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Agenda item No. 6

THE ACTIVITIES OF ASIA, SOUTH-WEST
(OTHER THAN ARABIC) DIVISION

(Paper Submitted by Sirri Erinc (Turkey))

As presently the only member of the Asia, South-West division participating in the 8th meeting of the U.N. experts group, I wish I could inform you of the over-all divisional activities which have taken place within above-mentioned part of the world since the 3rd Conference held in Athens. Unfortunately, I am not able to fulfill this task mainly because the invitation letter of the Secretariat was sent to me only a short time before the meeting, and thus, I had neither the opportunity to communicate with my distinguished colleague Prof. Ganji, Chairman of our division, nor to secure circulars and other documents in due time.

In this connection, I think that a great many number of experts have probably experienced similar difficulties in obtaining documents circulated either by the Chairman of the Expert Group or by the Secretariat as a result of changes in individual addresses, retirements, re-appointments or simply because of communication deficiencies. Therefore, I suggest and propose that, in the future circulars and other documents should be sent not only to the divisional

chairman, but to the responsible national authorities as well in order to keep the experts well-informed.

As to the efforts deployed in Turkey since the Athens Conference, they have led to the following results:

1- The map at 1:1 million scale has been prepared in accordance with the requirements outlined in the previous conferences. The map, composed of three sheets in color, is at present in print, and needs a final examination. But, in any case, it will be available long before the next conference.

2- The compilation of Gazetteer of Geographical names has been initiated two years ago by the National Committee on Standardization, and the work is well underway.

3- In the meantime, a list of all administrative centers in alphabetical order has been published by the Turkish Ministry of Interior. The same Ministry has also published another volume dealing with the changes officially made with respect to place names.

4- A research team has been set up under the supervision of Mr. Erinc to deal with the problems of exonyms and names beyond the Turkish Sovereignty. We are aware of great difficulties awaiting us in achieving a satisfactory result in this field. Nevertheless, in view of the great importance Turkey attaches to the subject, we believe that it must be tackled in any case. Indeed, study of exonyms and place names

beyond the Turkish boundaries, particularly south of Danube-Sava line, is of primary importance for understanding cultural heritage with the practical purpose of identifying the places, the names of which have in some cases changed several times in a relatively short period, and as well as for enabling us to evaluate historical documents and archive records.

Therefore, it is needless to say, that we would greatly appreciate any help, suggestion and encouragement offered by the experts of our neighbouring countries in this very special and extremely difficult field.