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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON PROGRESS IN THE STANDARDIZATION
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FOURTH CONFERENCE

Standardization of geographical names in the USSR
in 1982 - 1986

Paper submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

FIFTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE USSR
IN 1982-1986

Standardization of geographical names in the USSR in the period since the 4th Conference was carried out in the main directions as follow:

- compilation and up-dating of normative instructions and methodical guidelines,
- compilation of dictionaries of geographical names,
- naming and renaming of place-names,
- international cooperation.

Compilation and up-dating of normative instructions and methodical guidelines

Since the 4th UN-conference on standardization of geographical names there have been compiled and updated in the Soviet Union normative instructions establishing the rules for place-name rendering from languages of foreign countries and USSR-nationalities into Russian as follow:

- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Rumania (Moscow, 1982),
- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Finland (Moscow, 1982),
- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Angola and Mozambique (Moscow, 1983),
- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Bashkir ASSR (Moscow, 1983),
- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of China (Moscow, 1983),

- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Afghanistan (Moscow, 1984),
- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Komi ASSR (Moscow, 1986).

There have been also prepared for publication Instruction for Russian rendering of Even geographical names and Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names of Mongolia.

All the instructions mentioned are guidelines for normalization of place-names of individual regions of the Soviet Union and foreign countries that aim at achievement of unity in Russian rendering of geographical names of the said regions in scientific, educational, reference, informational and cartographic publications as well as in periodical press. They are obligatory for ministries and departments, agencies and organizations of the USSR.

A number of toponymic guidelines have been published in the period under review:

- Guidelines on normalization of Antarctic geographical names (Moscow, 1984). The document defines basic rules and procedures for normalization of Antarctic geographical names in cartographic, reference and other publications in the USSR;
- Guidelines on normalization of names of World Ocean undersea features (Moscow, 1985). The document aims at regulation of usage of undersea feature names available, naming of features newly discovered, spelling of Russian and right rendering of foreign names as well as transliteration of Russian names by Roman letters. The rules established by the International Oceanographic Commission of the International Hydrographic Organization have been taken into account in compilation of the said Guidelines;
- Guidelines (revised and enlarged) for collection and establishment of geographical names on topographical maps and plans (Moscow, 1985). They define a general procedure of acquisition and establishment of geographical names in compilation and updating of topographic maps and plans at scales of 1:500 to 1:1,000,000 inclusive. They are intended for specialists performing topographic surveys;
- Methodical guidelines on nomination of geographic features of the USSR (in press).

Compilation of dictionaries of geographical names

There continues publication of dictionaries of geographical names of individual Soviet republics and foreign countries. The dictionaries contain names of towns, railway stations, airports, physico-geographical features as well as sites of touristic interest. The volume of dictionaries varies from 2,000 to 10,000 names. The names are usually given in Russian transcription, national form, and in Roman letters (for countries using non-Roman writing system).

In the period under review the dictionaries of geographical names of Portugal (1982), Somalia(1982), Austria(1982), France(1983), Kenya(1984), China(1984,2nd edition), and Czechoslovakia(1984) have been published. The dictionaries of geographical names of Australia and Antarctic are now in press.

In this period some major collective publications have been issued, such as "Dictionary of geographical names of the USSR" (1983, about 18,000 entries) and "Dictionary of geographical names of foreign countries" (1986, about 40,000 entries). In 1986 the second edition of the reference booklet "Names of States and Territories of the World" was published. It contains the names of sovereign states as well as territories of special status and is destined for mapping agencies, publishing houses, and information services. Besides the names of states and territories as well as their capitals and administrative centres, the datum of joining the UNO is given. Full forms of names are accompanied by abbreviations as used in Soviet publications.

In addition to the said works of normative character there have been published in 1982 to 1986 a number of dictionaries that are not normative documents but widely used in establishing the standard forms of geographical names. Among them there is "Geographical encyclopedia. Place-names" (Moscow, 1983) representing a reference edition that contains 10,000 entries and reflects the modern map of the world.

"Dictionary of local geographical terms"(Moscow, 1984) and "Dictionary of toponymic vocabulary of Latin America" (Moscow, 1983) are most significant among the dictionaries of toponymic vocabulary published. The content of these dictionaries

is rather specific. They contain a wide number of vocables, in particular, generic geographical terms, local and dialect forms used as appellatives and outdated words (or roots) maintained only in toponymy as topoformants.

Compilation of dictionaries is actively pursued in the republics of the Soviet Union. Thus, three dictionaries containing all up-to-date names of inhabited places of Belorussia have been published in 1982, 1983 and 1986 in the Belorussian SSR. Toponymists of the RSFSR compiled a number of dictionaries, such as "Dictionary of Tatar hydronymes"(Kazan, 1984), "Geographical names of Upper Prikamje"(Perm, 1983), "Names of Ural ridges and mountains"(Sverdlovsk, 1984) etc.

Orthographic and bilingual dictionaries published in the republics of the USSR often contain as supplements lists of geographical names of the republics concerned in national writing and Russian rendering, e.g., in "Udmurt-Russian dictionary"(1983). Great attention is given to microtoponymy. So, in the Ukrainian SSR a comprehensive dictionary "Microtoponymy of Černigovsko-Sumskoe Polesje"(Sumy, 1984) has been published.

Experiments are going on to use and improve automated information retrieval systems for toponyms. Such system has been used for preparation of geographical names indices of atlases and for compilation of some dictionaries of geographical names.

Naming and renaming of geographical features in the USSR are realized by the established procedure providing for obligatory coordination with the Permanent Joint Commission on geographical names of the Main Administration of Geodesy and Cartography. The Commission considers and draws decisions on proposals of naming and renaming of geographical features of the USSR.

In the field of international cooperation it should be noted following:

- In conformity with the resolutions adopted by the 4th UN-conference on standardization of geographical names the draft "Statute of the UN Expert Group on Geographical Names Activities" has been compiled by Soviet experts. The "Statute" elaborated represents a single document uniting currently valid "Aims and Functions", "Modus operandi" and "Rules of Procedure" of the Expert Group. The structure of the "Statute" corresponds thereby

to that of the UN Charter. On the whole, continuity of the content with the above documents is as much as possible maintained in the "Statute". At the same time the document prepared is supplemented in comparison with the previous ones by the formulation of aims and principles of the activity of the UN Expert Group, such as collectiveness in decision-making, recomendatory character of resolutions, national standardization as a basis of international one etc.

The "Rules of Procedure" of the Expert Group are based on typical procedure rules of the UN Economic and Social Council with account for specific features and established practice of the Expert Group activity. The "Statute" contains unambiguous formulation of the principles of decision-making. It is indicated that decisions on technical problems are taken by consensus and on procedural ones by voting. The document compiled except for "Rules of Procedure" has been adopted at the XIIth session of the Expert Group.

- Participation in the activity of the UN Expert Group on standardization of geographical names both directly at the XIth and XIIth sessions of the Expert Group and by exchange of technical correspondence.

- Participation as observers in the 7th and 8th sessions of the Xth Regional Division.

- Since 1983 in cartographic publications of the Soviet Union the Romanization system based on the State standard GOST 16876-71 "Rules for transliteration of Cyrillic characters by the letters of Roman alphabet" is used for rendering geographical names of the USSR (except for the Republics using the Roman writing system) and Russian names of Antarctic and World Ocean features. This Standard has been remade corresponding to COMECON-standard (ST CEV 1362-78) adopted by the COMECON Permanent Standardization Commission in 1978 and republished in 1981 as the National Standard regulating the rendering of characters of Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and other languages using Cyrillic alphabet in scientific and technical information.

The Romanization system adopted is based on the said Standard with some stipulations made for sake of standardization of geographical names and is fixed by special "Methodical guidelines

on application of GOST 16876-71 (ST SEV 1362-78)" that have been adopted in 1983 by the Main Administration of Geodesy and Cartography as obligatory for scientific and productional organizations.

The Romanization system is used not only in cartographic products, such as the Map of Soviet Union at the scale of 1 to 8,000,000 (1985), plans of Moscow and Leningrad published in 1985 for foreign guests of the 12th World Youth Festival in Moscow, and, which is especially important, the maps of the 3rd edition of the Atlas Mira (World Atlas), but it also is gradually introduced in publications of other USSR departments..Thus, in 1986 the time-tables of passenger trains of international railway lines connecting the towns of the Soviet Union with those of foreign countries of Europe and Asia have been published according to the new Romanization system. This system gets more and more widely applied in highway signs on the territory of the USSR, first of all, along international touristic routes.