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REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE UK DIVISION

In September, 1984 South Africa applied to become a member of the UK Division, as well as the Dutch/German Division. Since English is a national language in South Africa the admission of the Republic of South Africa was agreed. Several times over the past ten years it had been expected that South Africa would apply to join the UK Division.

The UK Division is so widely spread now, covering four continents, that formal meetings of the whole Division would be extremely expensive and, therefore, unlikely even to occur. Nonetheless geographical names are on the agenda of various bilateral and tri-lateral meetings and advantage is taken of international conferences to renew contact. The recent ICA conference in Perth provided such an opportunity.

Two major events in the UK should prove of special interest to UNCEGN.

In the past few months a final decision has been taken on the production of the gazetteer of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain based on the 1/50,000 scale map series. As has been reported at previous meetings of UNCEGN, the gazetteer will be in a single volume with almost 300,000 names. Grid references only will be given but a simplified means of obtaining geographical coordinates will be included in the published volume.

A very important development was announced just a few days ago. After some years of research and development a method of typing Chinese characters has been finalized. The system allows the typing of any of more than 50,000 Chinese characters. It is based on Pinyin.

A number of overseas aid projects in the UK has involved an enormous amount of field collection, processing and plotting and storing geographical names and the production of a number of gazetteers.