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OFFICE TREATMENT OF NAMES

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Paper presented by the German Democratic Republic**

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1. In the German Democratic Republic, investigations have been made into the spelling of regional geographical names in an effort to implement those resolutions adopted by the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which deal with national standardization (resolution 4 of the First Conference, resolution 25 of the Second Conference, resolution 16 of the Third Conference). The term "regional geographical names" applies to the names of landscapes, mountain ranges, ridges and lowlands. These names, which reflect primarily the shape of a relief, are of major importance to knowledge of the topographical and geographical features of a country. In addition, they are increasingly being used in international communication. As a result of the investigation, a map to the scale of 1:750,000 was made, which is called Regional Geographical Names of the German Democratic Republic. It contains the spelling of the names as well as the sites and the extension of the geographical features. A list of the regional names and short descriptions of the features concerned has been printed on the reverse. The short descriptions provide information about the nature of the features (ridges, lowlands, landscapes, etc.) and their sites.

2. The standardization of the spelling of regional geographical names is a major task within the scheme for national standardization of geographical names. It is useful to employ the method of listing both the name and the boundaries of the features on the map because several purposes are served in this way. The map and the list of the regional names are intended to make a contribution to:

- (a) Ensuring a standardized spelling of those names in all cartographical products published in the German Democratic Republic;
- (b) Ensuring a correct assignment of the names to the features and their extension;
- (c) Supporting the proper selection and generalization of these names on general geographical and special-purpose maps.

In addition, the documents can be used for co-ordination with neighbouring countries in the spelling of the names of features extending beyond common borders. In such cases the map can help implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which contain provisions for the names of features extending on the territories of two or more countries (resolution 8 of the First Conference, resolution 24 of the Second Conference and resolution 20 of the Third Conference).

3. In drawing up the map, it was necessary to conduct comprehensive analyses of cartographical, geographical and local sources in order to investigate whether over the years the spelling of names has changed, two or more names have been used for the same feature or the perception of the territorial extension of a feature has changed. Since in reality the features have no clear-cut boundaries, their boundaries were defined as the "border or middle line of the border area between features". A number of extensive features were subdivided and the borders of the partial areas were represented on the map. This ensures an unambiguous assignment of names to the partial areas. An example of this is the Erzgebirge which is

subdivided into a western part and an eastern part (Westerzgebirge; Osterzgebirge). The course of the boundary between the two partial areas was determined and entered on the map.

4. Only those regional names were selected whose associated features extend across the area shown on the map sheet or the edge of a map sheet with the largest topographical scale. The scale 1:10,000 is the standard topographical survey scale in the German Democratic Republic.

5. It has also proved useful in the German Democratic Republic to set up a committee whose members are experts from various disciplines who discuss and agree upon the rules for a standardized spelling of regional geographical names prior to their publication.
