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FIFTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
Montreal, 18-31 August 1987  
Item 15 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

Draft statute of the United Nations Group of Experts  
on Geographical Names

Submitted by the United Nations Group of Experts  
on Geographical Names

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**STATUTE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS  
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES\***

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was established in pursuance of the Economic and Social Council resolution 715A (XXVII) of 23 April 1959, 1314 (XLIV) of 31 May 1968 and decision adopted of the 1854 meeting to further the standardization of geographical names of both the national and the international levels.

**I. AIMS**

The basic aims of the Group of Experts are:

- the consideration of principles and methods for solving the problems of national and international standardization of geographical names;
- the collection and dissemination of information on work of national and international bodies on the standardization of geographical names to the United Nations Member States;
- the sharing of experience of national bodies on the standardization of geographical names;
- encouraging the supply of scientific and technical help to developing countries in national standardization of their geographical names.

**II. PRINCIPLES**

1. The Group of Experts acts as a collegiate, consultative body, accordingly agreement of non-procedural matters will be achieved by consensus and not by voting.
2. The decisions of the Group are of a recommendatory character.
3. Questions involving national sovereignty will not be discussed by the Group of Experts.

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\* As approved by the Group of Experts at its twelfth session held at the United Nations office at Geneva, from 28 September - 7 October 1986.

4. The Group of Experts in its activity adheres to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and proceeds from the following provisions:

- the standardization of geographical names must be based on the achievements of science in relation to both language treatment and the technical means of processing and generating toponymic data.
- international standardization of geographical names must be carried out on the basis of national standardization.

### III. FUNCTIONS

To further the stated aims, it is essential that the Group of Experts on Geographical Names exercise the following functions:

1. Provide liaison between countries in their work on geographical names.
2. Co-ordinate between countries their efforts on the standardization of geographical names.
3. Undertake the preparatory work for periodic international conferences on geographical names.
4. Provide continuity of action between conferences.
5. Assist in implementing resolutions adopted at conferences.
6. Consider the formation of linguistic/geographical divisions as rational bases for furthering work at national levels.
7. Co-ordinate the activities of divisions.
8. Maintain liaison with other international organizations dealing with related subjects.
9. Encourage the divisions and countries to take a more active role in standardization programmes. To this end, divisions should formulate their own working procedures and should co-ordinate them with the Group of Experts for the sake of assuring uniform content and principles.

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10. Encourage divisions, wherever feasible, to participate in United Nations Regional or other cartographic conferences. By having a divisional meeting in conjunction with a conference, the divisions could also take advantage of the conference facilities.

#### IV. COMPOSITION

##### 1. Linguistic/geographical divisions

1.1 The United Nations Group of Experts is composed of experts from linguistic/geographical divisions designated by the Governments of the United Nations Member States. The Group of Experts is headed by elected officers who guide activities of the Group during and between the sessions.

The Group of Experts in its activities is supported by the linguistic/geographical divisions.

- Africa Central Division
- Africa East Division
- Africa West Division
- Arabic Division
- Asia East Division (other than China)
- Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division
- Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)
- Celtic Division
- China Division
- Dutch and German-speaking Division
- East Central and South-East Europe Division
- Hebrew Division
- India Division
- Latin America Division
- Norden Division
- Romano-Hellenic Division
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Division
- United Kingdom Division
- United States of America/Canada Division

1.2 The number of linguistic/geographical divisions and their composition may be revised, if necessary.

1.3 A country decides for itself to which division it wishes to belong. A country may be a member of another division provided the nature of its participation is not such as to change the linguistic/geographical character of the division(s) concerned. An expert may be invited to attend meetings of other divisions in the capacity of observer/consultant.

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1.4 Each division, if composed of more than one sovereign State, will select, by methods of its own choosing, an expert to represent the division as a whole at the meetings of the Group of Experts.

1.5 In order to guarantee the continuity of the work, each division having more than one sovereign State should select an alternative representative; the divisional representative will act in close contact with his alternate.

1.6 The divisional representative stimulates activities on the standardization of geographical names within his division by all appropriate means (correspondence with national bodies on the standardization of geographical names and with national surveying and mapping agencies, arrangement of meetings of the divisional experts).

1.7 The divisional representative will be responsible for ensuring that the work of the Group of Experts and its potential for technical assistance are brought to the attention of the individual countries within his division and for reporting to the United Nations any special problems within his division.

1.8 To discuss technical and procedural matters a division may organize regional meetings during United Nations conferences on geographical names and meetings of the Group of Experts or at any other convenient time.

## 2. Officer

2.1 The Group of Experts will elect the following officers: a Chairman, a Vice Chairman and a Rapporteur.

2.2 All provisions regarding their election and functioning are given below in the Rules of Procedure.

## Working Groups

3.1 Working groups are disbanded upon completion of their appointed tasks. Expediency of prolongation of their term of activities is considered at the sessions of the Group of Experts. If necessary, new working groups may be appointed and their tasks determined.

3.2 The Convenor and the Co-convenor of a working group are elected at the meetings of the working group by methods of its own choosing.

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