction.

The first volumes will be available early next year; the last one is to be published in 1980.

The Committee discussed the principles to be applied in the gazetteers before starting the actual work, and will take a stand on all matters arising during their preparation.

The most important principle is to apply names as they appear in the local usage, including names in other languages. Dialect forms are given in the literary language only if identification is possible without difficulty. In the case of brooks and creeks, because of allonyms in the local usage, a single name may have to be chosen, which means that an exception will have to be made to the rule and the local name disregarded.

The fact that the Committee had adopted detailed rules for the spelling of names of outskirt settlements of cities, as well as of divisions of towns and cities aided greatly in the preparation of the gazetteers. These rules complement previous decisions on the spelling of geographical names.

The Committee has taken an active part in the preparation of legal rules for the naming of streets and divisions of towns and cities, including the change and amendment of such names. Our main task in this respect was to incorporate our experiences in name standardization.

The Committee continuously deals with matters relating to geographical names outside of Hungary. Decisions on new country names were approved recently. Principles on the use of geographical names in a new world atlas are being discussed at present, first of all in respect of the use of exonyms and methods of transcription. The reduction of exonyms is one of the principles that has already been adopted.