



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.79/INF/55
20 August 1987

ENGLISH ONLY

FIFTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
Montreal, 18-31 August 1987
Item 4 of the agenda

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

Report by Cyprus

Paper submitted by Cyprus

1. HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF CYPRUS

1.1. The island of Cyprus, a striking setting for often dramatic events, remains a source of fascination to the representatives of a wide range of interests from beyond its shores. It is apparent that the problems which beset the people of Cyprus, are largely a consequence of the island's overpowerful appeal. The strategic significance of the island's location has attracted successive people who have regarded possession of it as a step towards the solution of their own diverse problems and the achievements of their ambitions.

1.2 Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean with an area of 9,251 square kilometres. It lies in the north-eastern corner of the East Mediterranean basin, at the meeting point of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa - a fact which has added considerably to the island's importance and development through the ages.

1.3 According to the 1973 census, Cyprus had a population of 650,000 of which 80 per cent were Greek-Cypriots, 18 per cent were Turkish-Cypriots and 2 per cent comprised the Armenian, Maronite and Latin communities. The language of the overwhelming Greek-Cypriot majority is Greek, while the Turkish-Cypriots' language is Turkish.

1.4 Since early times Cyprus had an eventful history mostly the result of its geographical position. It appeared for the first time in the history of civilization in the 6th millennium B.C. during the Neolithic Period. This period which lasted three millennia, was followed by the Bronze Age which lasted until 1500 B.C. In the 13th century B.C. the Achaean Greeks settled in Cyprus. They introduced the Greek language which has been preserved to this day. At the end of the 4th century B.C., Cyprus became part of the Kingdom of Alexander the Great. During the first century B.C. it was made a province of the Roman Empire and remained as such until the 4th century A.D., when it was included to the eastern part of the Roman Empire. This marked the beginning of the Byzantine Period, which lasted until the 12th century A.D. when, during the crusades, King Richard Coeur de Lion conquered the island; but he soon handed it over to Guy de Lusignan who established a French dynasty which lasted until the 15th century. In 1489 Cyprus was taken over by the Republic of Venice and in 1571 it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. Cyprus came under British rule in 1878 and remained so until 1960, when it gained its independence.

1.5 Cyprus was declared an independent sovereign republic on 16 August 1960, and in September of the same year it became a member of the United Nations. In 1961 it became a member of the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES AND CARTOGRAPHY

2.1. The history of Cyprus outlined above has provided the basis on which the Geographical Names and Cartography of the island have developed for the last 3,500 years. It came to build up all sorts of Geographical Names. It has a wealth of toponyms some of which originated in antiquity and survived to present day unaltered.

2.2 The Geographical Names of Cyprus reflect, among other things, the historical and social conditions which prevailed in the long history of the island. Evidence to prove this can be traced in all of its historical periods since the 15th century B.C. For example, the name of the island is referred in the Tel Al Amarna tablets found in Egypt as "ALASIA"; in Assyrian inscriptions, as "JATNANA"; in the Old Testament, as "KHETIM"; Homer was the first to mention the island by its present name "KYPROS". Farther, in his epic poetry he refers to other geographical names, like that of "PAFOS". Later, in the 7th century B.C. from Assyrian inscriptions we come to know for the first time the names of the nine kingdoms of Cyprus.

2.3 The history of the Cartography of Cyprus covers a period of more than 2000 years. In his monumental work under the title "Geographike Hysteresis", dating back to 100 A.D., Claudius Ptolemaeus of Alexandria mentioned that he mapped Cyprus. This work, which later became known to the West as Ptolemy's Geographia, was ignored by the Romans and remained dormant for several centuries. However, Ptolemy's map of Cyprus was in use until it was replaced by western marine cartographers. Consequently, the geographical names of Cyprus have an old history from a cartographic as well as a cultural point of view.

2.4 A milestone in the history of the cartography of Cyprus is Lord Kitchener's mapping of the island in 1878 - 1882. The map which was at a scale of one inch to one mile, covered the island in 15 sheets. The map was produced in English, which at the time was the official language of the Administration.

2.5 Since its independence, Cyprus is being mapped in Greek and Turkish, the two official language of the Republic, as well as in English. Geographical names adopted are in the language of publication and include the name of the island of Cyprus and the names of its towns, villages, mountains, plains, rivers, capes, gulfs and all locality or place names which appear on the maps and cadastral plans.

3. PROGRESS MADE IN STANDARDIZATION

3.1. Complying with the resolutions of the U.N.C.S.G.N. Cyprus has kept abreast with the subject since the first Geneva conference in 1967. On the 21st April 1977 the Government of the Republic of Cyprus by Decision No. 15.769 of the Council of Ministers set up an official Body the "Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names". This competent national Geographical Names authority was entrusted with the standardization, transliteration and transcription of all Geographical Names of the Republic of Cyprus. Following this in 1982, 2,000 main Geographical Names of the Island had been standardized and transcribed to form the "A CONCISE GAZETTEER OF CYPRUS" which was submitted and discussed at the 4th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

3.2. The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names has continued its work in the parts of the island which are under Government control on the same lines as described in the previous report. The main task was undertaken by the same two services, viz. the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Cyprus Research Centre. However, the work of the said Committee regarding the final field checking for verification of the material collected and used for the preparation of the Gazetteer and the maps was not made possible for nearly 40% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, which is under foreign military occupation and therefore inaccessible to our competent names authorities.

3.3. My Government is now in the pleasant position to introduce A COMPLETE GAZETTEER OF CYPRUS which contains about 67,000 entries and is based on the cadastral plans which are at scales 1:500, 1:1000, 1:1250, 1:2500 and 1:5000 as well as on other

sources like the 1:50,000 Map and the National Topographical Series. This gazetteer has been produced utilizing computers and it is now envisaged that the names file would be expanded while the present Gazetteer is kept current.

3.4. The collection, standardization and romanization of the Geographical Names of the Island have been carried out by the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Cyprus Scientific Research Centre. The toponyms were collected mainly from the cadastral plans, other official map series and sources. After field checking they were processed by glossologists of the Cyprus Scientific Research Centre. Thereafter the names were submitted to the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names for scrutiny and approval.

3.5. It should be emphasized that during the process of preparation of this Gazetteer, the Geographical Names, forming part of the history and cultural heritage of the communities living in Cyprus, were fully respected by the competent authorities.

3.6 It is though regrettable that Turkey, through its occupying forces and its organ, the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" has attempted to change the Geographical Names in the occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus. Such attempts amount to unauthorised interference in the affairs of an independent state and illegal action against Cyprus, which is null and void as it is contrary to International Law. Since such change of Geographical Names does not conform with the resolutions of previous conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, it cannot be recognized, but should be condemned instead.

3.7. As stated in the introductory note in the Gazetteer, the geographical names are given in either Greek or Turkish as the case may be and only the Greek names have been transliterated into the Roman script.

4. FUTURE PROGRAMME

4.1. Further research and field work is needed to complement the whole project by adding the Geographical names which do not constitute the official names but exist and are inherent in the culture of the Cypriot because they are used by people in their day-by-day life.

5. LINGUISTIC DIVISION

5.1. Cyprus is a member of three Linguistic Divisions as follows:

- (a) The Romano-Hellenic Division.
- (b) The East/Central and South-East Europe Division.
- (c) The Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic Division).

5.2. Cyprus has agreed with Greece on a common system of transcription and transliteration from Greek to the Roman alphabet.

6. NEW MAPS

6.1. Under the item 6(2) of the provisional agenda Cyprus, in support of the "A COMPLETE CATALOGUE OF CYPRUS", is submitting the following four new editions of maps compiled or published by the Department of Lands and Surveys:

- (a) Cyprus Administration and Urban map at scale 1:50,000.
This map which is coloured and bears the national number series D.L.S. 14 is in Greek edition, and the names shown on it are as standardized by the T.S.T.S.G.I.S.

- (b) Cyprus Administration and Road map at scale 1:250,000. This map which is also coloured and bears the national number series D.L.S.35, is in Turkish edition and the Greek names are shown on it as pronounced by the Turkish Cypriots while the Turkish names are as shown in the Gazetteer.
- (c) Cyprus Administration and Road Map English Edition at Scale 1:250,000. This map which is also coloured and bears the national number series D.L.S.36 shows the standardized Greek names in Roman script and
- (d) A Visitor's Map of Cyprus, English edition at scale 1:400,000. The map which is coloured shows the standardized names in Roman script and the Turkish names, being romanized, in Turkish script,