

New York, 26 February - 9 March 1979
Agenda item No. 7

STATEMENT BY MR. A. TAZI ON "EXONYMS" AT THE EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Mr. Chairman,

One major task undertaken by the Government of my country after Morocco recovered its independence was the fulfilment of the national sovereignty through a number of initiatives aimed at regaining authenticity in all areas of life of independent Morocco.

We applied this cardinal principle to reform the topographic institutions in existence before the independence of Morocco. In this connection our major concern at the outset was to draw maps that responded to our national interest.

We also engaged particular efforts in providing adequate staffing to ensure a better functioning of our national topographic institutions.

We also paid great attention to the elimination of exonyms that were not related to our history. Thus we undertook a work of consistent research to change foreign names and restore our national identity. In proceeding with this task, we relied a great deal on the Moroccan academic community as well as on members of the Nationalist Movement. We were also guided by the numerous Royal Decrees that established the legality of the new names.

Now, I would like to give you a few examples to illustrate what I have just said. Thus Petit Jean became Sidi Kacem, Port Lyautey became Kenitra, Marchand became Rommani, Louis Gentil became Youssoufia, Rio de Oro became Dakhla, Cape Juby became Ras El Ayoubi, Saint Jean became Louisia, etc.

Other examples can be found in the "Journal Officiel" of 13 August 1975 and 6 August 1976.

Those were, Mr. Chairman, some of the measures initiated by my Government with regard to the elimination of foreign concepts and the restoration of the Moroccan geographic appellations.