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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

TREATMENT OF NAMES IN MULTILINGUAL AREAS

Country Monograph: Peru**

Monograph submitted by Peru

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** Published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Peru.

ABSTRACT OF THE COUNTRY MONOGRAPH OF PERU ON TOPONYMS

The influence of the factors of geography and language throughout the history of Peru has caused the country to be naturally divided into a number of overlapping geographical and linguistic units. Consequently, in most cases there can be no certainty about the origin and meaning of toponyms, and it frequently happens that there are several different names for one place. There is a need, therefore, to discover their original content or meaning and to unify the various names.

On the basis of existing cartography, which provides geographical names determined and located in situ, supplied by the inhabitants, an entire research system has been organized, with very encouraging results. The presence of various languages having no system of writing, chiefly pre-Hispanic, the meaning of many of which is enigmatic, complicates the work. This is a manifestation of the confluence of different cultural groups in the geographical area of the Central Andes (Peru), and consequently these designations represent vestiges of several languages: Puquina, Aymara, Quechua, northern-coast languages and forest languages, which converged in the past in different parts of Peru.

The problem of the written representation of Quechua toponyms has been settled, at least potentially, by the establishment of an official alphabet as one of the effects of the implementation of the Act recognizing Quechua as an official language of Peru. The alphabet itself is based largely on the results of linguistic research on Quechua, which is the most important native language in the South American continent and has the largest number of geographical names in the Andean area.

We attach a bibliography for research into geographical names and an account of the main official agencies dealing with the subject in one way or another.
