



# Newsletter

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

No. 18-19  
September 1997

## Inside:

<b>■ Preface</b>	
Message from the Chairman	2
In Memoriam Rolf Böhme	4
<b>■ News from Headquarters</b>	
Note from the 19th Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names	7
Note on the 7th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names	7
Official records of the 6th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Vol. II. Technical Papers	8
<b>■ From the Divisions</b>	
Africa South Division	10
Arab Division	12
Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division	13
Baltic Division	14
East Central and South-East Europe Division	17
Norden Division	20
Romano-Hellenic Division	21
United States-Canada Division	23
<b>■ From the Working Groups</b>	
Publicity and Funding	25
Training Courses in Toponymy	26
<b>■ From the Countries</b>	
Islamic Republic of Iran	27
The Netherlands	27
<b>■ Reports of Training Courses, Symposia, &amp; Other Meetings</b>	
International Seminar on the Standardization of Geographical Names June 1997	28
Symposium on Geographical Names, October 1996	31
<b>■ Correspondence &amp; Reports on Special Issues</b>	
Geographical Names and their post-codes in the United Kingdom.	32
<b>■ Book Review</b>	33

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# Message from the Chairman

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Dear Colleagues,

## 1. UN Conference and UNGEGN Session

As we have been informed by the Secretary of the Group, Mr. K. Hans Stabe, both the 7th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the 19th Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names have been postponed until January 1998. This postponement provides us with an additional opportunity for preparations.

As in the past, the first part of the UNGEGN will take place on the day preceding the Conference, and the second part on the day after the Conference. Formal invitations to participate in the Conference will be sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to individual countries via their Permanent Missions to the United Nations.

The hope is expressed that more developing countries will be able to send delegates to the Conference. Where this is not possible, they are urged to submit country reports. The UN Economic Commission for Africa has offered to cooperate with the UNGEGN and is urged to inform its member countries in this respect.

The following comments are offered to enlighten and guide delegates attending a Conference for the first time. Complete guidelines for the preparation and submission of reports and working papers will accompany the invitation of the Secretary-General.

The Conference presents the opportunity for each country to report on activities and progress on geographical name standardization since the previous conference. Committees will discuss national programmes, technical programmes and international programmes respectively. Under national standardiza-

tion are discussed such topics as field collection of names, office treatment of names, treatment of names in multilingual areas, administrative structure of national names authorities, toponymic guidelines for maps and other editors, and exonyms. The committee on technical programmes will deliberate on matters such as toponymic data files (data collection procedures, data elements required, ADP systems, compatibility and structure of systems, etc.), national gazetteers and other publications, and terminology in the standardization of geographical names. The committee on international programmes will deal with names of features beyond a single sovereignty, features common to two or more nations, writing systems and romanization, toponymic education and training and international cooperation in this regard, cooperation with international organizations, cooperation with public information media, cooperation with international organizations, cooperation with public information media, cooperation with national and international agencies and other bodies, and so forth.

During the course of the Conference resolutions will be drafted. Those decided upon will be submitted to the United Nations Economic and Social Council for adoption.

For the edification and convenience of delegates and experts, a number of documents has been collated under the title United Nations Documents on Geographical Names. These include the Rules of Procedure of the UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the Statute of the UNGEGN, resolutions adopted at the previous six conferences alphabetically arranged by subject, the English version of the Glossary of Technical Terminology, and transliteration tables for the romanization of eight non-Roman scripts. This publication may be ordered from the Names Research Institute, P.O. Box

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26582, Gezina, 0031 Pretoria, South Africa, at US\$30.00, including packaging and postage.

## **2. Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors**

Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors of the various countries have repeatedly been identified as among the most useful products of the UNGEGN. Experts who have not yet done so are therefore urged to prepare such Guidelines as working papers for the forthcoming Conference. Those wishing guidance as to information to be included are referred to resolution 4 of the Fourth Conference.

I thank those experts who sent me the Toponymic Guidelines of their countries for publication in combined volumes as recommended by resolution 7 of the Sixth Conference. Unfortunately too few have been received to warrant a publication at this

stage. I have pleasure in inviting those experts who wish to have their Guidelines included in the first volume to send them to me in hard copy and diskette. Should you require the specifications, please let me know.

## **3. Acknowledgements**

My sincere and heartfelt thanks are expressed to the Secretariat of the UNGEGN, to the Chairpersons of Divisions, Convenors of the Working Groups, liaison officers and representatives of intergovernmental and other organizations, and individual experts and colleagues, for continued cooperation and support. I look forward to seeing you at the Conference.

Peter E. Raper  
South Africa

## Rolf Böhme

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The *Ständiger Ausschuss für Geographische Namen* (StAGN, Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) lost in Rolf Böhme one of its very active and committed members. His creative activity for the cause of geographical names lasted until shortly before his death in May 1997. Still in March 1997 this year he took part in a meeting of StAGN at which he expressed his thanks for the Honorary Membership which had been conferred on him in autumn 1996 on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meeting of StAGN held in Vienna, in which he was unfortunately unable to participate for reasons of health.

In the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), he was one of the great men representing the German language group at international level with outstanding success and diplomatic skill. Rolf Böhme participated in the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Athens in 1977, in Geneva in 1982, and in Montreal in 1987 as well as in a great many of UNGEGN Working Sessions for preparing the Conferences. In recognition of his international activities and merits, official tasks and functions were regularly assigned to him at such international events. A primary result of these activities was the Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany which was published in 1981 on his initiative together with the "Toponymic Guidelines Germany for Map and other Editors" by the *Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie* (IFAG) in Frankfurt am Main.

During recent years since his retirement, he committed himself within the scope of StAGN to the establishment of a "List of Selected Exonyms of the

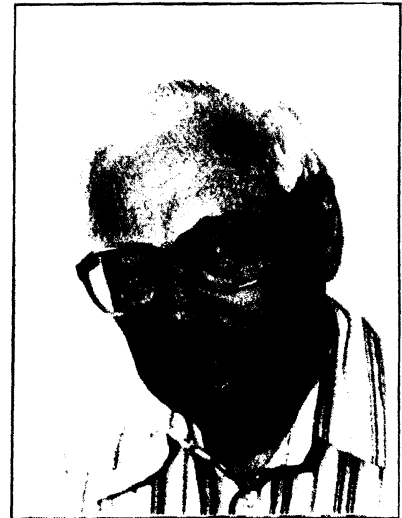
German Language" (1994), a "German Glossary of Toponymic Terminology" (1995), as well as the elaboration of a "Concise Gazetteer Germany" (in preparation), and the revision of the "Toponymic Guidelines Germany" for the third edition.

Rolf

Böhme distinguished himself by handing functions and tasks over to his successors always at the right moment, and by his ability to share his rich experience and knowledge with others. Hence, it was always sheer pleasure to collaborate with him within StAGN in all of his excellent work, and to benefit from his rich experience.

We deeply regret the loss of Rolf Böhme who was indeed an esteemed colleague, a recognized expert and advisor, and a good friend. The expert knowledge he brought into StAGN will no doubt have a lasting impact and effect.

J Sievers  
Chairman, StAGN  
Germany



Rolf Böhme  
(1917 - 1997)

# Rolf Böhme: An Expert and a Friend

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The news of the passing of Rolf Böhme came as a great shock to me and my wife. We knew he had been ill, but, as always in such cases, we hoped to see and hear more of him before his departure.

It was in Athens that I first really got to know Rolf Böhme. He was accompanied by his wife Gisela during the Third International Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. From my first encounter with them I was struck by the close relationship they exhibited. We are told that we know a man by the company he keeps. No man keeps closer company than his wife. A man who manages to win and keep a wife like Gisela must have some remarkable qualities himself.

It was in Athens also that I first discovered that he was a gifted water-colour artist and during all the years that followed our time in Athens I have seen many examples of the quality of his work. He had an eye for composition and a flair for the balance of colour.

Within the United Nations he will always be associated in my mind with the gazetteer for the 1:500,000 scale map of Germany. We in the United Kingdom have been brought up in the tradition of gazetteers. In any emergency soldiers ask "where is the gazetteer?" In Germany there was no such tradition and I remember clearly Rolf telling me: "In Germany they do not know the meaning of the word". Some Experts will recall the energy with which Rolf set about the task of producing the 1:500,000 scale gazetteer, the first of its kind in two senses. It was the first gazetteer of Germany produced under the auspices of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, but above all it was the first gazetteer produced by what we used to call Automated Data Processing (ADP).

UNGEGN had already established the model for a gazetteer of the conventional kind, that is to say a gazetteer printed in the ordinary way and bound as one or more volumes. As we know, such works are very difficult to edit and to revise, and very costly to

replace, involving new compilation followed by costly printing and binding. The "German" gazetteer, being produced by ADP, offered far greater scope for maintenance and for re-issue in the form of new editions. Experts will recall details of the discussions we had over the codes for feature designations. This was a topic close to Rolf's heart. We discussed it both during Meetings and in the free periods between. In my mind I see now the triumphant look in Rolf Böhme's eye on the day he was bringing the final publication to the Group of Experts. His words to me were "This is it!"

I also have very fond recollections of our time in Cisarua where we were both lecturing at the first toponymy course held in Indonesia, the students being drawn from Indonesia and neighbouring countries. There was plenty of opportunity for me to observe at close quarters Rolf's attention to detail, his unbounding enthusiasm for field work and its subsequent processing. I am sure Rolf would not object to me mentioning the time when we had just completed a whole day's work in the field. Summarizing the results of our work at the end of the day, we, the party leaders, all found loose ends and minor deficiencies in our protracted day's work. We made the necessary manuscript amendments and regarded the task as concluded. Not so Rolf. He insisted on a careful and complete editing, keeping his team's heads bent over their work until all was to his satisfaction. That was Rolf — always striving after perfection.

During the course, he still found time to make sketches of the luxuriant Indonesian landscape and would often point out to me a particular character of the scenery when we sat together in a vehicle. I also took advantage of his expertise when it came to buying the pictures which now hang on the walls of our home. They serve as a reminder of Rolf and the past.

Each year we would look forward to receiving his Christmas cards, in the hope that one of his water colours would form the basis of the card. Our favourite Christmas card from him - a lovely water colour - has

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for many years also graced a wall in our house.

Over and above all my many recollections of Rolf is a special photograph which I treasure. It is a panoramic photograph covering a whole 360° taken in the Caucasus during World War II. On one occasion in one of the sessions of the Group of Experts I happened to mention this remarkable photograph to Rolf Böhme. To my utter astonishment he told me that he was the person who had taken it. He then went on to describe the mounting of the camera and the subsequent operation required to complete this spectacular photograph. I wonder how many other copies, if any, are still extant. As far as I am concerned, it is in itself a remarkable memento, the personal value of which has been enhanced by my knowledge of the person who took it. It will remain a treasured keepsake for that reason, ever reminding me of a friend and valued colleague in the fields of cartography and geographical names.

H. A. G. Lewis  
Chairman PCGN  
United Kingdom

## Notes on the Nineteenth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names & the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

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Most of the Experts will have received the message, that, unfortunately, the Nineteenth Session and the Seventh Conference could not take place in Tehran, Iran, in September 1997 as originally scheduled. Our colleague Mr. Malmirian, has sent us in this connection the following message:

To the esteemed members of United Nations  
Group of Experts on Geographical Names:

As you are informed through the Note Verbale of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, despite of our utmost endeavour, the Conference could not take place in Tehran, due to technical reasons, and due to simultaneity of the Seventh Conference and the Nineteenth Session of the Group of Experts with the summit of the heads of the OIC. We take this opportunity to express our regret to all the member countries and particularly for causing inconvenience to the staff of the Secretariat of the Group.

H.Malmirian  
G. Director, N.G.O

Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council has decided, that the Conference and the Session of the Group of Experts will take place at the United

Nations Headquarters in New York in the period from 12 to 23 January 1998.

All members, non-members, and organizations have received from the Secretary-General of the United Nations a Note Verbale dated 7 July 1997 inviting them to participate in the Conference. This Note has been sent to the Permanent Missions of each State who in turn forward it to their headquarters, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. From there it should go to that Ministry which is responsible for the activities in the field of standardization of geographical names.

The preparations for the Conference and the Session of the Group of Experts are well underway. Tentatively these events will take place in Conference Room 2.

The Secretariat asks all Experts who intend to submit papers to the Conference and/or the Session of the Group of Experts, to do this well before the Conference and send them to us, if possible already in October 1997. Please remember, the Secretariat will need two hard copies of each paper: one in single spacing, one in double spacing and a diskette with the text. To expedite the transmission, you may use the following e-mail address: *stabe@un.org*

Please also note that no pictures can be transmitted through the e-mail and properly received here. The same is true for certain diacritical signs. For these materials we will need in all cases hard copies and a diskette. Kindly do not consider preparing papers at the last minute and bringing them with you to the Conference, as doing this will create a very heavy burden on the Secretariat.

# Official Records of the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Vol. II: Technical Papers

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We are pleased to announce, that the Volume II. Technical Papers of the Sixth Conference has finally been issued and released. It has been mailed out in the same manner as the Note Verbale (see above). It is anticipated that attending experts have received it through their Government channels. Additional copies can be ordered from and paid for at the United Nations' Sales Publications book store (e-mail address is [publications@un.org](mailto:publications@un.org)).

## Reorganization at Headquarters

The Secretariat of the United Nations is currently in the process of restructuring. Since 1 July 1997 the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names reports to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), as do all cartographic activities and services previously reporting to the former Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS).

Until the end of 1997 Cartography and Geographical Names activities will remain in the Natural Resources and Environment Management Branch, Division for Economic and Social Development and Natural Resources Management (NREMB/DESDNRM).

As of 1 January 1998 new changes for this sector are expected and will be made known at an appropriate time.

## Corrigendum to Newsletter No. 17

The Secretariat very much regrets the errors that occurred in Newsletter No. 17 and the inconvenience that might have been caused by these errors.

The text on the following page, which was not available in digital form, was prepared by Mr. H.A.G. Lewis.



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NEWSLETTER NO. 17, MAY 1996 - CORRIGENDA

Page 3 After "General remarks on UNGEGN" insert  
"by H.A.G. Lewis, (UK)"

Page 3, third line from bottom Delete "has", insert "have"

Page 4, first paragraph, line 2 Delete "favor", insert  
"favour".

Page 4, line 2 After 1967 insert "and".

Page 4, fourth paragraph, line 5 Delete "onomastic" and  
insert "onomastics".

Page 4, fifth paragraph, line 3 Delete "involved" and  
insert "involve".

Page 4, sixth paragraph, sub-paragraph 1, line 1 Delete  
"onomastic" and insert "onomastics".

Page 5, line 3 Delete "as" and insert "a".

Page 5, line 11 Delete "eye" and insert "eyes"

Page 5, line 14 Delete "ethno-morass" and insert  
"ethno-political morass".

Page 5 After "The definition of exonym and endonym" insert  
"by H.A.G. Lewis (UK)"

Page 5, 8th line from bottom of page Delete "exonyms" and  
insert "exonym".

Page 5, 2nd line from bottom of page Delete "names" and  
insert "name".

Page 6, paragraph 2, line 3 Delete "Geneva" and insert  
"Genève".

Page 7, line 7 Delete "official" and insert "officially  
recognized".

Page 15 After the title "B. Working Group on Toponymic  
Data Files and Gazetteers" delete "Peter Raper (South Africa)"  
and insert "H.A.G. Lewis (UK)".

Page 15, line 11 from the bottom of the page Delete "at  
present time" and insert "at the present time".

Page 16, third paragraph, line 1 Delete "hard-backed" and  
insert "hard-back".

Page 16, fifth paragraph, line 3 Delete "date" and insert  
"data" to read "data is up-to-date".

Page 16, sixth paragraph, sub-paragraph 1 Delete "off" and  
insert "of".

## Africa South Division

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### International Seminar on the Standardization of Geographical Names - Korea

The Chairman of the Africa South Division (ASD) of the UNGEGN, Dr. Peter E. Raper, was invited by the UNGEGN expert of Korea, Prof. Ki-Suk Lee, to participate in an *International Seminar on the Standardization of Geographical Names: Special Emphasis concerning the East Sea*.

The Seminar was organized by Professor Ki-Suk Lee, Head of Urban Geography at Seoul National University. It was hosted by Jun-Hyun Kim, President of Seoul City University, and sponsored by the Korea Foundation, the Korea Research Foundation and the Haesung Ethical Society.

The theme of the Seminar centered on the names *East Sea* and *Sea of Japan*, and placed the focus on the international standardization of geographical names. The paper read by Dr. Raper "The United Nations and standardization of geographical names" dealt specifically with UN resolutions referring to the standardization of names of geographical features that are under the sovereignty of more than one country or are divided among two or more countries, resolution 111/20, as well as other underlying resolutions referring to this complex problem of shared features. The full paper may be ordered from the Secretary of the ASD.

While in Korea, Dr. Raper ascertained the membership structure and representation of the Korean national geographical names authority. This will be useful for member countries of the Africa South Division which are in the process of establishing or reconstituting national naming authorities.

### Reconstitution of South African National Naming Authority

A Working Forum on Geographical Names was established to advise the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on the reconstitution and renaming of the National Place Names Committee in accordance with recommendations of the White Paper on Arts, Culture, and Heritage, and based on United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, and criteria regarding national naming authorities. Dr. Raper was appointed as Chairman to the Working Forum, and in their report it was recommended that the Committee be renamed the *South African Geographical Names Commission*. The public and interested persons were invited to comment on the report. A Draft Bill was also prepared for the inclusion of the South African Geographical Names Commission into the legislature together with other related heritage and cultural institutions of the National Heritage Council.

### 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

Two experts from the Africa South Division, Dr. P.E. Raper and Dr. L.A. Moeller, attended the 18th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) held at the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland, from 12 to 23 August 1996.

Dr. L.A. Moeller presented two working papers at the Session, Working Paper no 1, *Report of the Africa South Division*, under Item 5 of the Agenda: "Reports of the Divisions," and Working Paper no. 96, Report on the Fourth United Nations Training Course in Geographical Names in South Africa, un-

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der Item 7, "Reports of the Working Groups: Report on the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy."

### Meetings of the Division

Contact was maintained with representatives of the member countries of the Africa South Division by correspondence and invitations to participate in the *United Nations Training Course on Geographical Names: In Africa for Africa, and the Ninth Southern African Names Congress*.

### Toponymy Training Courses

From 1 to 10 July 1996, the Fourth UN Training Course in Geographical Names was held in Pretoria. It was co-presented by Dr. P. E. Raper and Dr. L. A. Möller, the Department of Geography of the University of Pretoria and the Topocadastral Information Service of the City Council of Pretoria. Twenty-four participants from five countries enrolled and received certificates from the university after intensive training in theoretical aspects, database automation, fieldwork and workshops, as well as a mock committee meeting in which policy and principles were formulated, and a draft law and fieldwork questionnaire were discussed. A full report of this training course in toponymy appeared as Working Paper no 96, Agenda item no. 7 of the Eighteenth Session of the UNGEGN.

Following the successful toponymy training courses in previous years, preparations for future United Nations Training Courses on Geographical Names continue, and may be held as soon as November 1997. The continuation of these courses was felt to be essential in view of the developments regarding the reconstitution of the national names authority in South Africa; the establishment of such authorities in other member countries of the ASD, as well as for the closer co-operation of the member countries of the Division.

### Ninth Southern African Names Congress

The Ninth Southern African Names Congress was arranged by Prof. Adrian Koopman of the Natal Branch of the Names Society of Southern Africa (NSA), and was held from 24 to 27 September 1996 at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

As keynote speaker, Professor Ferjan Ormeling Jr., expert to the UNGEGN representing the Netherlands, spoke on "Cartographic Problems in a Multilingual Society". Prof. Ormeling's expertise in mapping strategies in countries with more than one official language was greatly relevant to the South African situation, where cartographers are faced with the problem of mapping a country that used to have two official languages, but now has eleven.

A total of 45 papers was read at the congress covering a wide range of topics, focusing especially on indigenous names and names in literature. As part of the proceedings, a panel discussion between members of the Pietermaritzburg-Msunduzi Transitional Local Council and the authors of the book, *Changing place names*, E.R. Jenkins, P.E. Raper and L.A. Moeller, was conducted during the session on toponymy.

### The address of the Africa South Division has changed to:

Names Research Institute  
P.O. Box 26582  
0031 GEZINA  
Pretoria, South Africa

Lucie A. Moeller,  
Secretary of the ASD  
South Africa  
Tel. no: (012) 302-2164  
Fax no: (012) 326-5362  
e-mail: [lamoller@silwane.hsrc.ac.za](mailto:lamoller@silwane.hsrc.ac.za)

