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TOPONYMIC EDUCATION AND PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

TRAINING COURSES IN TOPONYMY

Report on training in office procedures offered by the United
States Board on Geographic Names**

Paper submitted by the United States of America

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REPORT ON TRAINING IN OFFICE PROCEDURES OFFERED BY
THE U.S. BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

To enhance its long-established policy of cooperative efforts with countries regarding issues pertaining to geographic names standardization, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names developed a training program in the mid-1970's for individuals from other countries. The program's primary goal has been to provide the participants an overview and familiarization of the principles, policies, and procedures followed by the Board in the standardization of geographic names for official purposes of the U.S. Government. Until recently, as reported to the 12th Session of the UN Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNGEGN), the training program followed an informal and varied format depending upon the specific requirements of the participants and the experience gained by the BGN staff and members in dealing with the training program. In an effort to provide the participants with a more structured educational experience, the BGN has developed a formal syllabus for use in future training courses.

The new training program is based on a five week course intended to provide comprehensive instruction on the standardization of domestic and foreign geographic names. The course, which is offered at no cost to the participants, is given in English and includes lectures, seminars, open discussions, reports, special projects, and actual hands-on work in both manual and automated names processing techniques. The course work is presented by the staff members of the Domestic Names Committee and the Foreign Names Committee and is held at their respective agencies, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Defense Mapping Agency. In addition to the formal sessions, the trainees may participate in the regular BGN committee and Board meetings, enabling them to observe the work of the Board. The participants of the training program are additionally provided tours of official mapping and charting agencies. In the past these included the National Ocean Survey, the U.S. Department of State, Office of The Geographer and the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

The BGN training program has been designed to accomplish certain objectives. The first is to provide the participants with a body of knowledge which could be applied in their respective countries to establish a national standardization body or to strengthen and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of an established names authority. Second, it

provides an effective mechanism for the establishment of mutually beneficial links with names authorities and experts in other countries. Finally it promotes the UNGEGN goal to further international standardization of geographic names. As a result of the program's success the BGN will continue to strongly support the training program and encourage participation by interested countries and their experts.
