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GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
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Item 14 of the provisional agenda\*

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

United Nations activities in the field of standardization  
of geographical names

Paper submitted by the Secretariat\*\*

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ABBREVIATIONS:

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- ECOSOC : Economic and Social Council
- IMW : International Map of the World on the millionth scale.
- UNCISG : United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
- UNEGN : United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

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1. Although the beginning of cartographic sciences may be traced back to ancient times, it is only recently that international agreement has been sought on such matters as the prime meridian line, geographic nomenclature, specifications for geodetic control, standard systems of measurements and methods of presentation of topographical features. In the field of cartography, international co-operation began in 1864 when the first international geodetic organisation, the Central European Geodetic Association (later to become a branch of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) ) held its first meeting. In other fields of cartography, little or no attempts were made to co-ordinate national programmes until the period between the two world wars.

2. A brief history of the evolution of the standardization of geographical names should go back to the days when people started to communicate among themselves, and from this moment on names given to physical features have played a very important role in their vocabulary.

3. Nowadays, the use of toponyms has increased considerably due to the sophisticated means of communication and the great progress made in the media and printing in particular. Geographical names have become a key element in various socio-economic activities, such as trade, postal services, census and relief operations etc. But for an individual geographic entity to be uniquely identified, its designation must be without any ambiguity. This is precisely the goal of the standardization of geographical names which has been defined as:

"The prescription or the recommendation of a particular graphic form or forms for application to a given feature, as well as the conditions of employment of that form or forms."

4. The need for standardization in place names was felt long ago, but the first concrete proposal for a world wide system of standardization was made at the end of the last century by the german geographer Albrecht Penck. In 1891, at the 5th International Geographical Congress, at Bern, Switzerland, Penck launched the idea of a World Map at the millionth scale for which not only technical matters such as map projection, symbolization and design were laid out, but for which concrete proposal on the adoption of standardized

writing of geographical names were made.

The opportunity afforded by the United Nations for the fulfilment of these needs were soon realized by the Member States and from its inception, the United Nations, through its Department of Social Affairs took a great interest in these fields.

5. Today, it is interesting to note that the two proposals made by Penck became part of the Agenda of the Economic and Social Council at an early stage of the United Nations, i.e. the "International Map of the World on the Millionth Scale (IMW)" and the "Standardization of Geographical Names" since 1949, when the United Nations was still at Lake Success.

#### THE FORMATIVE YEARS

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6. Already during the debates of the sixth session of ECOSOC in 1948, the problem of standardization of geographical names was raised and it was kept in mind when ECOSOC adopted resolution 131 (VI) on the co-ordination of cartographic services, recommending, inter alia, "that the Member Governments stimulate the accurate survey and mapping of national territories, and that the Secretary-General take appropriate action for furthering such efforts by promoting the exchange of technical information and other means, including the preparation of a study on modern cartographic methods and development of uniform international standards."

7. In accordance with this resolution, a meeting of experts was held at Lake Success in 1949 and the question of geographic nomenclature was discussed for the immediate use of the Secretariat's Map Library and Statistical Office and for international standardization purposes.

8. It is in implementation of recommendations made at this meeting of Experts, that a cartographic office was created within the Secretariat. However, the very first document dealing with geographic names issued by the United Nations and entitled "Nomenclature of Geographic Areas for Statistical Purposes" was published in 1948 by the Statistical Office. (Statistical Papers, Series M, No.1).

9. The standardization of geographical names was discussed further at several sessions of the Council and consultations were made with Member Governments, specialized agencies and interested inter-governmental organizations on the holding of regional cartographic conferences and on the adoption of a standard method of writing geographical names on maps.

10. In 1955, in pursuance of resolution 556 (XVIII) adopted by the Council, the First Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held and for the first time at an international conference called by the United Nations, the "Adoption of a standard method of writing geographical names on maps" was placed on the Agenda of the Conference. (Item 6 b iv). The Conference considered a note by the Secretariat entitled "Replies from Governments on the question of the adoption of a standard method of writing geographical names on maps". This document contained comments and studies submitted by 19 Governments. (Document E/CONF.18/A/L.9). The Conference was also informed of the work carried out in this field by the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Universal Postal Union and the International Hydrographic Bureau, and the interest expressed by the International Telecommunications Union on this subject.

11. The Conference, while noting the favourable views expressed by various governments on the adoption of uniform methods of writing and transliteration of geographical names, realized the diverse technical problems involved therein, the solution of which seemed so far beyond the competence of a regional conference. Although the adoption of local spelling for names in languages using the roman script had reached a fair degree of agreement, it would nevertheless be difficult to make substantive progress concerning the other languages until a body, which in the opinion of the Conference should be formed by common consent under the sponsorship of the United Nations, had worked out a phonetic script and transliteration rules applying to all the scripts of the world. The Conference adopted the following resolution:

" The Conference

1. Commends to the notice of the Governments attending the Conference the suggestion of the Government of the United States of America, viz: "... The United States Government would be willing to cooperate in drafting a general framework for a programme looking toward maximum international uniformity in the writing of geographical names for consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, or by an International Conference called by the Council for that purpose, or in drafting an agenda for such a Conference."; and
2. Recommends that a Committee should be set up under the auspices of the United Nations, on the lines proposed by the Government of the United States of America, and that the Governments of this Region should appoint experts to

UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND ECOSOC RESOLUTIONS  
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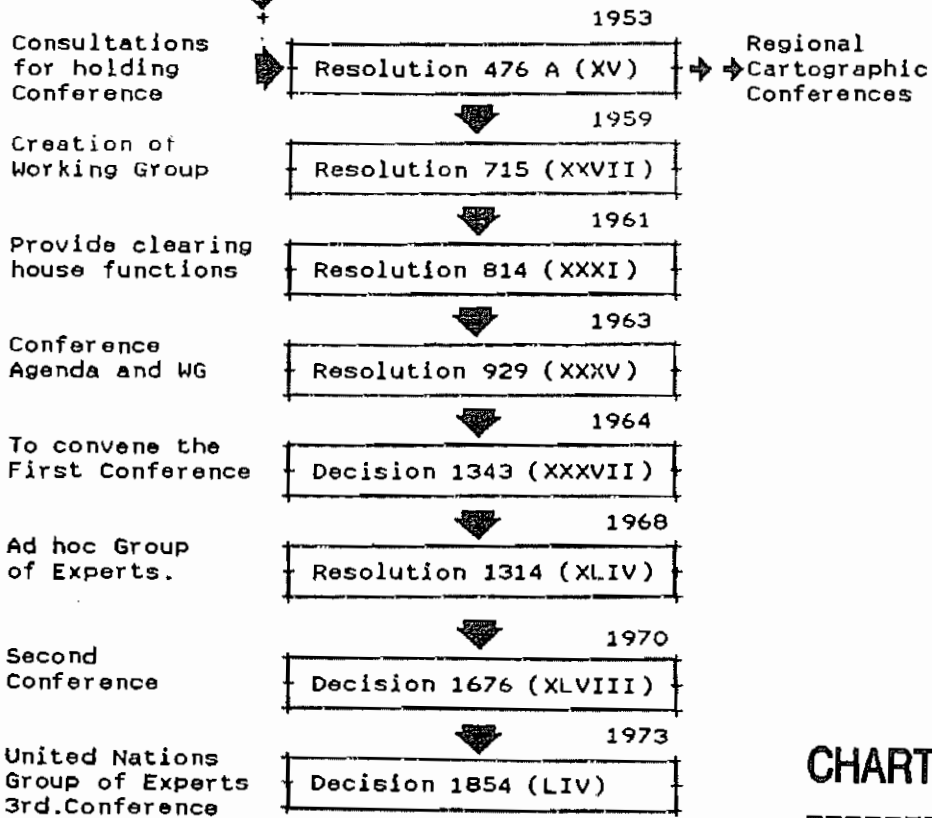
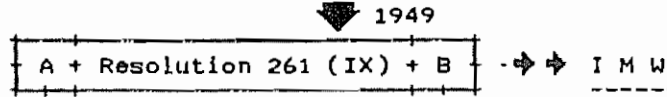
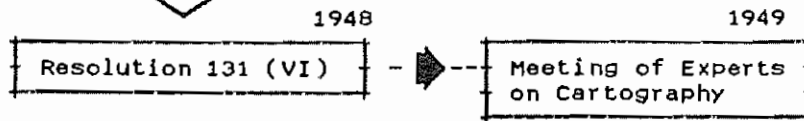
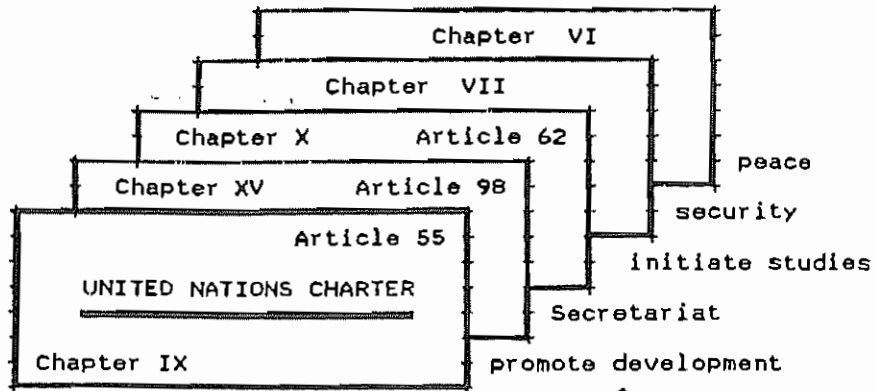


CHART 1

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participate in the deliberations."

12. This recommendation took its final form in May 1956 when the Council adopted a resolution (600 (XXI)) drafted by Canada and Ecuador, noting, inter alia, the results of the Secretary-General's consultations on the adoption of a standard method of writing geographical names on maps and requesting, inter alia, the Secretary-General, in co-operation with interested international organizations and such experts as he wished to consult within the limits of budgetary availability, to draft a general framework of a programme looking towards maximum international uniformity in the writing of geographical names.

13. Following this recommendation, the Secretary-General submitted to the Council a report dealing, inter alia, with a draft programme. It was recognized that the work in this field involved two basic questions:

- \* The standardization in one form of geographical names at the national level by the country concerned and
- \* the agreement on standard methods of transliteration of the accepted form into other languages at the international level.

In the light of the debates on the questions, the Council adopted on April 1959 a three part resolution 715 (XXVII) dealing in part A with Geographical Names and in part B and C with the IMW.

14. In resolution 715 A (XXVII) the Council requested the Secretary-General:

- a) To provide encouragement and guidance to those nations which had no national organization for the standardization and co-ordination of geographical names to establish such an organization and to produce national gazetteers at an early date;
- b) To take the necessary steps to ensure the functions of a central clearing-house for geographical names, including :
  - \* the collection of gazetteers; and
  - \* the collection and dissemination of information concerning the technical procedures adopted by Member States for standardization of domestic names, and concerning the techniques and systems used by each Member



State in the transliteration of the geographical names of other countries.

The Secretary-General was further requested to set up a small group of consultants chosen, with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and to the different linguistic systems of the world, from those countries having the widest experience of the problems of geographical names:

- i) to consider the technical problems of domestic standardization of geographical names, including the preparation of a statement of the general and regional problems involved, and to prepare draft recommendations for the procedures, principally linguistic, that might be followed in the standardization of their own name by individual countries ; and
- ii) to report to the Council at an appropriate session on the desirability of holding an international conference on this subject and of sponsoring working groups based on common linguistic systems;
- iii) to invite Governments of countries interested and experienced in the question to make available, at the request of the Secretary-General, and at their own expense, consultants to serve on the above group.

15. This resolution is at the base of all the work carried out by the United Nations in this field, in particular the formation of the

\* United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical names.

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and the holding of

\* United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of  
-----  
Geographical Names.  
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THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
-----  
AND CONFERENCES ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
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16. The Group of Experts on Geographical Names, which had been set up by the Secretary-General in pursuance of ECOSOC Resolution 715 A (XXVII) convened for the first time at United Nations Headquarters in June 1960 to consider the technical problems of domestic standardization and the desirability of holding an international conference. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Meredith F. Burrill (USA) and Mr. Andre Pegorier (France) as rapporteur, the six members of the Group prepared a very detailed report (E/3441) recognizing the most important and widespread problems of domestic standardization and twenty one technical recommendations relative to problems raised. The Group was unanimous in its concurrence that it is imperative to hold an international conference

- \* to study national and international problems involved,
- \* to exchange technical information and
- \* to reach agreement on concrete steps to be taken.

17. On the basis of this report, and after further consultations with Governments, the Council at its 1343th meeting on 6 August 1964 decided to convene a United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1967. The arrangements for the holding of this conference were later approved by ECOSOC in July 1965.

18. The Group of Experts was invited to attend a preparatory meeting designed to assist in the necessary preparations for the Conference. This second meeting of the Group, which took place at United Nations Headquarters in March 1966, finalized the specific objectives of the Conference as follows:

- a) Removal of any remaining doubt that nationally standardized names are the proper basis for international standardization and that an international alphabet is not feasible;
- b) Development of a greater willingness on the part of each country to take account, in its standardization programme, of the problems that other countries might encounter in receiving and assimilating those geographical names for their own use. This process would involve, on the part of the donor country, all the elements of the original.

scripts and other linguistic details necessary for proper conversion into other scripts;

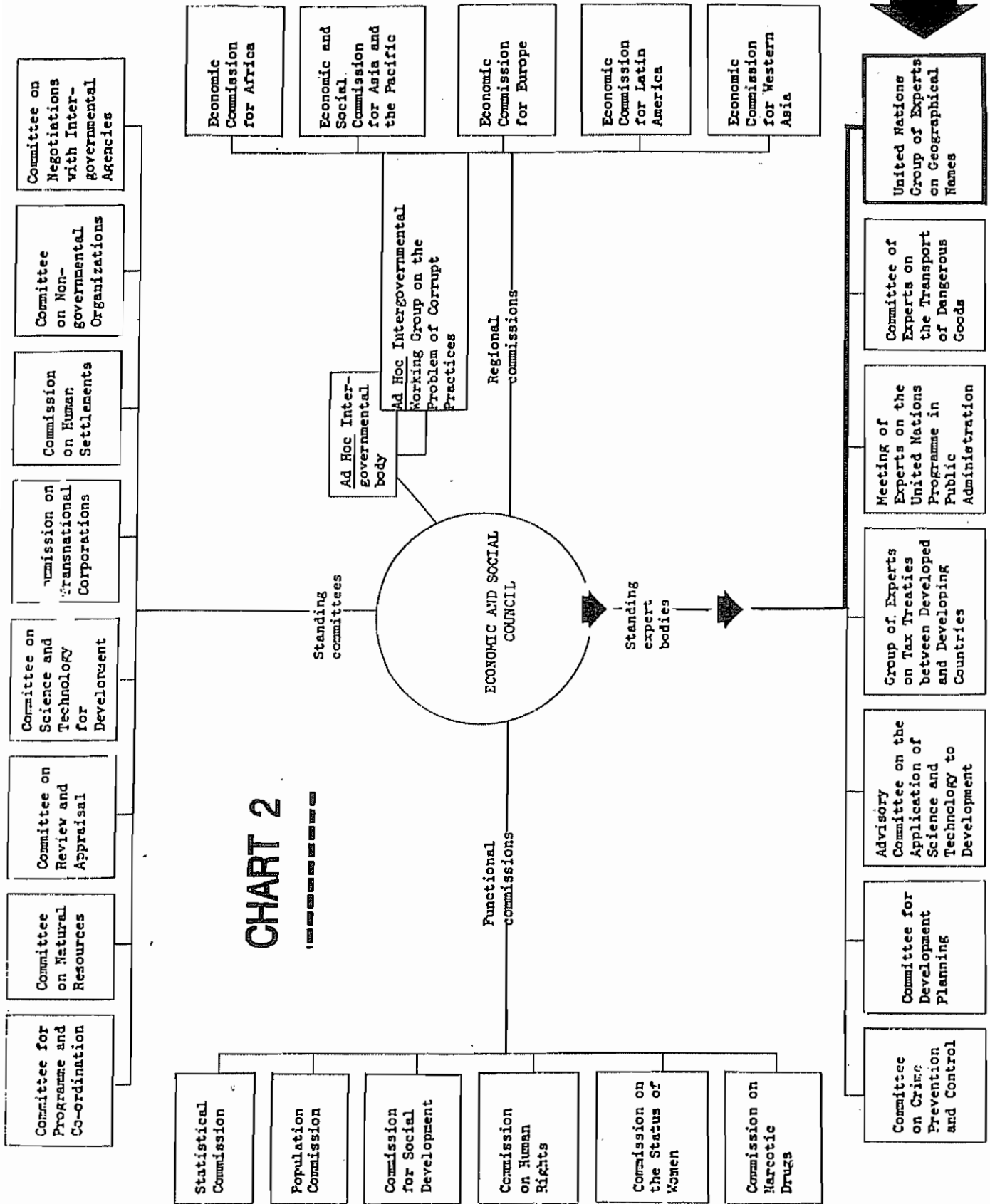
- c) Comparison of problems and programmes of various countries;
- d) Identification of topics, areas and categories of names which currently merit further study, and formulation of principles relating to international standardization;
- e) Formulation of principles applying to the transfer from one writing system to another;
- f) Romanization from other writing systems for international standardization to be thought from United Nations Roman-alphabet languages: English, French and Spanish ;
- g) Consideration to be given to the establishment of systems for international standardization based on the Cyrillic alphabet and the Arabic alphabet ;
- h) Identification and discussion of categories of names of features extending beyond the sovereignty of a single country, i.g. oceans, rivers, mountains, undersea features etc., and examination of possibilities of standardization.
- i) Development of machinery for international exchange of information ;
- j) Proposals for the establishment of a programme of regional Conferences or working groups to operate after the Geneva Conference ;
- k) Promotion of the establishment of names standardization bodies in all countries.

19. The First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was convened at Geneva from 4 to 22 September 1967. It was attended by 111 representatives and observers from 54 countries. The report of the First Conference (document E/4477) was presented to ECOSOC at its 44 th session in 1968. The Council unanimously adopted a resolution (1314 (XLIV)) in which it

- \* noted the recommendations of the Conference ;
- \* invited the ad hoc Group of Experts to provide the necessary co-ordination of national activities in that field ;
- \* approved as terms of reference for the ad hoc Group the specific matters referred to it by the Conference ;

/...

# CHART 2



- \* directed it to carry forward the programme of co-operative activity agreed to at the Conference.
- \* requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the ad hoc group of experts, to consider the desirability of holding a second Conference.

20. With this resolution, the future of both Conferences and of Group of Experts were firmly established. It should be pointed out however that the ad hoc Group became the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names following a recommendation of the Second Conference in London in 1972, and later endorsed by ECOSOC. Thus the Group became a member of ECOSOC "standing expert bodies". (see Chart 2 )

21. From this time on, to enumerate the various resolutions and decisions which have been adopted or taken by ECOSOC for the holding of the next five conferences and fifteen sessions of the UNGEGN, would add little to this overview. Of greater interest will be to examine the structure that has been set up and to look into the work programme in more details.

22. By ECOSOC resolution 1314 (XLIV) of 31 May 1968 and later decisions, the UNGEGN has been charged with providing for continuous co-ordination among countries to further the standardization of geographical names and to encourage the formation and the work of linguistic/geographical divisions.

23. In order to achieve the results required, at both national and international levels, as specified in the resolutions adopted at Conferences, 19 such Divisions have been formed. (see Annex 1). Each country is encouraged to participate in the activities of a Division and decide for itself to which Division it wishes to belong according to its linguistic and geographical affinities. Countries having more than one official language can participate in the activities of more than one Division.

24. Within the UNGEGN working groups have been established to deal with the following particular issues:

- a) Single Romanization system (est. 1967)
- b) Definitions (est.1971) (disb. 1987) (re-est.1989:see j) )
- c) Names of undersea and maritime features (est.1970)
- d) Training courses (est.1973)
- e) International gazetteers (est.1973)
- f) Automated data processing (est.1977)
- g) Extraterrestrial topographic names (est.1970)

- h) Country names ( est.1973)
- i) Toponymic data files ( est. 1982)
- j) Terminology ( est. 1989) (former : Definitions)
- k) Evaluation (AdHoc) (est. 1987)

Upon completion of the appointed task, the working group is automatically disbanded, and in 1987 , only three Working groups remained i.e. on Toponymic Data files, on Courses in toponymy and on Single romanization system. The working group (Adhoc) on evaluation was formed at that time and remains in activity. At the 14th session in 1989, the working group on Definitions was reconstituted and renamed Terminology.

25. The UNGEGN meets at regular intervals (every two years) and maintains communication among themselves. The Chairman is responsible for reporting on its main activities to the United Nations. The " Statute " of the UNGEGN defining the structure and activities of the Group is given in Annex 1.

26. Besides the UNGEGN, Governments are invited to participate every five years at a world wide United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. United Nations specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and international scientific societies are also invited to send observers. At the fifth Conference held in Montreal in 1987, 106 representatives and observers from 53 countries, 1 specialized agency (ICAO) and 3 International scientific organisations attended the meeting. More than 150 technical documents were presented and 26 resolutions adopted. The agenda of this conference as it is also the case of the present one, was not fundamentally different from the proposals made by the Experts who met in 1966, but more and more it underlines the trend towards practical solutions.

27. To make an inventory of all the activities which have been undertaken by the various countries in implementation of resolutions adopted by the Conferences is not an easy task. In accordance with resolution 4 adopted at the fifth Conference (see E/CONF.79/5), a special working group, within the UNGEGN, was established to evaluate the activities of the Group and investigate fresh approaches and new avenues to achieve its goals and objectives in the most efficient manner and to review the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Conferences and report on their implementation. As this in depth report prepared by Mr. Richard Randall (USA), convener of the Group, will be presented at the 6th Conference, no attempt will be made here to comment on these subjects. However a few outstanding achievements deserve to be pointed out.

28. In the field of the terminology used in the

standardization of geographical names, the UNGEGN in close cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat (Documentation, Reference and Terminology Section, Department of Conference Services), published "Glossary Nr.330", entitled Technical Terminology Employed in the Standardization of Geographical Names. This glossary which was compiled under the guidance of Mr.Lewis (UK), convener of the working group, contains 115 definitions and cross-references together with explanatory and descriptive information in the six official languages at the United Nations.

29.The production and publication of Toponymic Guidelines for map editors and other editors has been extremely welcome by the international community. This series of guidelines which contain for a given country the main facts, measures and achievements in the field of national name standardization with particular consideration to legal status of geographical names in the respective languages of multilingual countries; alphabets of the language (s) and romanization keys; spelling rules, aids to pronunciation etc. This project, spearheaded by Prof.Breu (Austria) is among the major achievements of the UNGEGN. More than 30 countries have presented their guidelines, most of them already published in various United Nations publications, such as World Cartography or among the Technical documents presented either at various Regional Cartographic Conferences or at Conferences for the Standardization of Geographical Names.

30.From the beginning of the UNGEGN the urgent need for training courses in toponymy was repeatedly stressed. This project, under the guidance and untiring efforts of Prof.Ormeling Sr. (Netherlands) has been also most successful and several courses were held in various linguistic/geographical areas of the world, i.e Cisarua (Indonesia) in 1982, Rabat (Morocco) in 1984, Quebec (Canada) in 1987, Quito (Ecuador) and Panama City (Panama) in 1988 and in Cipanas (Indonesia) in 1989. The repeated recommendations made by the UNGEGN to promote education and training in toponymy has also stimulated tertiary educational institutions, such as the University of Jerusalem , Laval University in Canada or Universities in Finland to incorporate this subject in their curricula.

31. Among the achievements of the UNGEGN mention should be made also of its efforts to standardize romanization systems. The problem of adopting a single romanization system, based on scientific principles, for each non-Roman alphabet or script, for international application has been the object of studies and recommendations by the Group since its very beginning and the Working Group on this subject was already

established in 1967. During the years devoted convenors such as MM.De Silva (Mexico), Breu (Austria), Foeldi (Hungary) and Quinting (USA) guided the work and several recommendations were made for alphabets and scripts such as for the conversion of Russian Cyrillic characters, Chinese (so-called Pinyin system), Amharic, Thai etc.

32. When 30 years ago the activities of the United Nations started in the standardization of geographical names, only a handful of countries had a national names authority, and very few countries had the establishment of one in the planning. Today, the need of such an organisation has been recognized by all Governments and the creation or strengthening of such authorities is becoming a reality.

33. As the world is shrinking under our eyes everyday, and as the modern communications techniques flood the media, books and maps with such a tremendous amount of data, the need for precise reference for the geographical features has increased in the same proportion. This need for precise naming of features on earth, under the ocean or in the sky can only be satisfied by national and international standardization programmes.

34. Thus, through the activities of the United Nations, and the initiative and efforts of each country, communications on the national level and world wide have been greatly improved.

#### STATISTICAL SUMMARY

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35. The following tables and charts are based on the attendance, country represented, number and content of the resolutions adopted at the various Conferences and sessions of the UNGEGN.

36. From the data given in table 1 , Figure 1A and 1B show the countries which have sent more than two Experts to the sessions of the UNGEGN since 1967. A total of 622 experts attended the 15 sessions of the UNGEGN and were sent by 69 countries. Figure 2 illustrates the numbers of Experts by continent and shows the expected high participation from Europe and North America but also the large participation from Africa and Asia. By contrast it shows also the relatively small participation from South America and Oceania. Why such a low participation from these regions? Are the needs of these countries already met by their respective governments or by an organization such as the Pan American Institute for Geography and History (PAIGH)? A better diffusion of information together with technical and



## UNGEEN - Number of Experts by country (total 15 sessions)

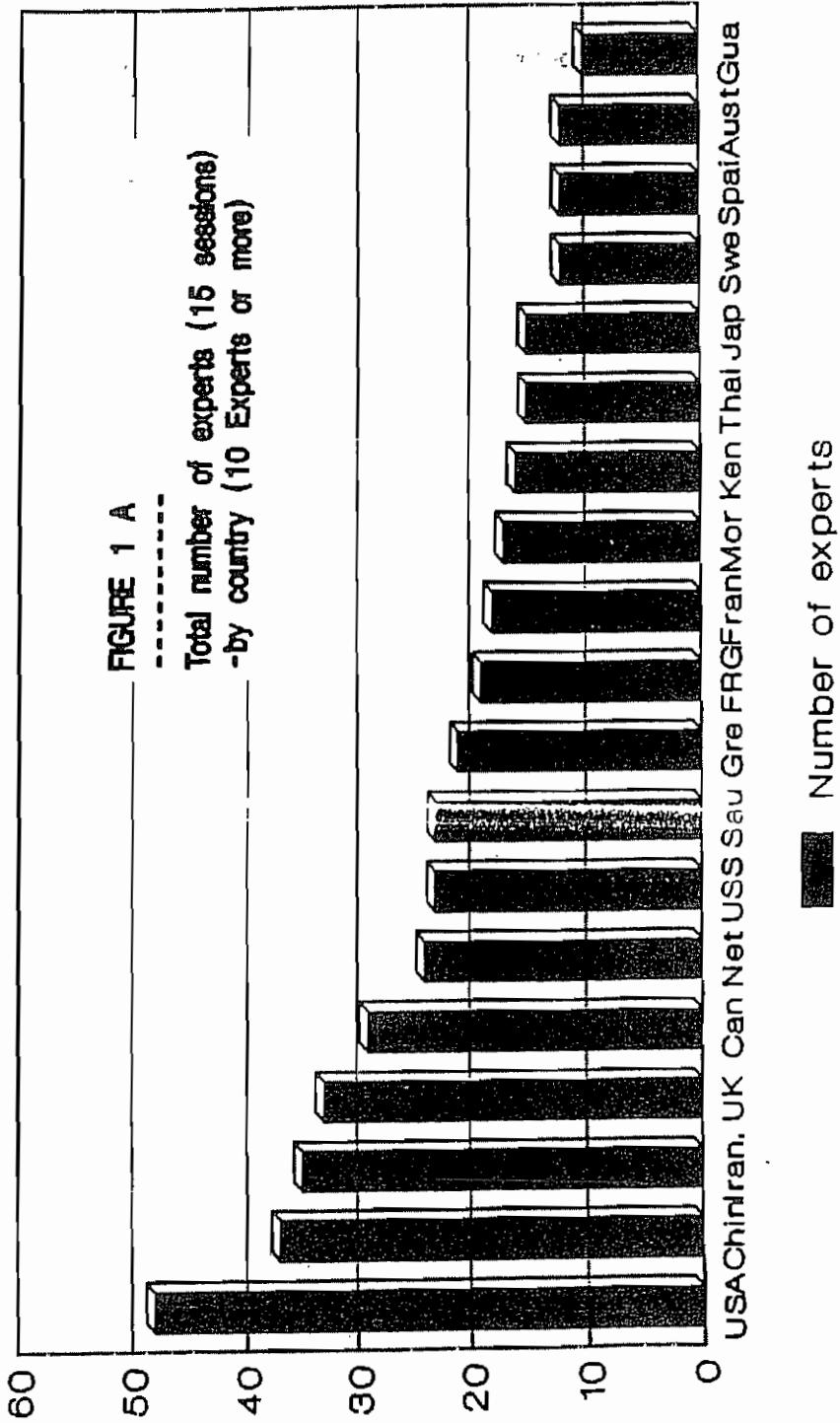
Afghanistan	1	Norway	8
Algeria	3	Pakistan	6
Angola	2	Peru	1
Australia	1	Philippines	2
Austria	12	Poland	6
Bahrain	1	Portugal	3
Bulgaria	2	Romania	2
Cameroon	2	Saudi Arabia	23
Canada	29	South Africa	5
China	37	Spain	12
Congo	2	Suriname	2
Cuba	9	Sweden	12
Cyprus	9	Switzerland	6
Czechoslovakia	6	Thailand	15
Dem. Korea	5	Turkey	7
Dem. Yemen	2	UK	33
FRG	19	USA	48
Finland	7	USSR	23
France	18	Ukraine	2
GDR	9	Venezuela	2
Gabon	1	Yemen	3
Germany	4	Zambia	1
Greece	21		
Guatemala	10	-----	
Hungary	8	Total	622
India	7	-----	
Indonesia	2	of which :	
Iran, Islamic R.	35	Africa	69
Ireland	4	Asia	225
Israel	9	North America	98
Italy	6	South America	5
Ivory Coast	1	Europe	224
Japan	15	Oceania	1
Jordan	1	-----	
Kenya	16	from 69 countries	
Khmer	1	-----	
Korea, Rep.	6	of which:	
Kuwait	1	Africa	14
Lebanon	5	Asia	24
Liberia	3	North America	5
Libyan Arab J.	9	South America	3
Malaysia	9	Europe	22
Mexico	2	Oceania	1
Morocco	17	-----	
Mozambique	1		
Netherlands	24		
Nigeria	6		

TABLE 1

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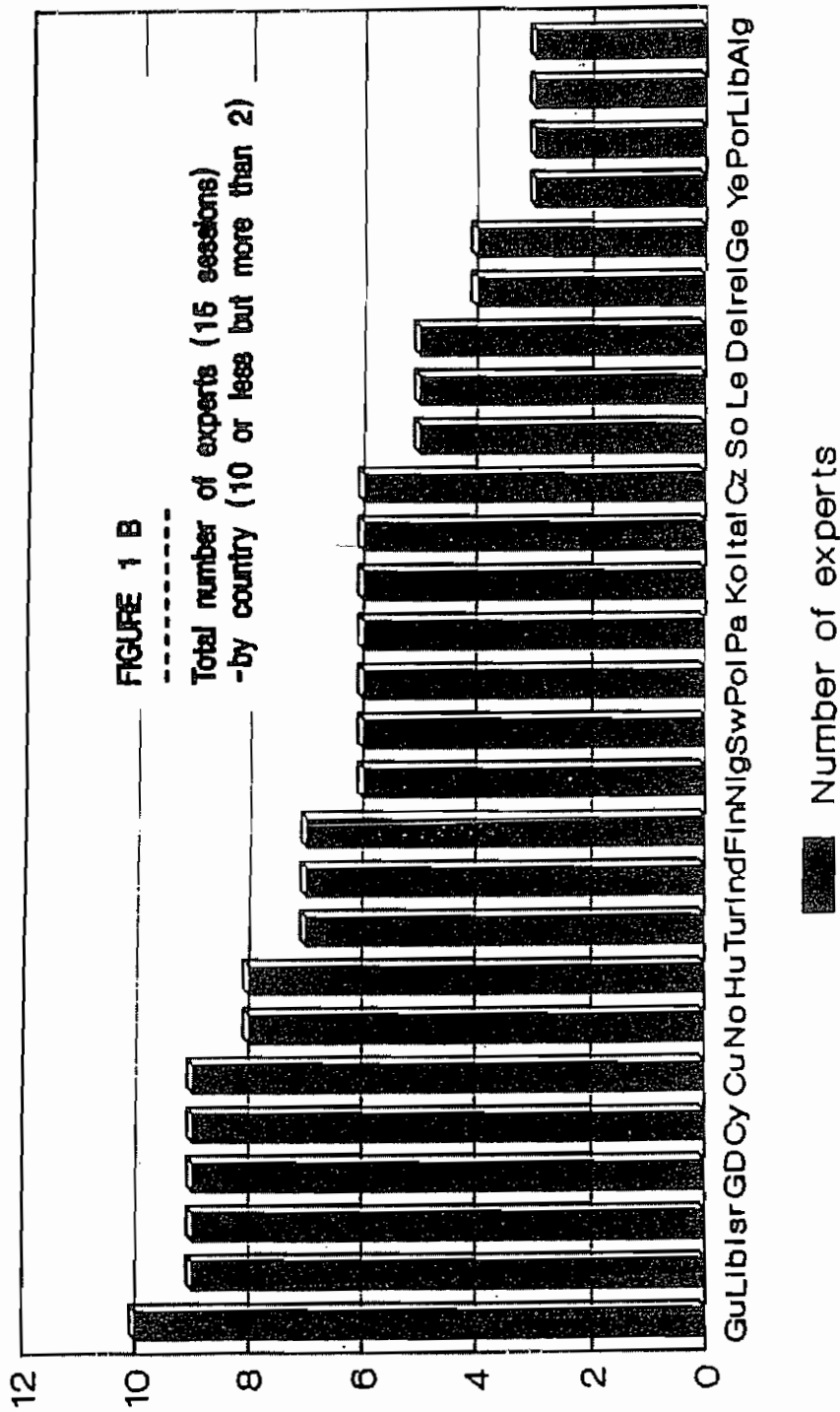
# UNGEEN - EXPERTS



Total Number of experts : 622

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# UNGEEN - EXPERTS



Total Number of experts : 622

...

# UNGEEN- Participation by Experts/Continent

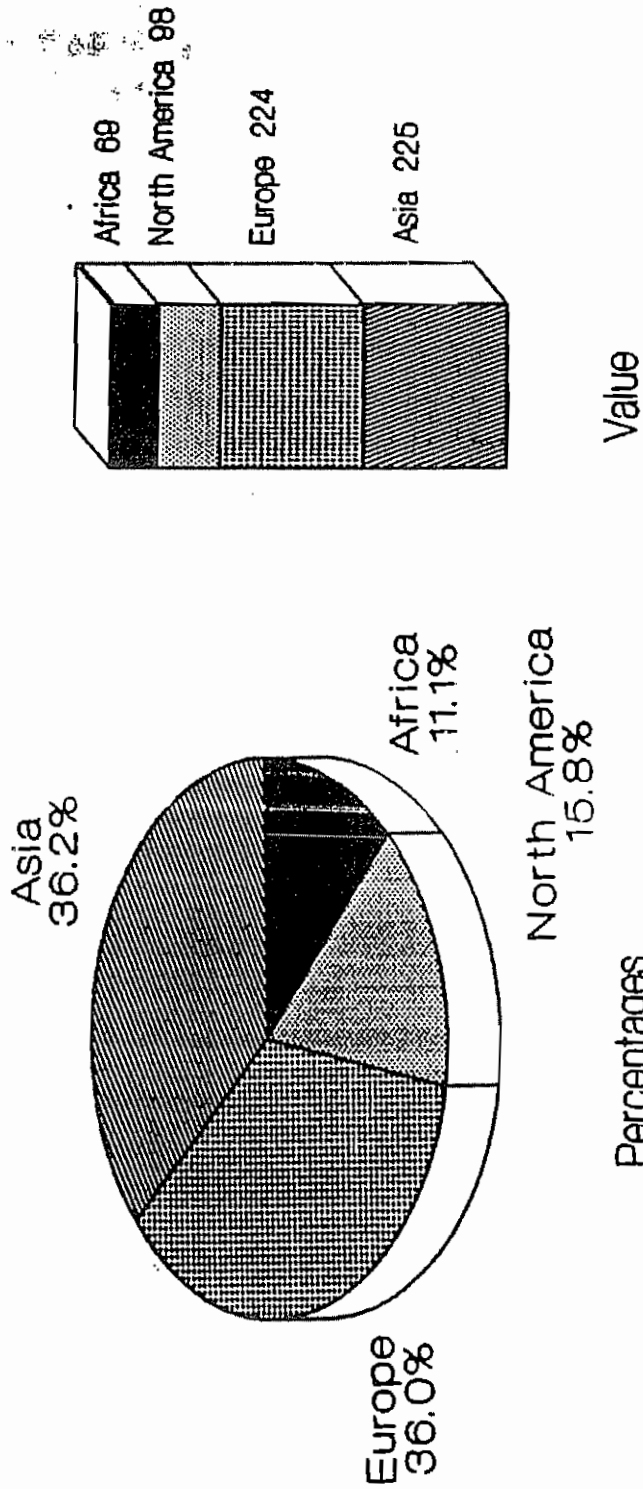
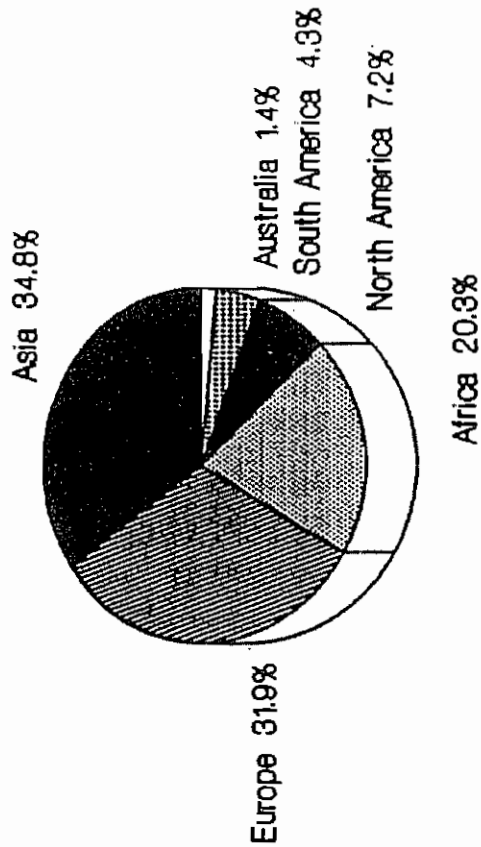


FIGURE 2  
Total of 622 experts from 69 countries

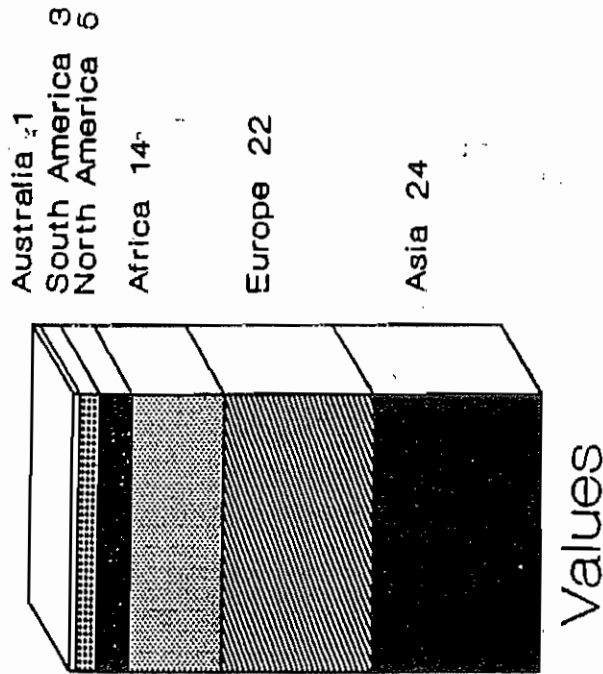
Note: The number of experts from Oceania and South America is 6. It cannot be graphically shown at this scale.

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Total number of experts (15 sessions)  
- - by continent (percentage and value)

# UNGEEN - Participation by Countries/Continent



Percentages



Values

Total: 69 countries

Figure 3

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 Total number of countries (15 sessions)  
 - by continent (percentage and value)

financial assistance might allow for a better share of mutual experience. This remark could be applicable to many countries from other regions where the UNGEGN needs to "sell" the idea of the standardization of geographical names.

37. Table 2, gives for each country which has ever attended one of the UNCISG, the number of delegate(s) sent by that country and the number of conference(s) attended. The five conferences were attended by a total of 596 delegates representing 98 countries. Figure 4 shows by continent, the total number of delegates and the total number of countries which have participate at the conferences. Figure 5 shows the percentage by continent of the participating countries. Figure 6 illustrates for each continent the number of countries and the number of conferences they attended e.g. only 18 countries have attended all 5 conferences i.e. 12 from Europe, 4 from Asia and 2 from North America. Figure 7 shows for each conference the number of countries which have participated, the number of delegates attending, the number of specialized agencies and scientific organisations which have sent observers and the number of resolutions adopted. It shows, inter alia, that though the number of countries attending the conferences is remaining almost constant, the number of participants reached its highest at the 3rd conference in Geneva. Number due perhaps to the location and to all the Missions to the UN European HQs. As to the total number of resolutions (138) adopted, they should by no means be an index of the degree of success of any of the conferences. With an average of 27 resolutions per conference it would appear that only 65 % of them are of substantive value, more than 10 % are of no consequence today, 20 % are of administrative importance and 5 % redundant or superseded.

38. As already stated an Adhoc working group was formed within the UNGEGN to evaluate the activities of the Group and to review the resolutions and to report on their implementation. The statistical tables and illustrations given here will complement and reinforce some of the data already collected by the Group. (see Working paper No.55, by Richard Randall, UNGEGN 15th sessions).

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# UNCSGN - BY COUNTRY

## Nr.of Delegates & Conferences attended.

Afghanistan	2	1	Nigeria	5	3
Algeria	6	2	Norway	10	4
Angola	1	1	Pakistan	6	4
Argentina	6	4	Panama	1	1
Australia	5	4	Peru	7	4
Austria	4	4	Philippines	9	3
Bahrain	1	1	Poland	9	5
Bangladesh	3	1	Portugal	5	3
Belgium	10	4	Romania	16	5
Brazil	4	2	San Marino	2	1
Bulgaria	7	5	Saudi Arabia	11	4
CAR	1	1	Senegal	3	3
Cambodia	2	1	South Africa	1	1
Cameroon	3	2	Spain	11	5
Canada	34	5	Sudan	3	2
Chile	5	4	Suriname	4	1
China	19	4	Sweden	10	5
Congo	1	1	Switzerland	8	4
Coete Rica	1	1	Syrian A.R.	1	1
Cuba	4	3	Thailand	10	4
Cyprus	13	5	Togo	2	1
Czechoslovakia	8	5	Trinidad and Tobago	2	1
Denmark	3	3	Tunisia	1	1
Dominican Rep.	1	1	Turkey	11	4
Ecuador	3	3	UAR (Egypt)	5	3
Ethiopia	4	2	UK	22	5
FRG	22	5	USA	27	5
Finland	9	5	USSR	18	5
France	6	5	Uganda	3	3
GDR	5	3	Ukraine	3	2
Ghana	2	1	Uruguay	2	1
Greece	17	4	Venezuela	3	2
Guatemala	4	4	Vietnam, Rep.of	3	2
Guyana	1	1	Yugoslavia	7	4
Holy See	7	5	Zaire	1	1
Honduras	2	2	Zambia	1	1
Hungary	6	4			
India	4	3			
Indonesia	3	2	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>596 delegates</b>	
Iran	19	5			
Iraq	3	3	<b>of which:</b>		
Ireland	2	2	Africa	78 delegates	
Israel	9	5	North America	79	
Italy	4	2	South America	30	
Japan	7	4	Asia	177	
Jordan	5	3	Europe	227	
Kenya	5	4	Oceania	5	
Khmer Rep.	1	1			
Korea, Rep.of	2	2	<b>from 98 countries</b>		
Kuwait	1	1			
Laos	2	1	<b>of which:</b>		
Lebanon	4	2	Africa	23	
Liberia	3	2	North America	10	
Libyan AR	7	3	South America	8	
Luxembourg	1	1	Asia	28	
Madagascar	5	3	Europe	28	
Malaysia	3	3	Oceania	1	
Mauritania	2	1			
Mexico	3	3			
Monaco	1	1			
Morocco	13	3			
Netherlands	10	5			

**TABLE 2**

# UN CONFERENCES SGN

FIGURE 4

Total number of delegates and countries  
- by continent ( 5 conferences)

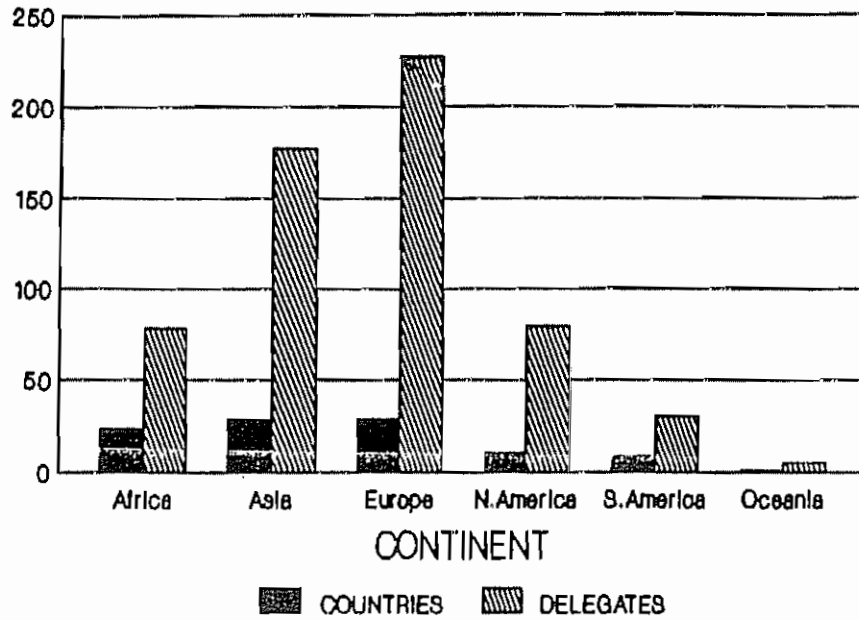
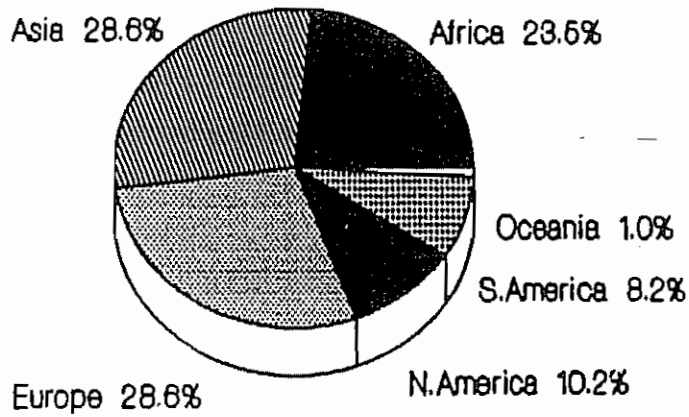


FIGURE 5

Total number of delegates  
- percentage by continent  
(five conferences)



Total: 598 delegates from 98 countries

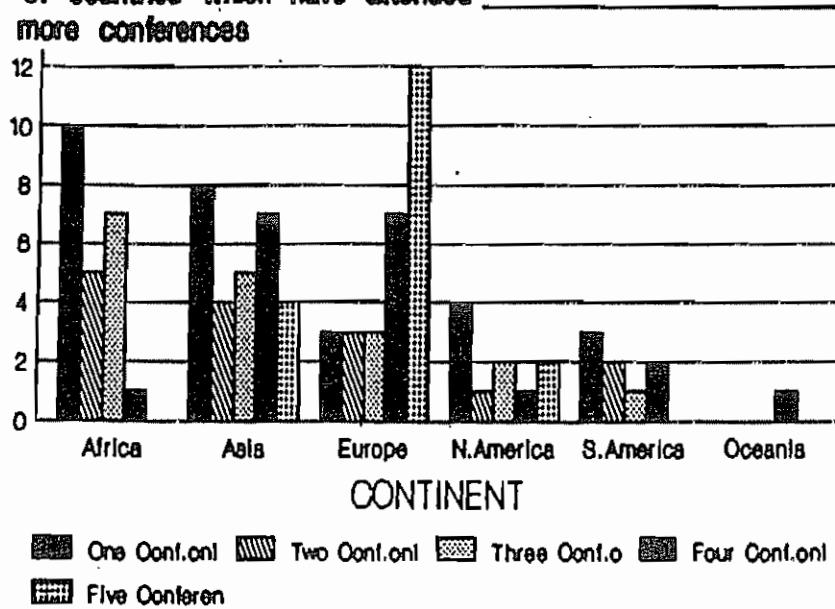
/...



# UN CONFERENCES SGN

FIGURE 6

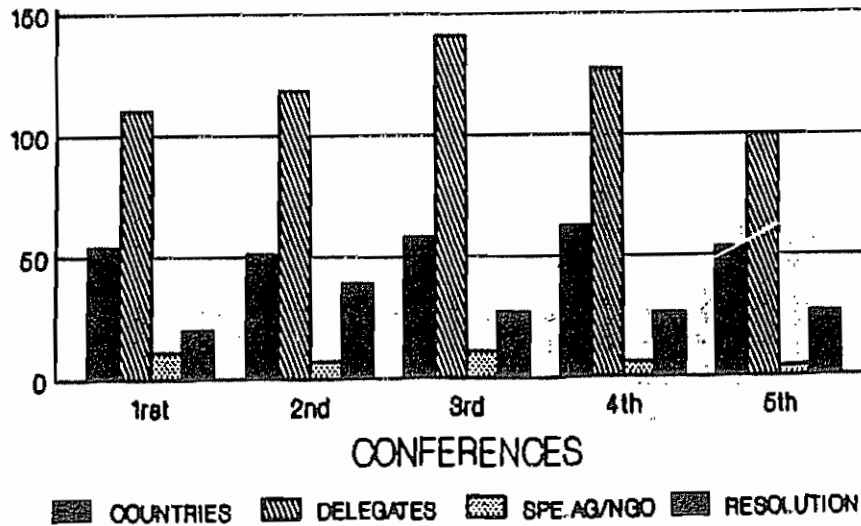
Number of countries which have attended one or more conferences



Total: 598 delegates from 98 countries

FIGURE 7

For each conference - number of :  
 Countries participating  
 Delegates attending  
 Specialized agencies and internat.  
 and scientific organizations  
 Resolutions adopted.



## CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

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39. It would seem that most of the problems faced by the UNGEGN and the UNCSGN are usually not of a technical (substantive) nature but concentrated on surmounting communication and administrative problems.

40. The strategy to overcome these problems could be to find first a better and more effective way to "advertize", and "sell" the product, and then to provide the interested countries with the means to "buy" and "use" this product. How could the work of the United Nations in the field of Standardization of Geographical names reach the countries which need it most and do not have the means of investing important human and financial resources for its application ?

41. The UNGEGN and the UNCSGN have of course been aware of this situation and have aimed their efforts to recommend cures to this ailment, and have had already positive results. However, to maximize this effort, this aspect should be given a high degree of priority . It is also obvious that any efforts made by the Group should be encouraged by Governments and also by world scientific institutions ( such as those producing atlases, dictionaries, scientific publications etc), private enterprises and public services (airlines, tourism etc.)

42. A better publicity of the activities of the Group would create a better awareness, and a better communication could be established with Governments, thus enabling the Group to point out the need and then to sell the product. To this end, the UNGEGN may wish to make greater use of existing means, by for exemple widening the scope and the circulation of the Newsletter, by making more use of publications like World Cartography and the publications of Technical documents presented at Conferences. It would also seem indispensable that for the follow up and the coherence of the work the Group should rely on a strong substantive secretariat. In view of the recent restructuration of the Secretariat and subsequent distribution of functions, the Group may find it necessary to strengthen its Secretariat by requesting a greater participation in their activities of Services substantively responsible in the field of geographical names such as Terminology, Map Library, Cartography, Technical Assistance etc. The publication of booklets on specific topics could be envisaged as well as the publication of toponymic guidelines etc. Training courses should be more frequent and held in new linguistic/geographic areas

/...

and lectures and manuals should be made available. Closer cooperation should be thought with scientific and cultural organisations.(UNESCO, ALECSO, PAIGH, ICA etc.)

43. Finally , as important as the diffusion of information, the problem of financing the participation of the experts and the creation or strengthening of names authorities and training should be investigated and possible solutions through available technical assistance programmes, multi-national like the United Nations or bilateral with interested governments should be found .

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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 Economic and Social Council resolutions 715 A (XXVII) of 23 April 1959 and 1314 (XLIV) of 31 May 1968 and the decision taken by the Council at its 1854th meeting, on 4 May 1973, to further the standardization of geographical names at both the national and international levels.

I. AIMS

The basic aims of the Group of Experts shall be:

(a) To consider principles and methods for solving problems in the national and international standardization of geographical names;

(b) To collect information on the work of national and international bodies on the standardization of geographical names and disseminate it to States Members of the United Nations;

(c) To promote the sharing of experience of national bodies on the standardization of geographical names;

(d) To encourage the supply of scientific and technical help to developing countries in the national standardization of geographical names.

II. PRINCIPLES

1. The Group of Experts shall act as a collegiate, consultative body; accordingly, agreement on non-procedural matters shall be reached by consensus and not by voting.
2. The decisions of the Group of Experts shall be of a recommendatory character.
3. Questions involving national sovereignty shall not be discussed by the Group of Experts.

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\* Adopted by the Group of Experts at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions and endorsed by the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, subject to review and approval by the Economic and Social Council.

4. The Group of Experts in its activities shall adhere to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the following provisions:

- (a) 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;
- (b) International standardization of geographical names must be carried out on the basis of national standardization.

### III. FUNCTIONS

To further the aims stated above, the functions of the Group of Experts shall be:

- (a) To provide liaison between countries in their work on geographical names;
- (b) To co-ordinate between countries their efforts in the standardization of geographical names;
- (c) To undertake the preparatory work for the periodic international conferences on the standardization of geographical names;
- (d) To provide continuity of action between conferences;
- (e) To assist in the implementation of resolutions adopted at conferences;
- (f) To consider the formation of linguistic/geographical divisions as rational bases for furthering work at the national level;
- (g) To co-ordinate the activities of the divisions;
- (h) To maintain liaison with other international organizations dealing with related subjects;
- (i) To 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 co-ordinate them with the Group of Experts to ensure uniform content and principles;
- (j) To encourage divisions, wherever feasible, to participate in United Nations regional or other cartographic conferences; by convening a divisional meeting in conjunction with a conference, the divisions may take advantage of conference facilities.

IV. COMPOSITION

1. Linguistic/geographical divisions

1. The Group of Experts shall be composed of experts from linguistic/geographical divisions designated by Governments. The Group of Experts shall be headed by elected officers who shall guide the activities of the Group during and between its sessions.

2. The Group of Experts shall be supported in its activities by the following 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;

East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic);

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.

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

4. A country shall decide for itself the division to which it wishes to belong. A country may be a member of another division provided the nature of its participation does not 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 or consultant.
5. Each division, if composed of more than one sovereign State, shall select, by methods of its own choosing, an expert to represent the division (Division Chairman) as a whole at the meetings of the Group of Experts.
6. In order to guarantee the continuity of the work, each division having more than one sovereign State shall select an alternative representative; the divisional representative shall act in close contact with his alternate.
7. The divisional representative shall stimulate activities in the standardization of geographical names within his division by all appropriate means (correspondence with national bodies on the standardization of geographical names and national surveying and mapping agencies; organization of meetings of the divisional experts).
8. The divisional representative shall 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 in his division and for reporting to the United Nations any special problems in his division.
9. To discuss technical and procedural matters, a division may organize regional meetings during United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names and meetings of the Group of Experts, or at any other appropriate time.

## 2. Officers

1. The Group of Experts shall elect the following officers: a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Rapporteur.
2. All provisions regarding the election and functioning of the officers are given below in the rules of procedure of the Group.

## 3. Working groups

1. Working groups shall be disbanded upon completion of their appointed tasks. The expediency of extending the term of their activities shall be considered at the sessions of the Group of Experts. If necessary, new working groups may be appointed and their tasks determined.
2. The convenor and the co-convenor of a working group shall be elected at the meetings of the working group by methods of its own choosing.



LIST OF MEETINGS/SESSIONS HELD BY THE  
UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
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GROUP OF EXPERTS "MEETINGS"  
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Held in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 715 A (XXVII) of 23 April 1959.

First meeting	New York	20 June-1 July 1960
Second meeting	New York	21 March-1 April 1966

AD HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS "SESSIONS"  
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The Ad Hoc Group was established by the First UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1967.

First Session	Geneva	22 September 1967
Second Session	New York	10-20 March 1970
Third Session	New York	2-12 February 1971
Fourth Session	London	9 May & 1 June 1972
Fifth Session	New York	5-16 March 1973

UN GROUP OF EXPERTS "SESSIONS"  
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ECOSOC at its 1854th Meeting on 4 May 1973 endorsed the recommendations made by the 2nd UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, that the Ad Hoc Group of Experts should henceforth be called the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Sixth Session	New York	5-26 March 1975
Seventh Session	Athens	14 August & 8 September 1977
Eighth Session	New York	26 February - 9 March 1979
Nineth Session	New York	17-27 February 1981

Tenth Session	Geneva	23 August & 15 September 1982
Eleventh Session	Geneva	15-23 October 1984
Twelfth Session	Geneva	28 September -7 October 1986
Thirteenth Session	Montreal	17 & 31 August 1987
Fourteenth Session	Geneva	17-26 May 1989
Fifteenth Session	Geneva	11-19 November 1992

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LIST OF UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES  
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
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First Conference	Geneva	4-22 September 1967
Second Conference	London	10-31 May 1972
Third Conference	Athens	17 August-7 September 1977.
Fourth Conference	Geneva	24 August-14 September 1982
Fifth Conference	Montreal	18-31 August 1987
Sixth Conference	New York	25 August-3 September 1992

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