

WORKING PAPER 24  
PILOT TRAINING COURSE IN TOPONYMY

by Dr. D. Ormeling

Introduction

During the last decade the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations has paid much attention to the problem of Geographical Names or toponyms. The confusion in this field is so serious that according to a U.N. report ..... "it forms an obstacle to smooth progress and understanding in many economic, social and scientific activities, both national and international".

In 1967 the ECOSOC made a first attempt in the direction of standardization of Geographical Names by convening the U.N. Conference on the matter in Geneva, September 4 - 22, 1967. One of the results of this Conference which was attended by more than 60 countries, was the establishment of a Group of Experts on Geographical Names to provide the continuous co-ordination and liaison among nations to further the standardization of geographical names and to encourage the formation and work of regional groups.

In pursuance of a decision by the ECOSOC the second United Nations Conference on the subject was held in London from May 10 - 31, 1972. The Netherlands was represented at both U.N. Conferences by Dr. Blok and by Professor F.J. Ormeling, ITC, who both are members of the U.N. Group of Experts since 1967. This Group meets periodically at U.N. Headquarters in New York City.

Considering the results of the various U.N. Conferences it should be emphasized that international standardization of geographical names is only possible when standardization on the various national levels has reached a satisfactory conclusion. However, national standardization is a long cumbersome process. It starts with the fundamental field collection of names followed by office research during which the collected names have

to be compared with spellings in other sources (cadastral documents, census reports etc.). It is not surprising that in many developing countries this domestic standardization process is in its very infancy. The reason for this deplorable state of affairs is the shortage of toponymically and linguistically trained personnel to work in the field.

It is only logical that the U.N. in its attempts to speed up the immense amount of work which remains to be done, is trying to solve this acute problem first of all. Against the background of the alarming shortage of trained personnel the delegation of the Netherlands in London proposed to investigate the possibilities of organizing a pilot training course in toponymy at the ITC, Enschede, in view of its long experience in the education of students from developing countries. The proposal was welcomed as a positive contribution to the acute shortage and the delegation from the Netherlands was invited to actively pursue the suggestion and to report on it at the next meeting of the Group of Experts in 1973.

The following draft gives an outline of a general set up for this Pilot Training Course in Toponymy.

Draft Programme

General Subject of Course: National Standardization of Geographical Names

- Specific Subjects:
1. Toponymy Terminology
  2. Report on U.N. Activities and Recommendations
  3. Field Collection of Names -
    - (a) in written language area
    - (b) in areas with unwritten languages
  4. Office treatment of Names
  5. New Names - Changes of Names - Commemorative Names - Repetition of Names
  6. Treatment of Names in Multilingual Areas
  7. Generics
  8. National Gazetteers

**Lecturers:** Preferably members of U.N. Group of Experts (see Enclosure 2) most of whom are experienced either in Field Collection or in Office Treatment of Names; various members have already accepted participation in the course.

**Time of Course:** 4 weeks in summer of 1974.

**Location:** ITC, Enschede, Netherlands where lecture rooms, exhibition space, equipment etc. as well as accommodation for students and lecturers is available (Schermerhorn Hall).

**Organization:** ITC - Cartographic Department in co-operation with U.N. Group of Experts.

**Organizing Committee:**

- Of ITC - Prof. Ir. A.J. van der Weele, Rector ITC  
Prof. Dr. F.J. Ormeling
- Of Kon. Ned. Academie van Wetenschappen  
Dr. D.P. Blok

**Advisory Board:** To be invited.

**Language of Course:** English.

**Number of Participants:** Approximately 20-25 students from developing countries preferably from countries listed in enclosure.

Costs (Estimate)

1. Participants - students from developing countries	
(1) Travel costs 25 x f.3.000	f. 75,000
(2) Daily allowance 25 x 28 x f.50	f. 35,000
(3) Excursion	<u>f. 1,100</u>
	f.111,000
	(US\$ 37,000)

2. Lecturers from U.N. Group of Experts	
(1) Travel costs 14 x f.1.000	f. 14.000
(2) Daily allowance 14 x 14 x f.50	f. 9.000
(3) Fees 12 x f.300	<u>f. 3.600</u>
	f. 27.400
	(US\$ 9,135)

3. Other costs	
(1) Exhibition	f. 2.600
(2) Postage, Printing Costs, etc.	f. 3.000
(3) Contingency	<u>f. 6.000</u>
	f. 11.600
	(US\$ 3,867)

GRAND TOTAL	f.150.000
	(US\$ 50,000)

- 1) Twelve lecturers and two U.N. staff members
- 2) Hotel accommodation in Schermerhorn Hall, Enschede included.

LIST OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

It is proposed that the following developing countries be invited for the Training Course:

Iran	Lybia
Saudi Arabia	Zambia
Afghanistan	Malawi
India	Nigeria
Thailand	Ivory Coast
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	Ghana
Indonesia	Costa Rica
Philippines	Venezuela
Peoples Republic of China	Ecuador
South Korea	Peru
Kenya	Panama
Tanzania	Guyana
Ethiopia	Suriname
Jordan	