

New York, 26 February-9 March 1979
Agenda item No. 10 (f)

Special Study Group appointed to consider a proposal for
an interim Concise Gazetteer of the World

Present: Messrs. Meynen (convenor)
Breu
Földi
Geelan
Komkov
Lewis

It was immediately recognized that there were many difficulties to be faced in the preparation of the gazetteer, which was planned to contain from 15,000 to 20,000 entries. There were questions of provision of material; the processes of assembling and editing; problems associated with national sovereignty; the need to take account of administrative structure and administrative subdivisions where appropriate; and the question of classification of the gazetteer entries.

Furthermore, since the gazetteer would be produced under the auspices of the United Nations it was essential that the final result be of a high standard failure to achieve which would damage the reputation of the Group of Experts.

Ideally a gazetteer of this type calls for an experienced editorial staff and competence in organizing and arranging the material contents. Dr. Meynen had prepared a general plan for the gazetteer and had assembled a number of sample entries for the various types of feature to be included. He had also assessed the number of entries required for each country, basing his scheme on the configuration of the land, population, administrative structure, etc. Using this material the study group drew up a first draft of a plan for the gazetteer.

In view of the complex nature of the problems that would confront the editors a pilot scheme was proposed which would enable the degree of difficulty to be assessed and a final layout and categorization of entries to be devised. The plan decided upon was to take a sample of four countries, each in a different part of the world, so that the method of compilation and editing and the general feasibility of proceeding with the final production could be assessed. The four countries selected were: Argentina, Thailand, Tunisia and Upper Volta. It was agreed that a practical procedure would be to prepare a body of entries for each of the four countries and to submit the results for comment to the national authorities concerned through the chairmen of the appropriate divisions. Dr. Meynen expressed his willingness to undertake this initial task.

The manuscript for each country as completed would be sent to the Chairman of the Working Group on Gazetteers for despatch to the divisional chairman concerned. The accompanying letter would be copied to the Chairman of UNGEGN. When returned by the countries covered those sections of the gazetteer would be re-edited and distributed to the various divisions for comment.

Attached is the revised draft layout for the gazetteer; together with a list of the categories of named features and a key to designation codes.

Annex A: Draft layout of the gazetteer

1. Name or names (where more than one form exists, e.g. in bilingual areas)
- 1a. Any name-change having occurred during the last ten years
2. Coded designation of feature
3. Country code or codes where the feature extends over more than one country
4. Geographical coordinates for point features
5. English and French exonyms of importance.

NB A key to the designation and country codes as well as a glossary of generic terms occurring in the names will form part of the preface to the gazetteer.

Annex B: Categories of Named Features

constituent parts of federations

towns over 20,000 inhabitants and other inhabited places
of special centrality or significance

main seaports

international airports

regions (natural or historical)

oases

mountain ranges

mountains

glaciers

national parks

islands and reefs

groups of islands, archipelagoes

valleys

caples

peninsulas

water features (seas, parts of seas, lakes, reservoirs,
rivers, estuaries, etc)

Annex C: List of Codes

FS constituent part of a federation (federated state)
CAP capital of a country
T town or city
POP smaller populated place
SEAP seaport
AIRP airport
REGN region
OAS oasis
MTS mountain range
MT mountain
VAL valley
GL glacier
NP national park
I island
IS group of islands
ARCH archipelago
CAP cape
PEN peninsula
SEA sea, part of a sea
LK lake
RES reservoir
RIV river
TRIB tributary
EST estuary

Annex D: examples of entries

Steiermark, FS, A, Eng.Styria, Fr.Styrie

Bruxelles/Brussel, CAP, B, 1234 5678, Eng.Brussels

Graz, T, A, 2345 7654,

Saint Pierre, T, Sajt Pierre et Micelon, 5432 9467

John F.Kennedy, AIRP, USA, 2345 8765

Pyrénées/Pirineos, MTS, F/ES, Eng.Pyrenees

Blanc, Mont/Bianco, Monte, MT, F/I, 9876 5432

Malaspina, GL, Alaska USA

Niue, I, NZ, 1234 5678

Mississippi, (1) FS, USA; (2) RIV, USA

Missouri, (1) FS, USA; (2) TRIB, USA