

Sixth Session
New York, 5-26 March 1975

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Activities related to overall work and
Interests of the Group of Experts 1973-1975

1. During the period between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Group of Experts, the Chairman has followed the activities of the divisions, working groups and individual experts as these have been reported directly or indirectly, and has commented or suggested actions as seemed appropriate. Continual contact has been maintained with the Cartography Section on all the varied matters requiring actions and decisions.
2. Two avenues of approach to the extra-terrestrial names problem were explored, the legal approach and the co-operative one. Discussions with the legal people at the United Nations and at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., about formal international compacts, and observation of the proceedings of the U.N. meetings on the Law of the Sea and other meetings seeking legal solutions have not been encouraging. It seems clear that a formal, legal approach would in essence, take the matter out of the hands of lawyers. The co-operative approach appears more promising. The new people involved with names in the International Astronomical Union (IAU) have been much more co-operative. Some who are employed by the United States Government will be serving on a EGN advisory committee. Dr. Peter Millman of Canada, who chairs the IAU overall committee on planetary nomenclature, sent material to our working group convenor and in a recent visit to Washington expressed his desire to explore with us co-operative roles for both groups. He has been invited to join us for discussions on Friday, 14 March, the first open date on his busy schedule. With reference to a role for the International Commission on Outer Space Onomastics, your Chairman had a long discussion with one of the officers of that group, following which he indicated that the group now accepts academic onomastic research as its appropriate role.

3. On behalf of the Group of Experts the Chairman wrote a letter of commendation to Gordon Delaney when he retired as Secretary of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. A copy is on file. The Chairman contributed a number of papers and reports on toponymic subjects, a paper on United Nations support of geographical name standardization for the Middle Atlantic Division of the Association of American Geographers, one on observation of toponymic phenomena for the 1974 International Geographical Union Regional Conference in New Zealand, a chapter on toponymy and cultural history for a forthcoming book on current trends in linguistic research, a critique of a manuscript on generic terms and advice to an association of earth-science editors.

4. The Chairman's personal papers are going into the National Archives Solar Records Center in Washington, D.C., where they will be available to research workers. The papers will include the file on generic terms in the United States which is now being updated with a grant from the Association of American Geographers.