

UNITED NATIONS

Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names  
The Chairman

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Esteemed Colleagues,

- (1) In response to my 1st Draft Report of the 7th Session I have received comments, suggestions, and corrections from the following colleagues:

Mr. W.J. Absaloms (Kenya)  
Mr. R. Böhme (Germany, Fed.Rep.)  
Mr. P. Foo (Malaysia)  
Mr. F. Gall (Guatemala)  
Mr. E. Haack (G.D.R.)  
Mr. T. Kanakubo (Japan)  
Mr. H.A.G. Lewis (U.K.)  
Mr. E. Meynen (Germany, Fed. Rep.)  
Mr. R.R. Randall (U.S.A.)  
Mr. A. Rayburn (Canada)  
Col. D.N. Sharma Atri Harnal (India)

I thank all these colleagues very much for their support.

- (2) After having incorporated all suggestions received I have amended the 1st Draft Report of the 7th Session and sent it as "2nd Draft Report" to Mr. Chris N. Christopher asking him to edit and distribute it to you as a United Nations document. In the meantime the 1st Draft Report will serve you as an interim reference paper. The only essential alterations in the 2nd Draft Report are (1) that Mr. J.M. Gonzalez Aboín (Spain) will be responsible as a co-ordinator for the revised version of the Spanish language section of the definitions only, and (2) that the names of Mssrs. H.A.G. Lewis (U.K.), A.M. Komkov (U.S.S.R.) and C.M. Mubita (Zambia) were added to the list of the members of the Working Group on Automated Data Processing.
- (3) In order to facilitate our work I enlist below the Divisions of our Group of Experts. After the names of the Divisions I have entered the names of the countries belonging or presumably belonging to them. This enumeration is far from being complete. It comprises those countries only which have taken part in the three U.N. Conferences and in the seven Sessions of the Group of Experts. Only for Divisions 1, 2, and 3 I have made use of a specific list of member countries as shown

in document E/CONF. 69/L 138. As a complete list of the countries belonging to each Division is of great practical value for our further work I ask the Chairmen of the Divisions to be kind enough to complete, and if necessary to correct the list given above. I am sure this will be difficult as many countries have not yet made any declaration on this subject. Our rule is that each country is free to choose the Division (or the Divisions) it wants to belong to. In many cases supplementation of the list will be easy. In Latin America e.g. an intensive co-operation has already taken place, here only the membership of some Caribbean countries may be doubtful, but on the mainland there will be no difficulty in completing the list.

List of the  
Linguistic-Geographical Divisions of the UNGEGN  
Draft

1 Africa Central Division:

Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Empire, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Zaire.

2 Africa East Division:

Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia (in doc. Athens L 138 not mentioned, therefore uncertain membership), Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seyshelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia.

3 Africa West Division:

Benin, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Upper Volta.

4 Arabic Division:

Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan.

5 Asia East Division (other than China):

Japan

6 Asia South-East Division:

Kampuchea, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Viet Nam, Singapore, Thailand.

- 7 Asia South-West Division:  
Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Turkey
- 8 China Division:  
China
- 9 Dutch and German-speaking Division:  
Austria, Belgium, F.R. of Germany, German D.R., Netherlands, Switzerland.
- 10 East Central and South-East Europe Division:  
Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia.
- 11 India Division:  
Bangladesh, India, Pakistan
- 12 Latin America Division:  
Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela.
- 13 Norden Division:  
Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden.
- 14 Romano-Hellenic Division:  
Cyprus, France, Greece, Holy See, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, Spain.
- 15 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Division:  
USSR, Ukraine
- 16 United Kingdom Division:  
Australia, Ireland, (membership not confirmed), United Kingdom.
- 17 United States of America-Canada Division:  
Canada, Guyana, United States of America.

I suggest that the Chairmen of the Divisions contact the countries within their geographical region or linguistic group which up to now have not yet stated to which Division they intend to belong inviting them to join their Division.

The following countries (contained in the U.N. Terminology Bulletin No 285/Rev.2, incl. Corr. 1 and 2) till now neither have taken part in the U.N. activities on geographical names, nor are they mentioned in the Athens document L 138. In brackets I have entered the numbers of the Divisions these countries possibly might belong to:

Albania (10)	Mongolia (5)
Bahamas (16 or 17)	Nauru (16)
Bahrain (4)	Nepal (11)
Barbados (16 or 17)	New Zealand (16)
Bhutan (11)	Nicaragua (12)
Bolivia (12)	Oman (4)
Brazil (12)	Papua-New Guinea (16)
Burma (6)	Paraguay (12)
Byelorussia (15)	Quatar (4)
Colombia (12)	Republic of Korea (5)
Costa Rica (12)	Samoa (16)
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (5)	San Marino (14)
Democratic Yemen (4)	Somalia (2)
Djibuti (2)	South Africa (?)
Dominican Republic (12)	Sri Lanka (11)
El Salvador (12)	Syria (4)
Fiji (16)	Tonga (16)
Grenada (16 or 17)	Trinidad and Tobago (16)
Haiti (12)	Tunisia (4)
Iceland (13)	United Arab Emirates (4)
Indonesia (6)	Yemen Arab Republic (4)
Jamaica (16 or 17)	
Kuwait (4)	
Liechtenstein (9)	
Maldives (11)	
Malta (16 or 4)	

Total number: 47 (out of the 158 countries of the world as mentioned in T.B. 285/Rev. 2 incl. Corr. 1 and 2).

I recommend that the Chairmen of the Divisions arrange before the 8th Meeting of the Group of Experts meetings of their Divisions (at least one meeting each).

(4) Below you find a list in alphabetical order of the Working Groups of the UNGEGN as in existence after our 7th Meeting:

1. WG on Automated Data Processing
2. WG on Definitions
3. WG on Extraterrestrial Topographical Features
4. WG on Gazetteers
5. WG on the List of Country Names
6. WG on a Single Romanization System for Each Non-Roman Writing System
7. WG on Training Courses
8. WG on Undersea and Maritime Features

(5) The 3rd Conference has adopted 27 Resolutions. The following list shows to which Working Group the resolutions refer. It is also indicated which resolutions refer to UNGEGN as a whole ("general"). The Resolutions and the WGs are given with abbreviated titles:

Resolution	WG
1. 4th U.N. Conference	general
2. Specifications of International Gazetteers of Countries	WG on Gazetteers; general
3. Automated Data Processing	WG on Automated Data Proc.
4. Reliability Statement	general
5. Divisional activities	general
6. List of Country Names	WG on the List of Country Names
7. Aids to Pronunciation	general; WG on Gazetteers
8. Romanization of China	WG on Romanization
9. Romanization of Arabic	WG on Romanization
10. Bulgarian Cyrillic Alphabet	WG on Romanization
11. Cyrillic Alphabets of Yugoslavia	WG on Romanization
12. Transliteration of alphabets of the Indian Div.	WG on Romanization
13. Romanization of Hebrew	WG on Romanization
14. Glossary of Technical Terms	WG on Definitions
15. Training Courses	WG on Training Courses
16. National Standardization	general
17. Names of Countries	general
18. Study of Exonyms	general
19. List of Exonyms	general
20. Features beyond a Single Sovereignty	general
21. Maritime Feature Names	WG on Undersea and Maritime Features
22. Undersea Feature Names	WG on Undersea and Maritime Features
23. Extraterrestrial Feature Names	WG on Extraterrestrial Features

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|--|--------------------|
| 24. Arabic as a Working Language                                 | general            |
| 25. Single Romanization System for Each Non-Roman Writing System | WG on Romanization |
| 26. African Geographic-Linguistic Divisions                      | general            |
| 27. Vote of Thanks   | general            |

- (6) Beside the Resolutions the "Report of the Conference", E/CONF. 69/4 of 8 Sept. 1977, Distr. limited, English version, contains in its Chapter 2 many suggestions concerning the further work (1) of UNGEGN as a whole and (2) of the Working Groups.

The following paragraphs are of special interest to the several Working Groups (names abbreviated):

- p. 11; §§ 7-12 — WG on Training Courses
- pp. 11, 12; §§ 13-15 — WG on Definitions
- pp. 13-15; §§ 1-9 — WG on Gazetteers
- p. 16; Annex — WG on Gazetteers
- p. 15; §§ 10-12 — WG on Automat. Data Process.
- pp. 19, 20; §§ 7-12 — WG on Undersea and Maritime Features
- p. 20; §§ 13-17 — WG on Extraterrestrial Features
- pp. 21-23; (a)-(t) — WG on Romanization
- p. 25; § 4 — WG on the List of Country Names
- p. 25; § 6 — WG on Gazetteers (also general)

In the following paragraphs I should like to make some suggestions for our further work (names of WGs abbreviated):

(7) WG on Automated Data Processing

Mr. Böhme (F.R. of Germany) has been elected Convenor of the WG. He has written to me that he as a civil servant needs the permission of the Ministry concerned to accept this position, and that the Ministry has not yet given it. In the meantime I ask Mr. Lewis to keep under his observation the problems of Autom. Data Proc., as these problems are strongly correlated to the problems of the WG on Gazetteers which is guided by him.

(8) WG on Definitions

As Mr. Page, who has served the WG as a Convenor, has left UNGEGN it seems to me necessary to replace him in this capacity. Mr. Gonzalez Aboín will act as co-ordinator of a subgroup for the Spanish version only. But there has to be done some co-ordinative work still, some alterations and additions also to the English and French versions etc. Furthermore somebody will be needed to contact the U.N. Division of Languages in New York and the Terminology Commission in Geneva.

Therefore I suggest that the members of the Group elect a new Convenor for these finishing and liaison tasks. I ask the members of the WG to nominate till 28 February, 1978, a Convenor. Then I shall ask the expert who will have received the greatest number of votes to accept this task.

(9) WG on Extraterrestrial Topographical Features

I think the main task of the WG will be an intensive collaboration with IAU and other interested international bodies as recommended in Res. 23 of Athens. This collaboration will refer also to the elaboration of proposal forms (Athens Res. 23, last paragr.). In many countries some uncertainty is felt. It must be safeguarded that if a given country submits a list of names to UNGEGN this list will be taken into due consideration by a combined staff of IAU and UNGEGN.

(10) WG on Gazetteers

I should like to comment on one point raised in Athens, i.e. the project for a U.N. Concise Gazetteer of the World. I think we should come already at our next Meeting to definite proposals in this matter. We might wait till each country has published a gazetteer of type D or E, or at least of type A and then condense the whole stock of names accumulated in these individual gazetteers into a Concise Gazetteer of the World. But I fear that in doing so we shall have to wait too long. It would be better for the reputation of UNGEGN to follow a different course of action. This is no more than a suggestion. It is, of course, up to the WG to decide in this matter. My point is: The WG works out a detailed specification for such a Gazetteer of the World, giving instructions concerning the composition of the entries following the headwords: transliteration (if necessary), pronunciation (if advisable), description of features, indication of administrative unit, co-ordinates, sheet number of maps, grammatical information etc. Further a list of abbreviations and codes should be worked out, and finally the number of entries for each country. Also the percentages of the different categories of names in the total number of names could be indicated: feature names, populated place names, names of regions, names of administrative units etc. If we have a definite plan and send detailed invitations to the individual countries we could succeed within a comparatively short time. The Divisions could act as intermediaries. If a country is not prepared to co-operate the Division could collect the names material for it. In a similar way we have acted within the WG on Country Names. The Convenor had worked out specifications, and specially appointed members of the WG have collected the material for individual Divisions or for groups of Divisions. This system has worked quite satisfactorily. In this case it would be perhaps preferable to ask the Chairmen of the Divisions to contact their member countries and to compile the namelists for those countries that will not respond. The first edition of such a gazetteer should be not too large; one small volume would suffice. One could object against it that this gazetteer would be of less value than one of the many existing atlas indexes. But our gazetteer would have other merits than containing a very large stock of names -

merits which will result from a strict application of UN recommendations. Please, be kind enough to take this suggestion of mine into due consideration and let me know what you think of it. In any case, it would be a substantial result of our practical work.

(11) WG on the List of Country Names

I ask the Convenor to bring the List of Country Names to an end as soon as possible. Then we will reproduce and distribute it and contact the U.N. Terminology Unit in order to decide on further steps. It is advisable to conclude the work strictly following the specifications distributed by the former Convenor.

(12) WG on Romanization

I have sent all necessary material to the Convenor. There are many important tasks to do for this WG. The most important ones are:

(a) Support to and co-operation with the Arabic Countries as regards the implementation of the Athens Res. No.9.

(b) Contact with the Greek authorities concerned. I am sending some source material to the Convenor.

(c) Procuring of informations from all non-Roman writing countries in which the situation is uncertain or unstable.

(d) Further investigation on the situation in the PDR of Korea and in the R. of Korea.

(e) Contact with the USSR Division. I am sending some source material to the Convenor asking him to forward it with his comments to the Soviet member of the WG.

(13) WG on Training Courses

The course of action is outlined clearly in the relevant Athens documents (Report of the Conference, Draft Report of the 7th Meeting of UNGEGN).

(14) WG on Undersea and Maritime Features

The task of this WG is of essential importance within the aims of UNGEGN. The general public recognizes here more easily than in other fields of our activity the necessity of names standardization. The work which will be done by this WG along the lines drawn in the Report of the 3rd Conference is a great one and can be done only in close co-operation with IHO.

(15) Some items of importance to UNGEGN as a whole

(a) Exonyms

Referring to Athens Res. 18 I ask the Chairmen of the Divisions to collect results and forward them to me in order to put me in the position to accomplish an exchange of information.

A study of the "Glossary of Geographical Names in Six Languages - English, French, Italian, Spanish, German and Dutch, ed. by G. Lana, L. Iasbez and L. Meak. Amsterdam - London - New York (Elsevier Publ. Co.) 1967" has put the following notion into my head:

We have discussed at length lists of exonyms. Why might we not start a multilingual list of great practical value. We could include the working languages of the UN using Roman script (English, French, Spanish), or all full working languages (as above plus Russian and Chinese), or all working languages (as above plus Arabic), or all working languages plus the newly admitted UN translation language German. The publication should explain in an introduction in detail our general policy regarding exonyms. Limitations to the use of exonyms should be added in coded form after each entry, such as obsolete, rare, historical, falling into disuse etc., etc. In the introduction it should be stated clearly what different rules for the use of exonyms are to be observed in different fields of application (oral, belles-lettres, statistical tables, school books, school atlases, road maps, world atlases for national use, international cartography etc., etc.). Please let me know, what you think about such a plan. Will it surpass our possibilities? The above mentioned "Glossary" is widely used, but it was outdated already in 1967.

(b) U.N. Toponymic Guidelines for International Cartography

There have been undertaken similar projects before, but I think such an object would be most suitable to UNGEGN. It should be a combination of "Glossaries" of PCGN, Alphabets of Foreign Languages (PCGN), Allgemeine Richtlinien für die Schreibung geographischer Namen (GDR, Ministry of the Interior - Administration of Geodesy and Cartography), Schreibung der Geographischen Namen auf der Weltkarte 1: 2 500 000 (Landesamt für Boden- und Kartenwesen - Institut für Geodäsie und Kartographie, Budapest), Romanization Guide (BGN), Instrukcija po ruskoj peredace geografičeskich nazvanij (Glavnoe upravlenie geodezii i kartografii, Moskva), Spicak na transkribirani geografski imena (Savet po pravopis i transkripcija na geografiskite imena, Sofija), W. Bonacker - Kartenwörterbuch, and other similar publications.

In studying the papers of the three U.N. Conferences I have found very valuable material about the conditions and results of national standardization, but the national reports put emphasis on different points, and many interesting facts are missing. Furthermore, reports are available from a limited number of countries only.

My proposals in detail:

We ask each country to produce Toponymic Guidelines relating to its own territory. The Chairmen of the Divisions may act as intermediaries and produce the Guidelines for those countries of their division which are not in the position to elaborate them themselves. Proposal for the contents:

## Toponymic Guidelines for International Cartography

(follows:) Name of the individual country

### I Languages

1 General remarks

2 National language(s)

- a) Legal situation and practical application in administration and official cartography
- b) Alphabet(s) and Transcription(s)
- c) General spelling rules for geographical names
- d) Grammatical peculiarities which are essential for the treatment and understanding of geographical names.
- e) Distribution of main dialects and their characteristics; how far are dialectal name forms adapted to the standard form of the language(s)? (In the case of many African countries with English, French, Portuguese or Spanish as official languages: Distribution of main vernaculars and their characteristics; how far are vernacular name forms adapted to the spelling of the official language?)

3 Minority languages

- a) - e) as under 2

### II Names authorities and names standardization

- 1 National names authority. Aims, functions, rules, addresses.
- 2 Provincial names authorities. Aims, functions, rules, addresses.
- 3 Names Standardization. Legal aspects, procedures, progress.

### III Source Material

- 1 Maps: Map series containing standardized names. Which sheets of a series contain already standardized names?
- 2 Gazetteers containing standardized names.

### IV Glossary of appellatives, adjectives and other words

necessary for the understanding of maps. (As such glossaries will serve the needs of foreign users they must contain also - and above all - words of the general vocabulary. The glossary should also contain abbreviations used on national maps, their decoding and meaning.)

Remarks: In consulting cartographic publishing houses I was often confronted with questions very difficult to answer. Examples: (1) On British maps of Scotland one finds sometimes original Gaelic names, sometimes anglicised name forms. It seems to me that the anglicised forms only have official status. Gleann mòr na-h Albin is the Gaelic form: Glen Mòr is anglicised, but the ò is not part of the English spelling system; Glen More nan Albin is another anglicised form, but here "nan" is a structural foreigner; Glen More, Glen Albyn, Great Glen, Great Glen of Scotland are other anglicised variants. (2) In Austria the Slovenian inhabited place names follow strictly the official gazetteer of inhabited places. Most names are germanized in spelling, a few are not. Feature names are entered into the maps in a germanized spelling (s = sch, c = tsch, h = ch, v = w etc.) by exception of those

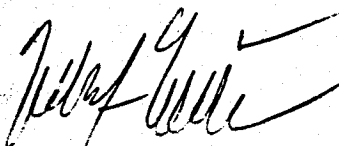
which consist of more than one separately written word: Brezov vrh, Bela peč - not Bresow Wrch, Bela Petsch. If this rules are not stated, the map user will be unnecessarily confused. (3) Friulian has in Italy no official standing. Nevertheless we shall find in official maps original Friulian elements as jôf instead of Italian giogo. The ô is foreign to Italian spelling. There is needed a statement on the official standing of Friulian in Italy and on the cartographical practice regarding Friulian geographical names. (4) Tremendous are the riddles in Affica. The rules in Zaire have been clearly stated in a national report. But in some other "francophone" or "anglophon" countries little or nothing is known to the foreign cartographer. Many vernaculars have an established spelling. Does cartography follow these spellings or are the vernacular names adopted to the official (European) language? If so, in what degree? (5) Numerous are the difficulties in Asia: What is officially the mutual position of Dari and Pashto in Afghanistan? How are the non-Urdu names reflected in cartography in Pakistan? What is the legal situation in the states of India? The Statesman's Year-Book states official languages only in part of the states: Jamnu and Kashmir (Urdu); Panjab (Panjabi); Utar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (Hindi); Gujarat (Gujarati and Hindi); Tamil Nadu (Tamil). In other states the "principal language" is stated; what does this mean? There are of course also minority languages within the individual states. Other questions are: How far are English names to be regarded as official in India? What is the official status of Hindi in the non-Hindi speaking states? What are the official languages in the territories? etc. etc. etc.

I hope this scanty examples have made clear my point. Please be kind enough to let me know what your opinion is about such a project. I see that foreign cartography mis-treats very often the geographical names of several countries. The U.N. should contribute to avoiding this.

(c) Other problems I shall discuss in further circulars.

- (16) Now I repeat my request to the members of UNGEGN, and especially to the Convenors of WGs and to the Chairmen of Divisions to send me copies of their circulars.
- (17) I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope it will be a prosperous one for UNGEGN.

Yours sincerely



(Josef Breu)