Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
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Item 6(a) of the provisional agenda*

TOPONYMIC EDUCATION AND PRACTICE:
EXISTING EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

Training of Specialists on the Standardization of Geographical Names

Paper presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 1/

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FOURTH UN CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF
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Geneva, August 24 – September 17, 1982
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ON THE TRAINING OF THE SPECIALISTS
IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Submitted by the Government of
the Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics
ON THE TRAINING OF THE SPECIALISTS IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Treatment of geographical names aimed at their standard-
dization requires rather unique professional training of
those engaged in it. Staff members of the service must have
a good command of the language of the country or territory
whose place-names they study and preferably have additional
training in the history of the language. It is necessary for
them to know the geography of the studied region, its ethnic
structure at present as well as in the past, the history of
its people and the toponymic system of the region on the
whole. They are also expected to have acquaintance with the
toponymy and ethnography of the adjacent territories. Be-
sides it is natural for them to know the rules for rendering
names of a given territory into Russian (or any other lan-
guage) thoroughly and to know the system of toponymic and
geographic terminology in the native language. They must be
able to read a map and to make use of necessary reference
books. They must be able to evaluate sources of information
on names accurately.

The whole complex of comprehensive knowledge cannot be
obtained in a single higher school. That is why the service
is staffed with specialists with different professional train-
ing: linguists, cartographers, geographers, historians.
Within the bounds of the service all necessary additional
training is arranged usually by means of the most proficient
and skilled staff members or specialists from other services.
Special courses in history and ethnography of countries and
territories, the learning of the languages of the USSR
peoples and of foreign countries, studying the scientific
essentials of toponymy as well as seminars on cartography
and map reading are organized.

Besides while any work is being carried out (dictionaries
of geographical names, instructions for rendering names
or any other directories etc.) it is always supervised from
methodic and scientific point of view by senior staff mem-
ers. The work is necessarily discussed collectively at dif-
ferent stages of its accomplishing. It serves as a very good
training for the young personnel.

So the whole system of professional training of the
staff members having the necessary minimum of basic knowledge
is provided by the service itself in the process of perform-
ing its primary duties.