

Sixth Session
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REPORT OF THE AFRICA WEST DIVISION

Most of the countries in the Africa West Division have not yet established geographical names committees. Consequently, the first task of the Division is to encourage the formation of geographical names committees in the countries in the Division. It is after committees have been established in some of the countries that a realistic meeting of the Division can be convened.

Informal consultations amongst members of the Division, however, took place in Cairo in July during the Symposium on Manpower Requirements and the Development of Cartographic Services in Africa, organised by the Scientific, Technical and Research Commission of the Organisation of African Unity (STRC/OAU). The standardisation of geographical names featured prominently at the Symposium which recommended the establishment of Geographical Names Committees in those countries in Africa where they do not yet exist. The Symposium also recommended the holding of meetings of the African Divisions, along with cartographic conferences and meetings, and that such meetings should be serviced by the OAU. African states were further urged by the Symposium to participate at the third United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names. The report and recommendations of the Symposium have not yet been published but they will be placed before the Heads of States and Governments in Africa at their meeting in July. After this, the Inter-Africa Committee on Surveys and Maps of the OAU will pursue the implementation of the recommendations.

Although there has been no meeting of the Division, regular meetings of the Nigeria Committee on Geographical Names were held. Romanised alphabets, with diacritical marks, where appropriate, have been adopted in standardising names. The major task before the Committee is the publication of a new edition of the National Gazetteer. It is based on the Nigeria 1:50,000 map series and the names will be as known and used by the local inhabitants. Names of foreign origin will be dropped as far as practicable. The Gazetteer is at the first stage of completion.

A new edition of the National Atlas will also be published about the end of this year.