

Fifth Session of the
United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names

WORKING PAPER No. 14

New York, 5-16 March 1973

THE MINUTES OF IRAN-AFGHANISTAN'S
REGIONAL MEETINGS

ON

TRANSLITERATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Teheran, Iran

10-17 February 1973

(Dr. K. Vadiiee)

The Regional Meeting on transliteration of geographical names was held at 0900 hours, 11 February 1973, at the State's Geographical Organization by L.G. Sadeghian, Chief, State's Geographical Organization; Dr. Mahyar Navabi, Professor and Director of Language Group, Teheran University; Dr. M. Hasan Ganji, Professor and Director of the Geography Group, Teheran University; Dr. Kazem Vadi-ee, Professor of Geography, Teheran University; M.G. Nurbakhsh, Deputy Chief, State's Geographical Organization; B.G. Daneshvar, Scientific Director of Geographical Information; B.G. Khalvati, Technical Director of Topographic Operations; Colonel Daneshvar, Chief, Foreign Relations; Colonel Shah-Bandeh, Adviser to the Geographical Information's Scientific Directorate and Engineer Mozafareddin Yaghoubi, Chief, Cartography Department of Afghanistan.

BACKGROUND

When the first United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in Shahrivar 1347 (2-22 September 1967) Iran attended this Conference and the procedure on conversion of Farsi geographical names to Latin was approved and the Farsi speaking countries group was designated. Furthermore, Iran was assigned to take appropriate measures on holding a regional meeting at a convenient time.

During the past two or three years it was hoped that Iran and Afghanistan would find a chance to get together to discuss the question of writing Farsi geographical names in Latin, but unfortunately this chance was never found due to the inability for Afghanistan to attend such a meeting.

In Dey, 1351 (the month ending January 20, 1973), the GOI authorized the State's Geographical Organization to request the Government of Afghanistan to nominate a representative to attend the preliminary conference on transliteration of geographical names. As Engineer Yaghoubi, President of the Cartography Department of Afghanistan, the State's Geographical Organization officially invited him to come to Iran for a period of one week to discuss the subject matter.

THE FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of the preliminary conference began with the inaugural speech of L.G. Sadeghian as follows:

"To begin with, I would like to thank Mr. Yaghoubi of our friendly and brother country of Afghanistan who has come to Iran by invitation of the State's Geographical Organization. The regional conference on transliteration of geographical names which has been approved by His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah is hereby being inaugurated."

Then Mr. Yaghoubi, the representative of Afghanistan said:

"Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen,

"As a representative of the Government of Afghanistan, it is indeed a pleasure for me to attend the conference on the transliteration of Farsi, Persian and Urdu geographical names. Thank you for your hospitality. I hope that the present meeting and the ensuing ones would succeed in consolidating the transliteration systems of the two countries and would prepare a detailed and comprehensive system that not only Afghanistan and Iran, but the United Nations Organization would also benefit from it." Then General Sadeghian gave a comprehensive report to the meeting on the background of the subject matter and at the end presented a procedure for the conversion of Farsi and Latin geographical names and requested the Afghanistan representative to have it studied and give his comments.

THE SECOND MEETING

The second meeting, presided over by L.G. Sadeghian, was held on 13 February 1973 at the State's Geographical Organization. The Chairman, after giving a brief explanation on the materials presented to the meeting by Mr. Yaghoubi, stated that the system or procedure proposed by Afghanistan had been inspired from a sense of international co-operation. Then Mr. Yaghoubi informed the meeting how transliteration of geographical names takes place in Afghanistan. He said:

"In my opinion, the following measures must be taken in transliteration systems:

1. Selection and improvement of short syllables system covering all countries of the world and official adaptation of this system by the UN.
2. All geographical names or at least the significant ones such as the names of capitals, ports, towns and other internationally important places be registered in maps on the basis of the relevant country's views and comments.
3. Preparation of a geographical dictionary.
4. Utilization of the views and ideas of experts and the materials that other countries have prepared in this regard.
5. Based on both systems of Iran and Afghanistan, the meeting must try to set up a joint system to meet the requirements of the two countries, as well as those of the rest of the world."

Mr. Yaghoubi then went on to explain the following:

- 1- The transliteration system.
- 2- The technical terminologies of geographical names pertaining to the maps prepared by Afghanistan cartography under a special bulletin no. 1.

Setting up a task committee, the meeting then began to study, review and compare the transliteration system of Afghanistan with the system of Government of Iran approved by the first transliteration conference in ¹⁹⁶⁷1946 (in Geneva)."

THE THIRD MEETING:

The third meeting was held in the afternoon of Feb 15, 1973 at the same place. The report of the task committee was studied and after necessary discussion agreement was reached on the following instances:

- 1- In regard to selection of 23 letters from Farsi alphabet as equivalent to Latin letters, complete agreement

was reached as per following

A	الف
B	ب
P	پ
T	ت
S	ث
J	ج
KH	خ

D
Z
R
Z
S
C
GH
F
K
G
Q
L
M
N
H

د
ذ
ر
ز
س
ع
غ
ف
ك
ق
ل
م
ن
ه

For dual pronunciation of V (vave) use of V and W was approved.

2. In regard to the remaining 9 letters of the Iranian system as well as the remaining signs and letters contained in the system proposed by Afghanistan, it was agreed that Mr. Yaghoubi, with due consideration to the Iranian system and approvals of the Geneva convention, try to adjust their system upon final approval of the system proposed by Iran and investment of the governments on production of geographical maps and dictionaries.
3. In certain instances, the discrepancies were quite minor and pertained to the signs placed above or under certain consonant letters. It is hoped that the two countries experts would understandingly reach an agreement on unification of the signs and would attain fruitful results from their efforts.
4. The meeting confirmed the necessity for selection and use of certain specific sign: for Poshtu and Afghanis words.

THE FOURTH MEETING

The fourth regional meeting on transliteration of geographical names was held on 15 February 1973 at the same place and the following points were agreed upon:

1. That the report of this meeting, as well as the materials presented in it on the Afghan writing system be furnished to the United Nations Group of Experts which will hold its meeting in March 1973 in New York.
2. That it be recommended that the United Nations Organization take appropriate action for preparation of a comprehensive phonetic alphabet to include all vowels available in all languages of the world so that in the future it can serve as a basis for the geographical dictionaries.
3. Between the time the Group of Experts terminates work in New York and the date the third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names will be held, the regional meeting of Farsi-speaking countries will be held in Kabul or in Teheran.

THE FIFTH MEETING

The fifth regional meeting on transliteration of geographical names presided over by Mr. L.G. Sadeghian was held on 15 February 1973 in the State's Geographical Organization. After adequate exchange of views the following resolution was prepared and approved at the meeting.

RESOLUTION

The meeting expressed its appreciation for the help extended to it by the Government of Iran in general and the State's Geographical Organization in particular as well as to the Government of Afghanistan which contributed to the success of the meeting and made scientific co-operation between the two countries possible by sending its efficient and well informed representative to the meeting.

2. The meeting confirms the significance of transliteration of geographical names and its role in development of international understanding.

3. The meeting lauds endeavors of the UN's Economical Commission for facilitating establishment of the first and second meetings and appreciates the efforts of the committee of experts and the task groups which helped pave the road for meetings operations.

4. The meeting appreciates the scientific efforts of Iran and Afghanistan for obtaining a national, regional and universal transliteration system.

5. The meeting confirms that the Afghanistan proposed system would meet the requirements of Afghan languages (Poshtu and Dari).

6. The meeting was happy to announce that complete agreement had been reached between Iran and Afghanistan on the selection of the equivalent of 23 Latin letters from among the letters of the Farsi alphabet. With regard to the remaining 9 Farsi alphabet letters, arrangements were made with Mr. Yaghoubi to try to have them generalized in future Afghan maps and other geographical documents.

7. The meeting confirms that the plan on transliteration of geographical names from Poshtu to Latin which has been assigned to the United Nations Group of Experts should be studied together with Mr. Yaghoubi's plan and at the same time.

8. The meeting confirms the necessity for holding its second meeting in Teheran or in Kabul between March 1973 and the date the third Conference on transliteration is supposed to be held.

Representative of GOI

L.G. Sadeghian

Gen. Hossain Nurbakhsh

Gen. Houshang Daneshvar

Brig. Gen. Khalvati

Col. Ali Daneshvar

Translated by: Lotfolah Owzar

Representative of Government
of Afghanistan

Engr. Mozafareddin Yaghoubi

Dr. Mahyar Navabi

Dr. Hassan Ganji

Dr. Kazem Vadi-ee

Col. Mahmood Shahbandeh