

Working Paper No. 11
20 August 1992
ENGLISH ONLY

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 11(a) of the Provisional Agenda*

WRITING SYSTEMS AND GUIDES TO PRONUNCIATION:
ROMANIZATION

Report by the Convenor of the
Working Group on Romanization Systems

(Submitted by United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names)**/

* E/CONF.85/1 Rev. 1

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SUMMARY

This report by the convenor of the Working Group on Romanization Systems addresses several issues: the Greek ELOT 743 system; a single romanization system for Korean, being designed jointly by South Korea and North Korea; the Russian GOST 1983 system; and the proposed transliteration system for Thai.

In addition, it is suggested that the newly independent states comprising the former Soviet Union be invited to participate in UNGEGN work in the future.

United Nations Group of
Experts on Geographical Names

Sixteenth Session
New York, 24 August and 4 September 1992

Item No. 3 (First Meeting) of the Draft
Provisional Agenda: Reporting of the Working Groups

REPORT BY THE CONVENOR OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS

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The focus of this report is on developments regarding romanization systems that were addressed at the Fifteenth Session of UNGEGN, Geneva, 11-19 November 1991. Some other issues of importance are also set forth.

GREEK

It is necessary to determine the status and anticipated publication date of the new official Greek gazetteer in which the ELOT 743 system is to be implemented. Likewise, it would be helpful to know what type of map series is being revised by the Hellenic Geographic Service reflecting this system. In the meantime, any help official Greek agencies could extend to cartographic users would be welcomed, especially by providing a substantial quantity of romanized names.

KOREAN

Information needs to be obtained as to the outcome of consultations that were scheduled to be held in March 1992 in Beijing between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding the efforts made toward the design of a single romanization system for Korean.

RUSSIAN

It is still necessary to know more about work in progress for the new edition of the world atlas, the Atlas Mira, and its anticipated publication date. Furthermore, it would be most helpful to obtain evidence of cartographic source materials issued during the past three years reflecting implementation of the GOST 1983 system. (These requests were made in the "Report by the Co-Convenor" submitted to the Fifteenth Session of UNGEGN, 1991.)

THAI

The transliteration system presented at the 15th session of UNGEGN (Working Paper No. 41) contains several changes in Roman-letter equivalents when compared to the 1987 version. The frequent use of diacritics in the system (macron, sub-macron, sub-dot) will pose practical problems to users in general, and printing and reproduction problems in particular. This system purports to be intended for automated data exchange; however, it would be unusable for rendering toponyms for use in cartographic products. Therefore, it is necessary for the working group to inquire whether the system has been implemented in Thailand and also to discuss it in detail before adoption by the Conference is considered.

It will also be necessary to obtain more information on progress made in revising the transcription system.

OTHER BUSINESS

It would be appropriate at this time to establish contact with the newly independent states that comprised the former Soviet Union. Concurrently, invitations could be extended to the new states with a view towards their participation in future UNGEGN sessions. Thus, a forum would be provided where information could be disseminated regarding the particular national language to be used in toponymy by each independent republic. Likewise, it would afford an opportunity to ascertain which writing system, i.e., Roman, Cyrillic, or Arabic, has been officially adopted in each country.

Details of procedure for initiating contact and communication could be discussed and agreed upon by the working group.