

New York, 26 February - 9 March 1979  
Agenda item No. 4

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN

Activities related to overall work and interests of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNEGN) 1977 - 1979.

1. During the period of the 7th and 8th sessions of the UNEG, I have followed the activities of the divisions, working groups and individual experts as these have been reported directly or indirectly, and have commented on suggested actions as seemed appropriate in 7 circulars distributed to the members of the UNEG.

Continual contact has been maintained with the Cartography Section on all the varied matters requiring actions and decisions. I was assisted in my work to a very high degree by the Rapporteur of the UNEG, Mr. Rayburn, Canada.

2. As the Cartography Section has informed me of some uncertainties regarding the structure and future of the UNEG, I have made the necessary inquiries at my Government and at the U.N. Secretary-General directly stressing in both cases the importance of the activities of the UNEG. The answers were reassuring. The status of the UNEG remains unaltered at present. On principle, the future of the UNEG depends on further decisions of the ECOSOC.

3. Assisted by the Rapporteur of the UNEG, Mr. Rayburn, and by the former Rapporteur, Mr. Blok, I have prepared the Report of the 7th Session of the UNEG. A first draft was circulated to all members of the UNEG. After incorporating all amendments received the Report was sent to the Cartography Section which has edited it as the U.N. document ESA/RT/C/GN/5 of 1 December 1977.

4. I have visited the Convenors of the Working Groups on a Single Romanization System, Mr. Földi, and of the Working Group on ADP, Mr. Böhme, and have discussed with them the special problems of their Working Groups.

5. I have contacted some international agencies concerned with geographical names, i.e. the Union Postale Universelle (UPU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA), the World Tourism Organization (WTO, which is the successor of the International Union of Official Travel Organizations, IUOTO), the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) and the International Standards Organization (ISO), whereas the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the International Astronomical Union (IAU) have been contacted by the Convenors of the Working Groups concerned.

- (a) The Union Postale Universelle declared that geographical names are no problem to it as it accepts unaltered all names presented by the member countries. This principle means that also all romanized forms are accepted exactly as they are submitted. The "Nomenclature" of the UPU has been re-edited in 1977 in one volume together with a separately bound English version of the preface.
  - (b) The International Telecommunication Union has not yet answered to my inquiries.
  - (c) The Universal Federation of Travel Agent's Associations is willing to co-operate with us. It will publish Resolution No. 38 of the London Conference in its monthly publication "Courier".
  - (d) The World Tourism Organization is interested in the work, especially in the London Resolution No. 38, and has asked me for further details.
  - (e) The Secretary-General of International Committee of Onomastic Sciences informed me in detail of the results of the ICOS Conference, Cracow 1978, which I had not been able to attend. A number of papers read referred to cartographic toponymy. The Proceedings of the Congress will be published presumably in 1980. Section V, Onomastics and Cartography, of the Conference had submitted to the plenary a resolution a copy of which I have presented to this session as a Working Paper. We certainly shall deal with the contents of this resolution under different items of our agenda. Here I should like to mention only the wish of the Cracow Congress that more linguists should take part in the U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
  - (f) I had a personal interview with a representative of the International Standards Organization/Technical Committee 46/Subcommittee 2 - Conversion of Written Languages. Especially for the benefit of the Working Group on a Single Romanization System I have submitted to this session 2 Working Papers showing the state of affairs. After the resignation of Mr. Orne, U.S.A., from the post of the Secretary of Subcommittee 2 a certain resignation is felt within the national standards organizations concerning the efficiency of the future work of ISO.
6. The Rapporteur of the UNGEGN has suggested that I compile a general paper on the "Aims and Activities of the UNGEGN". After a lengthy discussion by letter during which I received valuable advice from the Rapporteur I decided that such a paper should be edited by the UNGEGN as a whole. My personal views to this subject are summarized in my paper "Thoughts on the Future of Standardization of Geographical Names within the Framework of the United Nations" which I have submitted as a working paper to this session.
7. Finally, I should like to thank all experts who have assisted me in my work for their valuable contributions.