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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

Report of Cyprus

(Submitted by Cyprus)

REPORT OF CYPRUS

Historical Outline of Cyprus

The island of Cyprus has been a striking setting for often dramatic events, and it remains a source of fascination to a wide range of interests beyond its shores. It is apparent that the problems that beset the people of Cyprus are largely a consequence of the island's special, powerful appeal. The strategic significance of its location has attracted a succession of peoples who have seen in the possession of Cyprus a step towards the solution of their own diverse problems and the achievements of their ambitions.

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 that has added considerably to its importance and development through the ages.

The population of the island today, which is about 740.000, is largely a reflection of the many nations that made it their thoroughfare in the past. 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.

Since early times, Cyprus has had an eventful history, mostly as a result of its geographical position. It appears for

the first time in the history of civilization in the sixth millennium before Christ, during the Neolithic Period. This period, which lasted three millennia, was followed by the Bronze Age, which lasted until 1500 B.C. In the thirteenth century B.D. the Achaean Greeks settled in Cyprus. They introduced the Greek language, which has been preserved to this day. At the end of the fourth century B.C., Cyprus became part of the kingdom of Alexander the Great, and during the first century A.D. it was made a province of the Roman Empire, remaining so until the fourth century A.D., when it was included in the eastern division of the Roman Empire. This marked the beginning of the Byzantine period, which lasted until the twelfth 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 fifteenth 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.

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 Movement of Non-Aligned Movement.

Soon after independence, political disagreements between the Greek Cypriot majority community and the Turkish Cypriot minority community created a number of constitutional deadlocks. Attempts to settle these disagreements failed when Turkish Cypriot extremists took up arms challenging the authority of the government. The situation deteriorated with Turkey's active involvement and the Government of the Republic of Cyprus brought th

case to the United Nations. In mid-1964 a United Nations peace-keeping force was deployed on Cyprus with the consent of the Cyprus Government.

The military regime ruling Greece between 1967 - 1974 at the time attempted in July 1974 through its proxies in Cyprus to overthrow, through a coup, the legitimate government of Cyprus. The coup was used as a pretext by Turkey which invaded Cyprus and within a period of a month conquered almost 40% of the island and turned one third of the population into refugees.

Repeated United Nations resolutions condemned outside intervention in Cyprus' internal affairs and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Cyprus. Turkey not only failed to comply but began a colonization programme that brought to Cyprus close to 85.000 Turkish colonizers who were settled in Greek Cypriot villages the names of which were arbitrarily changed into Turkish ones.

Despite numerous rounds of United Nations negotiations no progress, so far, has been recorded that could lead to a just and viable solution. On the contrary Turkey through a series of fait-accomplis has been implementing a policy that seeks to alter the centuries' old demography and toponym of the island and make its presence in Cyprus permanent.

Geographical Names and Cartography

The history of Cyprus outlined above has provided the basis on which the cartography of the island and its body of geographical names have developed for the last 3.500 years. All sorts of geographical names have been built up; there are a wealth of

toponyms, some of which originated in antiquity and have survived to the present day unaltered. They reflect, among other things, the historical and social conditions that have prevailed in the island's long history. Evidence to prove this can be traced in all of its historical periods since the fifteenth century B.C. For example the name of the island is referred to 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". Further, in his epic poetry he refers to other geographical names, like that of "Pafos". Later from Assyrian inscriptions of the seventh century B.C., we come to know for the first time the names of the nine Kingdoms of Cyprus, which as many often have survived through the ages and are used in present times. The same is valid for the copper plate of Idalion found in the fifth century B.C. which constitutes the first cadastral dealing of Europe and which mentions at least five toponyms that have remained unaltered to this day.

Other activities regarding dealings in land during the Lusignan, Venitian, Ottoman and British periods, evidence the continuity of toponyms in Cyprus.

The history of the cartography of Cyprus covers a period of more than 2,000 years. In his monumental work under the title Geografiki Ifigisis, dating back to 160 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.

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. It was produced in English, which at the time was the official language of the administration.

Since independence, the maps of Cyprus are being issued in both Greek and Turkish, the two official languages of the Republic, as well as in English. Geographical names adopted are in the language of publication and include the names of towns, villages, mountains, plains, rivers, capes, gulfs and all locality or place-names appearing on maps and cadastral plans.

Progress made in standardization

Eversince the Fifth Conference the Government of Cyprus by virtue of a Council of Ministers decision published in the Official Gazette of the Republic No. 2375 dated 7th January, 1989 has sanctioned the obligatory use of the approved Romanization System of the Greek Alphabet. This system ELOT 743 has been used and will continue to be used to all official and semi-governmental editions and publications.

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names has continued its work in the parts of the island that are under Government control on the same lines as described in the previous report. The main task has been undertaken by the same two services, viz. the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Cyprus Research Centre. However, the work of the above-mentioned Committee regarding the final field checking for verification of the material collected and used for preparation of the Gazetteers and the maps has not been possible due to the

fact that nearly 40 per cent of the territory of Cyprus, has been since 1974 under foreign military occupation and therefore inaccessible to the competent names authorities.

Apparently, the donor countries are applying effectively the system as rapidly as possible and there is evidence that the recipient countries have positively responded in applying it as well. It is worth noting that the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names has, since 1987, been issuing on request free of charge the Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus Volume I to all Official Geographical Names Authorities, Cartographic Organizations, Universities and other relevant agencies. Cyprus has adopted the system successfully by applying it on all new and revised editions of maps and charts compiled and published by the Department of Lands and Surveys, the national mapping agency. Such maps and charts are the Administrative and Road Maps, Town Maps, Tourist Maps, Hydrographic Maps, Aeronautical Charts etc. Besides, the system has been introduced to other activities and services namely the postal and communication services, the Local Authorities, the Polling Office, the Department of Antiquities, the Cyprus Tourist Organization and others.

The CPCSGN prepared a booklet containing directions for update application of the ELOT 743 Greek Alphabet System and guideline for the standardization of cartographical and other geographical features.

Through the implementation of the system, the Department of Lands and Surveys has compiled and published new maps and charts as listed below:

(a) Cyprus Town Plans:

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- (i) Street Names Map of LEMESOS Town, multicoloured edition, in two sheets at scale 1:7.500.
 - (ii) Street Names Map of LARNAKA Town, multicoloured edition, in one sheet at scale 1:7.500.
 - (iii) Street Names Map of PAFOS Town, multicoloured edition, in one sheet at scale 1:7.500.
 - (iv) Street Names Map LAKATAMEIA Municipality, multicoloured edition in one sheet at scale 1:7.500.
 - (v) Street Name Map for PARALIMNI Municipality, multicoloured edition in one sheet at scale 1:5.000.
 - (vi) Street Names Maps for a number of villages, black and white edition at scale 1:5.000.
- (b) The Administration and Road Map at scale 1:250.000 showing the six districts in different colours.
- (c) Aeronautical chart ICAO 1:500.000 2426 - A CYPRUS on the basis of international specifications.

Work is in progress for the preparation at the following publications:

- (a) Compilation of Volume II of the Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus.
- (b) Historic Geographical Lexicon of Cyprus to be renamed "MEGA TOPONYMIKO LEXIKO".

- (c) Comprehensive Geographical Lexicon which will include ancient and present exonyms of Europe and Mediterranean.
- (d) A glossary of Geographical Terms.
- (e) Lexicon of Archaeological places and ancient monuments of Cyprus.
- (f) Cyprus Street Name Index with postal code.

Finally, to facilitate the use of the System by the recipient countries it is reminded that there are software conversion packages that accomplish the conversion automatically and that both the Greek and Cyprus Governments are willing to provide transliterated names to cartographers and other interested experts.

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