

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL
NAMES ON THE WORK OF ITS EIGHTH SESSION

(held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
26 February - 9 March 1979)

Terms of reference

1. In pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 1314 (XLIV) and Decision 1978/7, the Secretary-General invited the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to convene its eighth session at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 26 February to 9 March 1979.

Attendance

2. The session was attended by 37 experts from 26 countries representing fourteen of the seventeen geographical/linguistic divisions of the world. Observers from the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and of the Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission (IOC) were also present (see annex 1). The Chief of the Cartography Section served as the Secretary for the Group.

Opening of the session

3. The session was opened on behalf of the Secretary-General by Mr. N.F. Falzon, Deputy Director, Transport and Cartography Branch, Centre for Natural Resources, Energy and Transport, Department of Technical Co-operation for Development. The Chairman of the Group of Experts thanked the United Nations for the services set at its disposal.

Rules of procedure

4. It was agreed that the same rules of procedure to be followed were those of former sessions.

5. The Group adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Review of divisional composition
4. Report by the Chairman on over-all activities of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
5. Report by the Secretary
6. Reports by the Divisions (divisional meetings, consultations, concerted actions and divisional problems)
7. Reduction of exonyms (reports of progress and problems, lists of exonyms)
8. Names of features beyond a single sovereignty
9. Review of aims

10. Report of activity by the working groups since the seventh session
 - (a) definitions
 - (b) undersea and maritime features
 - (c) extraterrestrial topographic features
 - (d) single romanization system
 - (e) training courses
 - (f) international gazetteers
 - (g) list of country names
 - (h) automated data processing
11. Discussion on Working Groups and further conference recommendations of general importance
12. Provisional agenda for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
13. Provisional agenda for the ninth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
14. Plans of action before the fourth Conference
15. Adoption of the report

6. The officers of the session were:

Chairman, Mr. J. Breu (Austria); Vice Chairman, Mr. W.J. Absaloms (Kenya); Rapporteur, Mr. A. Rayburn (Canada); Secretary, Mr. C.N. Christopher (United Nations).

Review of divisional composition

7. The composition of the linguistic/geographical divisions were reviewed and accepted as follows:

(a) Africa Central Division

Angola, Burundi, Central African Empire, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, United Republic of Camercon, Zaire

(b) Africa East Division

Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.

(c) Africa West Division

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

(d) Arabic Division

Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan

(e) Asia East Division (other than China)

Japan, Republic of Korea

- (f) Asia South-East Division
Democratic Kampuchea, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam
- (g) Asia South-West Division
Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Turkey
- (h) China Division
China
- (i) Dutch- and German-speaking Division
Austria, Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Netherlands, Suriname, Switzerland
- (j) East, Central and South-East Europe Division
Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Yugoslavia
- (k) India Division
Bangladesh, India, Pakistan
- (l) Latin American Division
Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela
- (m) Norden Division
Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden
- (n) Romano-Hellenic Division
Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Greece, Holy See, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey
- (o) USSR Division
USSR
- (p) United Kingdom Division
Australia, Guyana, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom
- (q) United States of America-Canada Division
Canada, United States of America.

It was agreed that countries which had not so far announced their adherence to any particular division should be approached and their wishes in the matter determined. Mr. Christopher would approach Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal; Mr. Absaloms would approach Comoros, and Somalia; Mr. Ramondou would approach Andorra, Djibouti, Italy and San Marino; Mr. Lewis would approach Bahamas, Barbados, Fiji, Grenada, Jamaica, Malta, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, St. Lucia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago and Tuvalu; Mr. Szymczak would approach Albania; Mr. Tazi would approach Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates; Mr. Komkov would approach Mongolia; Mr. Breu would get in touch with Burma, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

Reports ^{1/}

8. The Report of the Chairman on overall activities of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and on his activities as Chairman of the Group was contained in Working Paper No. 14. Mr. Breu's analysis of the situation facing the Group, expressed as "Thoughts on the Future of Standardizing Geographical Names within the framework of the United Nations" was contained in Working Paper No. 12.

9. The Secretary for the Group stated that the Report of the Athens Conference, including a statement of the resolutions adopted, had just been printed.^{2/} He noted that the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was scheduled for 1982. He agreed to investigate the possibility of producing an information bulletin relating to names standardization work and of having it circulated to all Division Chairmen and convenors of Working Groups twice a year.

10. Mr. Bizenga, reporting on the activities of the Africa Central Division, said that there had been some progress in establishing national toponymic committees in his division (Working Paper No. 43).

11. The report by Mr. Absaloms on the activities of the Africa East Division was contained in Working Paper No. 46. He drew attention to a seminar held in Nairobi in November 1978, during which the problems of field collection and office treatment of geographical names were discussed.

12. Mr. Sawyerr, speaking for the Africa West Division, commented on continuing difficult problems relating to the romanization of unwritten languages and technical assistance needed in this field. (Working Paper No. 19.)

13. The Arabic Division, drew attention to a geographical conference held in Riyadh, which all Arab countries had attended. The conference had shown general agreement on the transliteration system for Arabic adopted at the London Conference (resolution No. 8)^{3/} and later modifications (Working Paper No. 55 and 56).

14. The Secretary stated that although the representative from the Asia South-East Division was absent he had received information that a divisional meeting had been held and that action in support of names standardization in the Philippines was being taken by that Government.

^{1/} See Annex 2 for List of Working Papers.

^{2/} Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Vol. I. Report of the Conference. (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.I.4).

^{3/} Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Vol. I. Report of the Conference, page 11. (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.74.I.2).

15. Mr. Kanakubo, for Asia East Division, though unable to attend, had submitted a written report (Working Paper No. 9), which noted, among other things, that the Republic of Korea wished to participate in the work of the Group of Experts.
16. Mr. Erinç, for Asia South-West Division, commented on some of the standardization problems in his division; his report was contained in Working Paper No. 44.
17. The report prepared by Mr. Wang on the China Division was contained in Working Paper No. 11. Mr. Wang said that it was expected that the Pinyin forms of the names of Chinese post offices would be sent to the Union Postale Universelle in June 1979.
18. Following Mr. Ramondou's report on the Romano-Hellenic Division contained in Working Paper No. 34 there was discussion on the desirability of Italy's participation in the work of the Group of Experts. It was agreed that an invitation should be sent to the various official agencies in Italy concerned with names standardization.
19. The report prepared by Mr. Komkov on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Division was contained in Working Paper No. 25. Mr. Komkov noted that the COMECON countries had jointly reached agreement on transliteration systems for the Cyrillic alphabets. He said that the COMECON system for the Russian alphabet was being examined by the appropriate bodies in the USSR and, if approved, would be submitted to the Fourth Conference in 1982 for adoption as the international system for the transliteration of the geographical names of the Soviet Union.
20. Divisional reports were presented by the Chairman of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division, the East, Central and South-East Europe Division, the Latin America Division, the United Kingdom Division and the United States of America/Canada Division. No representative from the Norden Division was present, but it was noted that Mr. Allan Rostvik had succeeded Mr. Hovda as divisional representative.
21. The Chairman of the Latin America Division reported on the work of his Division during the period since the third Conference in Athens. He stated that there was a fifth Regional Central American meeting in January 1979 and several of the countries within this division reported the preparation of gazetteers and geographical names lists.
22. National reports on progress in names standardization work were given by Mr. Breu for Austria, Mr. Velazquez for Cuba, Mr. Meynen for the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Haack for the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Mavridis for Greece, Mr. Gall for Guatemala, Mr. Földi for Hungary, Mr. Adebekun for Nigeria, Mr. Szymczak for Poland, Mr. Wekker for Suriname, Mr. Lewis for the United Kingdom and Mr. Randall for the United States of America. Mr. Kanakubo, not present at the meeting submitted a report on the compilation of Japanese geographical names in Working Paper No. 8. Zambia, also not represented at the meeting, presented a report on its activities in Working Paper No. 54.

Reduction of exonyms

23. Mr. Randall observed that the United States continues progress to reduce exonyms in official publications but that certain exonyms were retained where they were of particular use. He explained that the United States Government could not dictate to private publishers the geographical names they used in their publications. Mr. Lewis noted that exonyms in use varied from one context to another. He expressed the view that they could never be abolished altogether and that what was important was to use the local official form whenever possible. The retention of certain exonyms, perhaps subordinately, was often considered of benefit to users. Mr. Ormeling observed that for those countries producing international maps the reduction of exonyms has proven to be a difficult experience. Mr. Breu noted that certain countries had concluded bilateral agreements on the names to be employed in school books and school atlases. Mr. Erinc stressed the need for co-operation between neighbouring countries. Mr. Gall suggested that countries should ensure that they used officially the names which had been approved nationally in the country concerned. Mr. Breu pointed out that certain exonyms were mandatory as, for example, in civil aviation where English was the sole language used in international communication. He concluded the discussion by referring to document E/CONF.61/L.24 of the London Conference, printed in E/CONF.61/4/Add.1⁴, pp. 195-196, which contains a detailed treatment of the fundamental problems involved and by emphasizing that the question of exonyms should not be considered from a political standpoint or as an expression of nationalism.

Names of features beyond a single sovereignty

24. Mr. Haack elaborated on the list of names of oceans, arms of oceans and undersea reliefs contained in Working Paper No. 16. Some discrepancies were noted, examples being water features in the area of Turkey. Mr. Kapoor noted the International Hydrographic Organization was working on the same subject.

Review of aims, functions and modus operandi of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

25. It was agreed that a study should be undertaken of the accomplishments of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names since its creation. An editorial group under the direction of Mr. Randall, with Mr. Gall, Mr. Geelan, Mr. Breu and Mr. Rayburn as members, was set up to prepare a report on the results achieved in the area of standardization. Their paper entitled The Work of the United Nations in the Standardization of Geographical Names would be useful for the information of new experts on UNGEGN and for others who were unfamiliar with the work of the Group. Various experts proposed a complete review of aims, functions and modus operandi. Because limited time was available for discussion and because updating of the modus operandi was felt to be an immediate necessity it was agreed that a revised modus operandi be prepared and that aims and functions be discussed separately. An editorial group under the direction of Mr. Blok and composed of Mr. Lewis, Mr. Gall, Mr. Sawyerr and Mr. Wekker redrafted the modus operandi. The amended version is issued as Annex 3.

26. Experts were invited to submit working papers on aims and functions (as well as modus operandi) for consideration at the Ninth Session of UNGEGN and the Fourth Conference.

⁴/ ibid. Vol. II, Technical Papers (United Nations Publication Sales No. E.74.I.4).

Working Group on Definitions

27. Mr. Lewis, the Convenor of the Working Group, explained that a certain amount of work was still necessary to complete the Spanish version of the definitions. An editorial group composed of Mr. Gall, Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Velazquez, with Mr. Lewis present, was formed to complete this work. The final text was submitted to the Group and approved for publication. In the course of discussion, it was pointed out that the title of the Spanish text had been amended to take account of the fact that the glossary comprised only "selected" terms. It was agreed that the title of the English and French versions should be amended to read: "Glossary of selected terms used in the standardization of geographical names" and "Glossaire de termes choisis, utilisés dans la normalisation des noms géographiques". Mr. Lewis agreed to submit the glossary in its finalized trilingual form for publication. The Group expressed its gratitude to Mr. C. Page and Mr. M.F. Burrill for the work done previously. It was proposed that the glossary should be circulated at the next regional cartographic conference in Mexico in 1979 and that it should also be published in World Cartography so as to reach a wider public. It was further agreed that when the glossary was published, the Working Group would be disbanded. Subsequent revisions if necessary, would be considered by the Group of Experts as a whole.

Single romanization system for each non-Roman writing system

28. Mr. Földi, the Convenor of the Working Group, reviewed the work done by the Working Group in Working Paper No. 33.

Arabic. Mr. Tazi reported that a meeting had been held in Riyadh to consider the romanization of Arabic (Working Paper No. 55). All Arab nations attended and complete agreement was obtained to use the system approved by the London Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (E/CONF.61/4), and later modifications (Working Paper No. 56).

Cyrillic. Mr. Komkov stated that the COMECON countries had prepared jointly a new transliteration system for the romanization of the Cyrillic alphabets. He explained that the system of romanization existed in two versions of equal status: one using diacritical signs and the other using letter combinations for use in telecommunications and data processing. The system described, which would be considered by the authorities in the USSR for possible submission to the Fourth Conference, was described as being neutral in respect of the individual Cyrillic script languages of the COMECON countries concerned. This means that a given Cyrillic letter would be transliterated by the same Roman letter regardless of the different phonemic values of the separate donor languages. Mr. Haack stated that his country is producing a gazetteer of the USSR, which will use the system expected to be agreed by the COMECON countries. Mr. Komkov stated that names in languages other than Russian of the USSR are, as a rule, converted to Russian as the medium for romanization for the purpose of international standardization.

Chinese. In discussion of Working Paper No. 10, Mr. Wang emphasized that only at the moment Mongol, Tibetan and Uighur names are directly transcribed into an appropriate Pinyin romanized form; the Pinyin spelling of all other minority language names is obtained through the medium of the Han character form. Mr. Wang confirmed that diacritical tone marks are omitted from the Pinyin forms of geographical names on maps and in atlases and gazetteers.

Burmese. Mr. Breu asked the convenor of the Working Group to contact the appropriate authorities in Burma on the question of the romanization of Burmese names.

Greek. Mr. Mavridis reported that Greece and Cyprus have continued their studies on the development of a joint system for the romanization of Greek. Many problems had still to be overcome but it was anticipated that a finalized system would be agreed by 1981.

Japanese. It was noted that no change had occurred since the Third Conference.

Pashto and Dari. It was noted that no information had been received from Afghanistan since the Athens Conference.

International gazetteers

29. Mr. Lewis referred to several points in his Working Paper No. 39. He reminded the Group that the concept of a one or two volume gazetteer comprising 200,000 or more names presented many difficulties. Discussion centered on the possible publication of a smaller gazetteer containing not many more than 15,000 to 20,000 names. Mr. Meynen had prepared an outline scheme for such a publication. Mr. Lewis suggested the use of an automated atlas index from an existing publication was the most practical means of producing the gazetteer of the larger content of names. Several experts put forward the view that an existing commercial publication should be used as the base for a United Nations gazetteer. Many experts supported the view that an international gazetteer published in the name of the United Nations, whether commercially produced or not, was a desirable goal. Mr. Christopher observed that there was a genuine demand for authoritative information on geographical names by the United Nations. Mr. Mavridis proposed a gazetteer which might be produced by commercial publishers with acknowledgements to the United Nations in the form of a document which would expand as information became available. Mr. Komkov was strongly of the opinion that some form of gazetteer should be published as soon as possible and regarded it as one of the most important potential tasks of the Group. It was finally agreed that a small working group should be set up, with Mr. Meynen as Convenor and Messrs. Breu, Lewis, Komkov and Geelan as members. The report of this working group is given in Working Paper No. 49. It was agreed that Mr. Meynen should compile lists for four selected countries, i.e., Argentina, Thailand, Tunisia and Upper Volta and that those should be submitted through the divisional chairman, through the Convenor of the Working Group for the countries concerned for their comments.

Working Group on Training Courses

30. Mr. Ormeling presented the report of his Working Group (Working Paper No. 42). He said that an earlier proposal to hold a training course in the Netherlands could not be realized due to lack of funds. Recent experience had shown that there was some merit in conducting training courses in the form of a series of lectures to be presented by international experts on the basis of the programme accepted in 1975 in one or two countries not too far from each other and that such a course, or seminar, could be effective in south-east Asia. He undertook to prepare the ground during a forthcoming visit and inform the UNGEGN of the results of his visit. Mr. Ormeling said he, in co-operation with the Chairman, would draft letters of invitation to individual lecturers, which would be issued by the Secretariat. He would endeavour to ensure that the host country would arrange for accommodation and relative costs, leaving the lecturers themselves to take care of their travelling expenses. Mr. Ramondou informed the Experts that the University of Dijon had produced a film on toponymy with special reference to the Burgundy. Mr. Wekker approved the suggestion that a videotape of the proposed seminar might be produced since this was of great benefit to other countries.

Extraterrestrial topographic features

31. Mr. Komkov, the convenor, reviewed the information contained in Working Paper No. 23. He explained that certain nations had not submitted names for inclusion in nomenclature to be applied to the planets of the solar system. He reminded delegates that all that was necessary was to give the information requested and that the form was of secondary importance as long as the information was complete. Mr. Randall observed that the substantive work of this Working Group had reached the stage where it could be disbanded. Mr. Komkov stated that, although he would continue his work with the International Astronomical Union (IAU), it would be premature to abandon the Working Group, which should be allowed to continue until the next conference. This was agreed. Mr. Komkov offered to circulate the reports of the IAU Committee on Extraterrestrial Nomenclature to the Experts who wished to receive copies. Mr. Mavridis stated that his country had prepared lists of names for submission and that he would be sending them in shortly.

List of country names

32. Mr. Ramondou, convenor of the working group, presented his report (Working Paper No. 48), and invited comments on the draft List of Country Names, circulated as Working Paper No. 48/Add.1. The Secretary stated that the United Nations Terminology Unit, responsible among other things for producing the official United Nations list of country names in English, French and Spanish, was looking forward to the final publication of the GEGN list which gave the short and long forms of all country names in the six languages of the United Nations as well as in the official language or languages of each country concerned. Examination of the draft by the Experts in the course of the meeting showed that much remained to be done to bring it to a state of readiness for publication. It was agreed that amendments should be sent directly to Mr. Ramondou, who would bring a finalized version back to the ninth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEKN) for adoption.

Given the continual change in the formal names of countries, as well as expected additions to the membership of the United Nations, it was agreed that the List of Country Names, once published, should be kept up to date by the regular issue of Addenda and Corrigenda. The convenor, the Chairman of the Group and the Secretary met with the Director of the Translation Division, Department of Conference Services, who agreed to maintain liaison with the Group in the matter of country names and terminology.

Undersea and maritime features

33. The working group met with representatives of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the International Hydrographic Organization (IOC/IHO) and reached agreement on three elements of the working group's programme: Proposed Guidelines for the Standardization of Undersea Feature Names for International Use, Undersea Features Name Proposal Form.

34. The convenor said that two further actions would be required before these items could be approved for international use, namely, approval by the IOC/IHO and by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names. The convenor also said that a question had arisen concerning possible conflict with similar tasks being undertaken by the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference (LOS). The Secretary reported that the LOS was also concerned with the definition of certain undersea terms that the working group had been dealing with. He informed the Group that, in communication with the Secretariat of the Law of the Sea Special Studies Section, he had learned that a legal study in this connection was being undertaken on behalf of the LOS. He had been told that no action should be taken at this time on defining "continental shelf" or any other feature relating to this term. After further discussion it was agreed that the Secretary would inform the Secretariat of LOS of the list of undersea feature definitions prepared by the working group. On the basis of further consultations with the Director of the Translation Division, Department of Conference Services, a staff member from her Department will take him the UNGEGN list of undersea feature definitions to present to the LOS Conference in Geneva in March 1979. The Secretary will also inform representatives of IOC/IHO of the interest of the LOS in this subject.

35. The convenor of the working group will continue work on the subject of undersea feature names and report progress at the Ninth Session of UNGEGN. He also asked members engaging in undersea naming (either in national or international waters) should inform him of their work so that he can provide pertinent facts to other interested parties. He also said that he would circulate the Third Edition of the UNGEGN Gazetteer of Undersea Features to members of the working group. This publication, which should be ready in 1979, is an example of national treatment of international undersea features.

36. With respect to maritime feature names the working group will co-operate with IHO, at the appropriate time, to work out common procedures and terms. Finally, the convenor called on representatives of maritime nations to continue efforts to reach agreement on names of shared bodies of water.

Automated data processing

37. Mr. Böhme presented his report on automated data processing. The following terms of reference were agreed by the Group of Experts for the Working Group: To investigate the management of information on data processing for the preparation of gazetteers, names lists or other formats among the members of the working group in order to present a report on the subject to the chairman of the UNGEGN and also to the Chief of the Cartography Section.

38. Members of the Working Group as well as others interested in the subject are asked to make bibliographies available to the convenor.

39. Brief statements on national programmes were given by Mr. Lewis, Mr. Komkov and Mr. Randall. It was observed by several experts that compilations by manual methods of small gazetteers could be produced more quickly and more cheaply than by the use of computer technology. Mr. Böhme gave a detailed report on progress in the Federal Republic of Germany, emphasizing the desirability to establish quantity limits to attain goals, the need to avoid duplication in programmes in national systems and the necessity to set up methods of data compatibility and verification. Mr. Böhme stated that his system has no restrictions on the use of diacritical marks. Mr. Breu suggested that Working Paper No. 50 should be distributed widely to persons working in the area of automated data processing of geographical name information.

40. Mr. Mavridis suggested that magnetic tapes should be prepared in such a way that they could be exchanged among countries.

Discussion on further conference
recommendations and other business

41. In implementation of resolution 4 of the Athens Conference^{5/} concerning a reliability statement on maps, the inclusion of a reliability assessment in the form of a diagram or foot-notes was considered a desirable objective. A model for a reliability statement applicable to maps of Guatemala was submitted to the Secretariat by Mr. Gall. Mr. Randall observed that there is often much difficulty in framing a general statement on reliability of the names appearing on a specific map. He also stated that this question was related to cartographic specifications. Mr. Lewis contrasted general statements on reliability with precise assessments of reliability and the problem of the use of one or the other in the margins of maps.

42. Mr. Breu referred to his Working Paper No. 5. It was agreed that the title should be shortened to Toponymic Guidelines for Cartography. The idea was generally approved. Mr. Randall made a plea to supplement them by the inclusion of a complete list of toponymic abbreviations found on maps. It was agreed that nations should consider the development of such guidelines for national and international use. Some experts stated they would provide them for their countries.

^{5/} See footnote 2.

Provisional agenda for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

43. The Group drew up the provisional agenda for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names as follows:

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Adoption of the rules of procedure
3. Election of officers
4. Report on credentials
5. Adoption of the agenda
6. Organization of work
7. 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
8. National standardization:
 - (a) Field collection of names
 - (b) Office treatment of names
 - (c) Treatment of names in multilingual areas
 - (d) Administrative structure of national names authorities
9. Training courses:
 - (a) Consideration of courses already held
 - (b) Programmes of future courses
 - (c) Prospective developments
10. Gazetteers:
 - (a) National gazetteers
 - (b) United Nations series of gazetteers
 - (c) Concise world gazetteer
 - (d) Other publications
11. Automated data processing:
 - (a) data collection procedures
 - (b) data elements required
 - (c) ADP systems
 - (d) Compatibility and structure of systems
12. Terminology in the standardization of geographical names
13. Exonyms:
 - (a) Categories and degree of use of exonyms
 - (b) Principles to be followed in the reduction of exonyms
 - (c) Provisional list of exonyms
14. Policies, procedures and co-operative arrangements for the naming of features beyond a single sovereignty:
 - (a) Features common to two or more nations
 - (b) Maritime features
 - (c) Undersea features
 - (d) Extraterrestrial features
15. Writing systems:
 - (a) Conversion of names from one writing system into another:
 - (i) Romanization
 - (ii) Conversion into non-Roman writing systems
 - (b) Writing of names from unwritten languages

16. International co-operation:
 - (a) United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
 - (b) Exchange of information:
 - (i) Reliability statement
 - (ii) Aids to pronunciation of names nationally standardized in non-phonemic writing
 - (iii) Scope and development of procedures in exchange of information
 - (c) Divisional and interdivisional meetings and programmes
 - (d) Technical assistance
 - (e) Co-operation with international organizations
 - (f) Co-operation with public information media
17. Report of the Conference

Provisional agenda for the ninth session of the
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

44. The Group drew up the provisional agenda for the ninth session as follows:

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Review of divisional composition
4. Report by the Chairman
5. Report by the Secretary
6. Reports by the Divisions
7. Review of recommendations concerning Aims and Functions
8. Report of activity by the working groups since the eighth session
 - (a) undersea and maritime features
 - (b) extraterrestrial topographic features
 - (c) single romanization system
 - (d) training courses
 - (e) international gazetteers
 - (f) list of country names
 - (g) automated data processing
9. Toponymic Guidelines
10. Discussion on Working Groups and further conference recommendations of general importance
11. Review of the Provisional Agenda for the fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
12. Provisional agenda for the tenth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
13. Other business
14. Adoption of the report.

Plans of Action before the Fourth Conference

45. It was agreed that each division and working group would carry on its work with special regard to the resolutions of the Third Conference and the results of the eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. This would be done for the most part by divisional meetings and by correspondence. The Chairman of the UNGEGN would communicate with members of the Group and with the UN Cartography Section by means of circular letters. These would be sent only to divisional representatives, whose responsibility it would be to forward copies to all national experts (and especially to convenors of working groups) within their division, as well as surveying and mapping agencies.

46. The convenors of working groups would also carry out their work by means of circular letters to their members. Copies of all circular letters should be sent to the Chairman of the UNGEGN. It would also be helpful to the Chairman if he could receive copies of any correspondence by Experts which had a direct bearing on the work of the Group.

47. The Chairman of the UNGEGN would be responsible for forwarding to divisional representatives any information on names standardization received through the UN Cartography Section.

48. The Secretary stressed the absolute necessity of having working papers for the ninth session submitted to the Cartography Section at least three weeks before the starting date of the session. Only in this way would it be possible for experts to have papers in hand at the beginning of the session for study and it would help expedite the work of the Group as a whole.

Annexes

- 1 List of participants
- 2 List of working papers
- 3 Modus operandi of the United Nations Group
of Experts on Geographical Names

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ABSENT

Asia South-East Division

ABSENT

Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)

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CANADA

List of Working Papers

- Working Paper No. 1 Withdrawn (see Working Paper No. 27)
- Working Paper No. 2 Thoughts on the future of standardization of geographical names within the framework of the United Nations. Agenda item 9 (submitted by J. Breu, Austria)
- Working Paper No. 3 Up-dating of the aims, functions and modus operandi of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. Agenda item 9 (submitted by F. Fall, Guatemala)
- Working Paper No. 4 Comité directeur de l'ISO/TC 46 - Reunion de Berlin (Nov. 1978) Rapport du secrétariat ISO/TC 46/SC 2: Conversion des langues écrites Agenda item 4 (submitted by J. Breu, Austria)
- Working Paper No. 5 Toponymic guidelines for international cartography. Agenda item 10(d) (submitted by J. Breu, Austria)
- Working Paper No. 6 Working Paper submitted by J.B. Wekker, Suriname. Agenda items 6 and 9 (submitted by J. Wekker, Suriname)
- Working Paper No. 7 United Nations Specialist on geographical Names. Agenda item 6. (submitted by F. Gall, Guatemala)
- Working Paper No. 8 The present state of automation in the compilation of Japanese geographical names. Agenda item 10(h) (submitted by T. Kanakubo, Japan)
- Working Paper No. 9 Report from the Asia East Division Agenda item 6 (submitted by Mr. T. Kanakubo, Japan)
- Working Paper No. 10 Technical explanations on spelling in the "Atlas of the People's Republic of China in the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" Agenda item 10(d). (submitted by China)
- Working Paper No. 11 Report on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names in China. Agenda item 6. (submitted by China)
- Working Paper No. 12 Resolution of the 13th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Cracow, 21-25 August 1978. Agenda item 4. (submitted by J. Breu, Austria)
- Working Paper No. 13 United Kingdom proposal for action at the forthcoming meeting of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Agenda item 9 (submitted by United Kingdom Division)

- Working Paper No. 14 Report by the Chairman. Agenda item 4
(submitted by J. Breu, Austria)
- Working Paper No. 15 Report of progress concerning the
standardization of geographical names in
the German Democratic Republic covering
the period since the third UN Conference
on the Standardization of Geographical
Names in 1977. Agenda item 6 (submitted
by the Ministry of the Interior of the
German Democratic Republic)
- Working Paper No. 16 List of names of oceans, arms of oceans
and undersea reliefs. Agenda item 8
(submitted by Ministry of the Interior
of the German Democratic Republic)
- Working Paper No. 17 The spelling of geographical names of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and
the People's Republic of Bulgaria in the
German Democratic Republic. Agenda item 11
(submitted by Ministry of the Interior of
the German Democratic Republic)
- Working Paper No. 18 Geographical names on the Baltic sea coast of
the German Democratic Republic.
Agenda item 11 (submitted by Ministry of the
Interior of the German Democratic Republic)
- Working Paper No. 19 Report of Africa West Division
Agenda item 6 (submitted by Liberia)
- Working Paper No. 20 Withdrawn
- Working Paper No. 21 Report of the United States of America and
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- Working Paper No. 22 Standardization of geographical names in
Greece. Agenda item 6 (submitted by Greece)
- Working Paper No. 23 Concerning the extraterrestrial topographic
feature names. Agenda item 10(d)
(submitted by A.M. Komkov, USSR)
- Working Paper No. 24 An automated information retrieval system for
geographical names (toponyms)
Agenda item 10(h) (submitted by USSR)
- Working Paper No. 25 Standardization of geographical names in the
USSR in the period between the 7th and 8th
sessions of the UN Group of Experts on
Geographical Names (1977-1978).
Agenda item 6 (submitted by A.M. Komkov, USSR)
- Working Paper No. 26 List of Exonyms of the German Democratic
Republic. Agenda item 7
(submitted by Ministry of the Interior of the
German Democratic Republic)

- Working Paper No. 27 Report of the United Nations Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Features Agenda item 10(b) (submitted by R.R. Randall, USA)
- Working Paper No. 28 Activities of the USA in Geographical Names since the 7th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Agenda item 6 (submitted by R.R. Randall, USA)
- Working Paper No. 29 United States proposal concerning the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. Agenda item 9 (submitted by R.R. Randall, USA)
- Working Paper No. 30 Report by the United Kingdom Division Agenda item 6 (submitted by H.A.G. Lewis, UK)
- Working Paper No. 31 Report by the United Kingdom Division Agenda item 6 (submitted by United Kingdom)
- Working Paper No. 32 Sobre la posible romanización única de las diversas escrituras mundiales. Agenda item 10(d) (presentado por el Gobierno de España)
- Working Paper No. 33 State of work in the Working Group on a single romanization system for each non-roman writing system. Agenda item 10(d) (submitted by E. Földi, Hungary)
- Working Paper No. 34 Rapport d'activité de la division romano-hellénique. Agenda item 6 (submitted by Jean Ramondcu, France)
- Working Paper No. 35 Proposal for a working programme and layout of the United Nations Concise Gazetteer of the World. Agenda item 10(f) (submitted by Dutch and German Speaking Division)
- Working Paper No. 35/Add.1 Withdrawn
- Working Paper No. 36 List of country names and derivations as well as of capitals. Agenda item 10(g) (submitted by Dutch and German Speaking Division)
- Working Paper No. 37 Geographical names at the coast of the Federal Republic of Germany. Agenda item 10(g) (submitted by E. Meynen, Federal Republic of Germany)
- Working Paper No. 38 ISO Annual sub-report for 1978, conversion of scripts. Agenda item 10(d) (submitted by J. Breu, Austria)

- Working Paper No. 39 Report by the Chairman of the Working Group on Gazetteers. Agenda item 10(f) (submitted by H.A.G. Lewis, U.K.)
- Working Paper No. 40 Statement by Mr. Tazi on "Exonyms" at the eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Agenda item 7 (submitted by A. Tazi, Morocco)
- Working Paper No. 41 Names of the capitals of states. Agenda item 11 (submitted by Ministry of the Interior of the German Democratic Republic)
- Working Paper No. 42 Working Group on Training Courses Agenda item 10(e) (submitted by F. Ormeling, Netherlands)
- Working Paper No. 43 Documents de Travail de la Division Afrique Centrale. Agenda item 6 (submitted by M. Bizenga, Congo)
- Working Paper No. 44 The activities of Asia, South-West, (other than Arabic) Division. Agenda item 6 (submitted by S. Erinç, Turkey)
- Working Paper No. 45 Report of the Federal Republic of Germany Agenda item 6 (submitted by E. Meynen, Federal Republic of Germany)
- Working Paper No. 46 Report of Africa East Division. Agenda item 6 (submitted by W.J. Absaloms, Kenya)
- Working Paper No. 47 Report by Nigeria. Agenda item 6 (submitted by Nigeria)
- Working Paper No. 48 Rapport du groupe de travail pour la liste des noms des pays du monde Agenda item 10(g) (submitted by J. Ramondou, France)
- Working Paper No. 48/Add.1 Liste des noms des pays du monde Agenda item 10(g) (submitted by J. Ramondou, France)
- Working Paper No. 49 Special study group appointed to consider a proposal for an interim concise gazetteer of the world. Agenda item 10(f) (submitted by E. Meynen, Federal Republic of Germany)
- Working Paper No. 50 Instruction for the data capture for the preparation of the "Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany" by A.D.P. Agenda item 10(h) (submitted by Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie, Frankfurt am Main Federal Republic of Germany)

- Working Paper No. 51 Paper submitted by Sirri Erinç (Turkey)
Agenda item 6
- Working Paper No. 52 Working paper on the standardization of
division names. Agenda item 6
(submitted by Sirri Erinç, Turkey)
- Working Paper No. 53 Glosario de cierta terminología de trabajo
usada en la normalización de nombres geogra-
ficos -- Primer Edición. Agenda item 10(a)
(submitted by Group on Definitions)
- Working Paper No. 54 Report of activities. Agenda item 6
(submitted by the Government of Zambia)
- Working Paper No. 55 Transliteration of the Arabic Alphabet
Agenda item 10(e)
(submitted by A. Tazi, Morocco)
- Working Paper No. 56 Notes on the Geographical Conference of
Islamic States. Agenda item 10(e)
(submitted by A. Tazi, Morocco)
- Working Paper No. 57 Report of the Chairman of the Latin America
Division. Agenda item 6
(submitted by F. Gall, Guatemala)

Modus Operandi of the United Nations Group
of Experts on Geographical Names

1. By Economic and Social Council resolution 1314 (XLIV) of 31 May 1968 and later decisions, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names has been charged with providing for continuous co-ordination and liaison among countries to further the standardization of geographical names and to encourage the formation and the work of linguistic/geographical divisions.

2. In order to achieve the results required, on both the national and the international levels, as specified in the resolutions adopted at United Nations conferences, the linguistic/geographical divisions listed below were formed:

Africa Central Division
Africa East Division
Africa West Division
Arabic Division
Asia East Division (other than China)
Asia South-East Division
Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)
China Division
Dutch and German-speaking Division
East Central and South-East Europe Division
India Division
Latin America Division
Norden Division
Romano-Hellenic Division
Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
United Kingdom Division
United States of America/Canada Division

3. Membership of Divisions

(a) A country not already a member of a division will decide for itself to which division it wishes to belong.

(b) A country may also participate in the activities of divisions other than its own, provided the nature of their participation is not such as to change the linguistic/geographical character of the division.

4. (a) The Group of Experts is composed of the national experts sent by member countries of the seventeen divisions.

(b) Each division will select, by methods of its own choosing, an expert to represent the division as a whole at the meetings of the Group of Experts and to speak on divisional matters at the U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

5. The divisional representative will be responsible for ensuring that the work of the Group of Experts and its potential for technical assistance are brought to the attention of the individual nations within his division and for reporting to the United Nations any special problems within his division.

6. The divisional representative is expected to stimulate the standardization work within his division by all appropriate means, e.g., correspondence (including national surveying and mapping agencies), divisional meetings, preferable at least one in 5 years, etc.
7. In order to guarantee the continuity of the work, each division having more than one sovereign state should select an alternate representative; the divisional representative will act in close contact with his alternate.
8. Governments may appoint national experts to attend meetings of the Group of Experts on the understanding that the said national experts will have the right of voice and that their attendance will be co-ordinated with the expert who represents the division in question and who will vote on behalf of the division. The Group of Experts would welcome participation by countries that have not yet participated in conferences or Group of Experts sessions, especially when their language or script is to be taken under consideration.
9. The Group of Experts will elect the following officers: a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Rapporteur.
10. The elections mentioned under item 9 will be held at the termination of the respective United Nations conference on the standardization of geographical names. The officers will serve until their successors are elected at the next conference. The Cartography Section of the United Nations will provide the secretariat for the Group.
11. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman will assume the office of the Chairman. In the absence of the Vice-Chairman or the Rapporteur, the Chairman will appoint persons to complete the unexpired portion of their terms of office.
12. The Group of Experts will meet in accordance with the precedents set by the Economic and Social Council.
13. Agreement on technical matters will be achieved by consensus and not by voting. Voting will be reserved for matters solely of a procedural character.
14. Questions implicating national sovereignty outside the scope of standardization of geographical names are excluded from discussion in the group.
15. Persons with special knowledge of particular aspects of the standardization of geographical names may be invited to place before the Group of Experts their specialized knowledge.
16. During the meetings of the Group of Experts, special working groups may be appointed to deal with particular issues. Upon completion of the appointed task, the working group will be automatically disbanded unless especially directed to remain in being.
17. Working groups of specialists may be formed by the Group of Experts under the chairmanship of one of the national experts referred to in paragraph 8 to study particular problems between meetings of the Group of Experts.

18. In preparation of the meetings of the Group of Experts the Chairman can ask for special papers on particular topics.
19. The working languages of the United Nations selected for the conduct of business during the meetings of the Group of Experts will depend upon the nature of the representation and the facilities available at the time.
20. The Group of Experts will maintain communication among themselves. The Chairman will be responsible for communicating the results of their main activities to the Cartography Section of the United Nations and to the members and officers of the Group.
21. Apart from communication through formal channels, experts representing divisions and also national representatives will be notified by informal means of the transactions, programmes and requirements of the Group of Experts.
22. The Group of Experts will encourage countries to supply information and assistance to other nations within or outside their respective divisions and also to the United Nations Cartography Section.