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Geneva, 24 August to 14 September 1982  
Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR  
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Standardization of Geographical Names in the USSR

Paper presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics<sup>1/</sup>

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FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON THE STANDARDIZATION  
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Geneva, August 24 - September <sup>14</sup>, 1982  
Items 4 and 5 of the provisional agenda

STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
IN THE USSR:

THE WORKS CARRIED OUT BETWEEN THE THIRD  
AND THE FOURTH UN CONFERENCES ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
( 1977 - 1982 )

Submitted by the Government of  
the Union of Soviet Socialist  
Republics

STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
IN THE USSR:  
THE WORKS CARRIED OUT BETWEEN THE THIRD  
AND THE FORTH UN CONFERENCES ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
(1977-1982)

In the period from 1977 to 1982 in the Soviet Union the work on the standardization of geographical names continued. Its main directions developed during the previous decade on the whole remain the same now.

First of all it is scientific and methodic work viz. elaboration and definition of rules and standards of rendering names into Russian and into the languages of federal and autonomous republics and consequently correction of previously distorted names, standardization of existing forms and of spelling of similar names.

Steadily conducting Lenin's national policy in the multinational state which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the formation of socialist unity of large and minor nations we try to perfect the rendering of names of each federal and autonomous republic into Russian as the language of international communication. The same principles form the basis for the elaboration of the rules for rendering place-names of foreign countries where we try to maintain maximum identity of Russian forms with national forms of names.

All of this is achieved by revision and corresponding correction of the existing and by elaboration of new instructions for Russian rendering of names of the USSR republics and districts and of foreign countries as well as by publishing them with the status of being obligatory for all authorities and institutions of the Soviet Union.

In order to be published it is necessary for the instructions for the USSR languages to be approved by national scientific and administrative bodies. These publications have been displayed at the previous UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names and they are well known to the wide circle of specialists. The elaboration of the instructions for the USSR languages had been accomplished by 1977. After it the last of them were co-ordinated with the corresponding national (republican) authorities. That is why the scientific and methodic work in the

period between 1977 and 1982 was concentrated upon the revision of the existing and elaboration of new instructions for the languages of foreign countries: Iran (published in 1979), Turkey (publ. 1980), Yugoslavia (publ. 1981), Afghanistan, Romania, China (revision), West Africa (1978), South Africa from African languages (1981), Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei (1980), Scotland, Angola and Mozambique (worked out for the first time).

Another direction of the standardization of geographical names is compiling dictionaries of geographical names aimed at the establishment of standard names in official and scientific usage. The dictionaries of geographical names of Armenian SSR, Estonian SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, Yakut ASSR, Karelian ASSR, Chukotski autonomous district and Sakhalin oblast' were compiled. These dictionaries are being co-ordinated now.

The same work is carried out with respect to foreign countries. In 1981 the dictionaries of geographical names of Burma and FRG were published. Compilation of the dictionaries of, Somalia, Portugal, France, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Afganistan, Turkey, Chekhoslovakia was completed. Some of them will be printed soon.

Compiling the dictionaries is going on and is becoming the main direction of our activities in the standardization of geographical names.

The Permanent Joint Commission on Geographical Names is co-ordinating all the activities in the field of standardization of geographical names. Besides the consideration and approval of the instructions for Russian rendering of geographical names and dictionaries of geographical names the Commission considers and gives recommendations on the suggestions concerning naming and renaming of features of all-Union (central) subjection and topographic features and submits them for approval to corresponding Governmental departments, either to the Supreme Soviet of the federal republics, Councils of Ministers of federal republics, where the given topographic features are situated, or to the Academy of Science of the USSR, if the geographic feature is situated within terrains of several federal republics, or within waters of the World Ocean, or in Antartica. It should be pointed out that the Permanent Joint Commission has its links with republican commissions carrying out the same work within their republican commissions get all necessary methodic aid from the Central Commission.

All day-to-day work: the maintenance of place-names catalogue, verification of names by the requests of mapping agencies, provision of the other USSR agencies with rapid

information on place-names together with the scientific and methodic activity and the compilation of dictionaries of names is performed by Department of Geographical Names and Cartographic Information of the Central Science Research Institute of Geodesy, Aerial Survey and Cartography. At present within the bounds of the Department glossaries of toponymic vocabulary are worked out. In the period from 1967 to 1971 several glossaries of geographical terms of the USSR national districts were published: Komi ASSR (1968), Khakassian AO (1968), Buryat ASSR (1969), Gorno-Altai AO (1969), Tuva ASSR (1971), Azerbaijan SSR (1971), Dagestan ASSR (1972), Tajik SSR (1975) and some others. All these dictionaries confined themselves to translation into Russian of national geographical terms and other words found in geographical names. They were intended mostly for specialists engaged in initial collection and recording of names and to a lesser degree for those engaged in office work with geographical names. Now the elaboration of glossaries is not reduced only to these aims. The task is not only finding of more or less adequate Russian equivalents of national geographic terms or other words but also their interpretation (explanation), the exposure of multiplicity of their meanings and ways of their usage in toponymy, inclusion of their alternants if ones and definition of their areas of currency. At present the "Glossary of toponymic vocabulary of Latin America" is being prepared for publication and the compilation of the "Glossary of Russian toponymic vocabulary of the European part of the RSFSR" has begun.

It is known that the accuracy of the initial recording and verification of names on the spot under the topographic survey provides their further stability to a great extent. With the aim to perfect the work at the important stage of name recording, in 1982 revision and correction of the "Directory on collection and recording of geographical names under topographic survey", published in 1971, is undertaken. The revision of the "Directory" is carried out on the basis of modern requirements for geographical names and considering new methods of topographic survey especially in hardly accessible areas.

The standardization of geographical names in the languages of peoples of federal and autonomous republics, autonomous districts and regions with non-Russian population is the important aspect of the standardization of names on the national level in the USSR.

In every republic of the USSR encyclopaedic dictionaries, reference books, textbooks and school atlases are published in the language of the republic. It is natural for

place-names found in these publications to be rendered into this language too. It promotes the stabilization and establishment of correct forms of the names of this country and the whole world in the publications and common use of population speaking other languages of the USSR.