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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION ON CARTOGRAPHY

REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

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FOREWORD

1. The Group of Experts on Geographical Names was set up by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in pursuance of resolution 715 A (XXVII) of the Economic and Social Council. Under this resolution, it had the following terms of reference:

"(i) To consider the technical problems of domestic standardization of geographical names, including the preparation of a statement of the general and regional problems involved, and to prepare draft recommendations for the procedures, principally linguistic, that might be followed in the standardization of their own names by individual countries;

"(ii) To report to the Council at an appropriate session, in the light of its discussion on the above points, on the desirability of holding an international conference on this subject and of the sponsoring of working groups based on common linguistic systems."

2. This report was prepared during the meeting held by the Group at the Headquarters of the United Nations, New York, from 20 June to 1 July 1960 with Dr. M.F. Burrill as chairman and Mr. A. Pégorier as rapporteur.

3. The Group discussed the various questions before it on the basis of experience gained by the experts in their participation in their respective national work in standardization of geographical names and in international co-operation in onomastic science. The Group studied the draft programme for achieving international uniformity in the Writing of Geographical Names, prepared by the Secretary-General, and the comments and information received from Governments.^{1/} Special attention was paid to these parts dealing with domestic standardization. In its deliberations, account has been taken of the work achieved by the United Nations specialized agencies - the Universal Postal Union and the International Telecommunication Union - by regional inter-governmental organizations - the Pan American Institute of Geography and History and the Committee on Technical Co-operation of Africa South of the Sahara - by the two

^{1/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-seventh Session, Annexes, Agenda item 6, document E/3209, para. 11 and Annex 1, and E/3209/Add.1.

United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Asia and the Far East, and by international scientific organizations, such as the International Committee on Onomastic Sciences and the International Organization for Standardization. The Group also benefited from information supplied by observers and the Secretariat during its debates.

The Report is composed of four chapters:

Chapter I. Need for standardization

Chapter II. Problems of domestic standardization of geographical names

Chapter III. Recommendations on domestic standardization of geographical names

Chapter IV. Question of calling an international conference and sponsoring of working groups

4. It has been apparent from the comments submitted by countries to the Secretary-General and indeed from the discussions of the Group that one of the first difficulties to be overcome is that of semantics. The Group therefore proceeded to clarify for purposes of discussion the meanings that are or might be attached to terms expected to be used. A list of these terms is annexed to this document (Annex I).

5. It may be useful at this point to refer to two of these - the term "domestic standardization", which was accepted for use in the sense of "the process whereby the authorized agency fixes a name or names on behalf of the users thereof, whether such use becomes compulsory or not" and the term "geographical name" which was accepted to refer to "a proper name, consisting of one or more words, used to designate an individual geographic entity, such as a mountain, river or city; the expression embraces both feature names and place names".

6. A list of national authorities dealing with geographical names in various countries is annexed to this report (Annex II) in order to facilitate correspondence between them. Omissions or errors should be reported to the United Nations Secretariat.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

1. Members of the Group:

Dr. Meredith F. BURRILL	(United States of America), Chairman
Mr. André PEGORIER	(France), Rapporteur
Mr. P.J.M. GEELAN	(United Kingdom)
Professor Saïd NAFISI	(Iran)
Mr. Alfredo OBIOLS	(Guatemala)
Professor Mo TSAO	(China)

2. Observers:

(a) Governments

Mr. Omar SHARAF	(United Arab Republic)
Dr. Abcu Bakr Abdel GHAFAR	(United Arab Republic)
Dr. Albrecht GRUSSNER	(Federal Republic of Germany)

(b) National Agency

Mr. John G. MUTZIGER	(United States Board of Geographic Names)
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3. Secretariat:

Mr. Roberto M. HEURTEMATTE	Commissioner for Technical Assistance, Representing the Secretary-General
Dr. Louis DELANNEY	
Dr. Te-Lou TCHANG	Secretary of the Group

CHAPTER I

Need for Standardization

7. The Group fully agrees with the comments of the Government of Belgium^{2/} in reply to the Secretary-General's inquiry, that "standardization from the geographical point of view appears not only desirable, but even necessary". The need for rapid development of countries has led Governments to undertake large projects for which the planning requires accurate maps, and statistical and demographic data. The Group is aware of the fact that lack of standardized names has caused difficulty in the work of map makers, statisticians, census takers and others, leading to undue and harmful delay and mistakes. The effects of confusion in geographical names is felt not only by geographers and those concerned with national and international affairs, since geographical names constitute one of the required elements of identification in administrative and legal documents, but also by individuals, since people all over the world now have occasion to refer to, identify, or even go to a place that their ancestors either never heard of or considered so far away and inaccessible as to be of no concern.

8. Many have experienced the discrepancy and confusion existing in place names in various editions of maps of an area; even on one map or in one document. Such a discrepancy has often resulted in unnecessary research, wasting both money and time.

9. To fulfil their immediate need, many agencies and private publishers have compiled name lists for their own use. Such temporary measures may have been unavoidable especially in countries in which no national names authorities operate; but the unco-ordinated efforts of many bodies would also complicate further the national effort in standardization. The Group is convinced that the sooner the appropriate guiding procedures by national standardization of geographical names are established, the easier and the quicker the objective of uniformity in the writing of geographic names can be achieved. Along a similar line, the Group stressed the need for national names authorities to bear in mind international standardization problems when deciding guiding principles for national standardization.

^{2/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-seventh Session, Annexes, agenda item 6, Document E/3209, Annex 1.

10. The Group noted with interest that the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 715 A (XXVII) has requested the Secretary-General (a) to provide encouragement and guidance to those nations which have no national organization for the standardization and co-ordination of geographical names to establish such an organization and to produce national gazetteers at an early date, and (b) to take the necessary steps to ensure the central clearing house functions for geographical names. The Group was informed that considerable material has already been gathered and that a bibliography on gazetteers is being published in the United Nations Cartographic Bulletin "World Cartography" Volume VI.^{3/}
11. The Group also noted that some beginnings of international standardization have, in fact, already been made.

^{3/} United Nations publications, Sales No. 60.I.10. See pages 57-69.

CHAPTER II

Problems of Domestic Standardization of Geographical Names

12. The following problems are recognized by the Group to be important and wide-spread. They are set forth here as an aid to their recognition at the earliest possible stage in a national standardization programme. The Group wishes to state explicitly that the list of problems set out in this chapter is recognized not to be complete or exhaustive. Others will surely come to light as programmes go forward in many countries.

(a) How to determine the actual name and its correct writing? What weight should be given to published usage, local usage established by field investigation or historical evidence under various conditions?

The methods used in assembling the evidence of name usage have an important bearing on the quality of the standardization work. Different methods may be called for in different countries, or even for different classes of names in the same country, depending upon the nature of the names and the competence of personnel, and the extent to which names of administrative entities are fixed by law or other official action. In any case, it is not easy in any country to train people to assemble evidence on geographical names with full competence and objectivity. When the evidence is uncertain as to the correct form or writing, especially when forms in local use are at variance with the forms used on maps or in historical documents, the decision may be difficult unless broad guiding principles are stated and followed.

(b) How to determine the extent of physical features to which names properly apply, such as the limits of a mountain range or of a bay? Again, what weight should be given to published usage, local usage or historical evidence?

For standard names to be applied in a uniform way by all users, the extent of the physical feature to which the name refers must be as explicit as possible. This sometimes is difficult but an approach to it can be made and it is useful to anticipate the difficulties. This problem is closely related to (a) above.

(c) How to select one name from several having some basis for acceptance?

It will often happen that a geographic entity will have more than one name. Sometimes each of the different names will have considerable support in usage. Here, again, guiding principles can be most helpful.

(d) What to do about (1) names for parts of natural features that have names in their entirety, and (2) names for large features for which only parts have names?

When names are proposed for, or selection must be made from several names for, parts of a feature that has an over-all name, the question will arise as to the extent to which such names should be treated systematically. This problem arises frequently with watercourses. In some cases the local people have names for parts of large features, but only for those parts with which they are familiar, and not for the whole feature with which they are not familiar or to which they have little need to refer. A name for the entire feature may become needed as development of the country proceeds, as in the case of projects involving river basins.

(e) How to treat existing names from unwritten languages or from minority languages (written or unwritten) or from dialects and regional forms of the principal languages?

Although some countries have begun to work on these problems, much remains to be done. Each country should solve these problems quickly and satisfactorily, preferably in concert with other countries whose experience can be exploited to advantage.

(f) How to choose between syntactical or grammatical variations of the same name?

For names in languages like Greek where variation such as *Ákra Málta*, *Ákra tis Máltas* and *Akra Máltas* occurs on different official or semi-official sources, decision on one form or other, name by name, should be made if either domestic or international standardization is to be achieved, since examples are known in many countries of apparently parallel forms that actually distinguish two entities.

(g) What to do about optional parts of certain names which serve as part of titles or to distinguish places of the same name?

The occurrence of variation of forms such as Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Rothenburg on different sources will make standardization difficult unless either such variation is eliminated or the conditions stated expressly under which the optional name element shall be or shall not be used.

(h) What criteria should be established for retention of established names vs. substitution of new names?

There will arise from time to time in any country situations in which a choice must be made between retaining a well-known name and substituting a new or altered name. An established name performs the function of a geographic name more efficiently than a new one until the new one becomes accepted. On the other hand an established name that is duplicated or is otherwise confusing may be less efficient than a new one that does not have these faults. If the choice is based on relative efficiency it will generally be easy; otherwise, it may be difficult to make and to justify.

(i) How much control of commemorative naming should be exercised, and in what manner?

If a geographic nomenclature is to become more or less orderly, new naming has to conform to a pattern. Some degree of control is generally possible, and, if shown to be in the public interest, is generally acceptable. The emotional storms that sometimes accompany proposed new naming involving the names of living persons can generally be avoided by an explicit statement of policy and adherence to it without exception.

(j) What to do about duplication of names, and when is it excessive?

Complete avoidance of duplication is an ideal that is not easily attained. Use of the same name for different populated places occurs in every country and in some countries excessively. This is also true for names of other geographic entities. Some kinds of names such as those with a descriptive term as the specific element of a natural feature name (e.g. Red Hill) are repeated over and over. The degree to which duplication causes confusion, and should therefore be eliminated or reduced, depends in part on the nearness of the named entities to one another and the frequency with which

the names are used by persons who live at some distance from the entities. It follows that a given instance of duplication will become more and more troublesome as people widen their knowledge of other than local areas and increase their mobility.

On the other hand, wholesale changing of the names concerned to achieve the ideal is not likely to meet with popular enthusiasm.

(k) How to choose between systematic rendition vs. retention of forms in being, when they differ?

In treating a given class of names or names in a given region in a country there may be considerable advantage in systematic rendition of those names, but the forms resulting are likely to differ in some, perhaps many, cases from forms established in use. No formula for solution of this problem is suggested for universal use, and the extent to which a formula can be applied in a single country will probably vary. It is, however, a problem to which early attention might well be given in a country where the written forms of names are not already well fixed.

(l) Shall printing form for names be made uniform and shall it agree with printing form for the language as a whole?

In some languages, as in German, the printing form for ordinary running text is practically uniform, the printing form for geographic names is not regular (cf. Müller Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch: Gross Heide located in Kreis Lüchow - Dannenberg but Grossheide located in Kreis Norden). Sometimes unification of two words reflects different meaning or pronunciation.

(m) What principles or policies can be adopted to reduce subjectivity in deciding names?

The complete avoidance of subjectivity in standardizing names is probably not possible. However, to the extent that it can be reduced the process will go on more easily and the resulting standard names will have more stability. Principles and policies clearly stated and demonstrably in the public interest are perhaps the most effective step toward objectivity.

(n) How to bring about local acceptance of nationally standardized names?

Unless the standardized names are accepted locally there will be continued and troublesome confusion. The procedures that will be effective may vary with the attitude of peoples toward independent thinking and the function of their national government, and with the degree of literacy. Since attempts to modify local usage on naming practice by edict have generally failed, it appears that people will not ordinarily give up a geographic name nor accept a new one without reasons that they consider valid.

(o) How to determine and express the location of geographic entities to a precision necessary for all needs?

Although in some areas precise location by geographical co-ordinates must wait for better geodetic control, minimum requirements will have to be set.

(p) How to set up a standard designating procedure which will define geographic entities consistently and unambiguously?

This is a far more complicated problem than is generally appreciated.

A full solution may be found, partial solution certainly. The first step is to recognize the problem. Complications arise from several directions. One is the bedeutungsfeld (field of meaning) of common nouns ordinarily used for geographic features, which appears to be wider than anyone had suspected.

Another is the difference in the way people categorize nature and experience, even within a country. Features named and referred to in communication in one area may not be recognized as entities in another area, even if the same phenomena occur there. For instances: Montagnette, signifying a pasture on intermediate slopes in the Alps, is a concept not known in all of France and Hill, in the sense of a steep place in a road, is a concept employed in parts of the United States but not everywhere. It is not easy for anyone to accept the fact that words having a clear meaning to him may have another meaning or no meaning to someone else. However, once this is accepted the way is open to discovery of whole new sets of facts about the toponymy of a country and to understanding of the phenomena involved. Research on this problem will be slow and difficult, but it will be rewarding. For practical and immediate solution consideration may be given to explicit definition of standard designator terms. (Note also (q) 1.)

There was general agreement on the need for glossaries of geographic terms that will include and make clear the varied meanings of geographic terms used in names, and the varied terms used for the same things. There would also be value in taking account of geographic "neologisms".

(q) 1. How to write the names of all entities so that generic terms are distinguishable from designations accompanying names?

Most names of physical features, though not all, contain a generic element (e.g. river, hill, etc.) that indicate the nature of the named entity. Some of those terms may be commonly omitted in familiar reference, others never or seldom omitted. Since, as noted under (p) the generic term itself may not be unambiguous and some names (e.g. Die Eifel, or Pelvoux) do not contain a generic element, it is necessary to indicate in the standardizing process what kind of entity is being named. For unambiguous use, it will be necessary to include the generic element in the name and to indicate whether it is commonly omitted.

2. How to write the names of all entities so that abbreviations are unambiguous?

E.g., M. Aleksandrovskaya is ambiguous if it can be interpreted as either Malaya Aleksandrovskaya or Malo-Aleksandrovskaya; N. Lésvos if either Nísvos Lésvos or Nomós Lésvos could be understood.

(r) How to ensure that definite articles be included in names in which they are essential for both domestic and international use?

Name sources for some languages in which a definite article may or may not be an integral part of a name are often very inconsistent. For such languages as Arabic, Norwegian, Albanian and Romanian the presence or non-presence of the definite article should be determined and stated for each name.

(s) How to document name spellings fully in the Arabic alphabet area?

Arabic alphabet names, as they are usually printed without vowel points, tashdids, hamzels, and sukuns, and being mostly out of context, are often ambiguous to the speaker of the language concerned and always a problem to speakers of other languages. It will continue to be a problem until names standardization in Arabic alphabet areas regularly provides complete written

forms for all place names. It is also in point that, since modern practice has come to require the rendition of Arabic, Persian and other Arabic alphabet names in terms of standard language forms, such documentation is a prerequisite to international acceptance of nationally standardized names. Similar problems may arise with Siamese, Amharic and other languages.

(t) How to determine the reading of names in ideographic script?

Since the reading of Sino-Japanese and Sino-Korean characters is a matter of special knowledge name by name, the names will not be fully intelligible to all until names standardization regularly provides kana spellings for Japanese names and hangul spellings for Korean names.

(u) How to provide such useful information on names as gender, position of stress and pronunciation?

In many languages names printed or listed without indication of such features as gender, stress and pronunciation cannot be used consistently and intelligibly either at home or abroad.

(v) How to set up a name-standardizing body in a country that does not have one?

There is a wide variation in the status of such bodies, and in their composition and procedures. It would seem to be more important that the organization fit the general pattern of administrative structure of a country than that the authorities in various countries be similar. There may, however, be some suggestions that are applicable to all.

CHAPTER III

Recommendations on Problems of Domestic Standardization of
Geographical Names

13. The following recommendations relative to problems raised in Chapter II are based on (1) the collective experience of the group, (2) the comments on the draft programme forwarded by Governments to the Secretary-General, and (3) geographic and linguistic analyses of the problems.

14. The Group accepts the fact that while these recommendations are felt to be sound it is probable that some at least can usefully be refined as more countries contribute to fuller understanding of the problems. The discussions have emphasized that no one country by itself can readily expect to comprehend fully all the toponymic phenomena that occur within its borders without comparison with the same sets of phenomena elsewhere. The Group feels it useful to emphasize that international standardization must be a partnership enterprise over a considerable period. Much more will probably depend upon the quality of the technical personnel employed by the various countries than on the size of the countries. To the extent also that countries can encourage young workers in this field the long-term solution will be more satisfactory; because in the final analysis the detailed work can only be done by persons who are nationals of, and know the country concerned.

15. The Group wishes to make clear that it is recognized that the applicability of some of the recommendations of the report will be quite different in different countries. Some recommendations are pertinent to countries where large numbers of names are yet unwritten would not be applicable in countries when this is not true. Other recommendations pertinent to countries where many names, though written, are not fixed in a single form would not apply in countries where the written forms are largely fixed. It is recognized that the problem of the initial establishment of a written geographical nomenclature may be quite different from the problems of refining a nomenclature. Many of the recommendations, however, are believed to be widely, if not universally, applicable.^{4/}

^{4/} Letters in parentheses at the end of a recommendation refer to the corresponding statement of problems in Chapter II.

Recommendation I

As an initial step in international standardization, countries that have not begun to exercise their prerogative of standardizing their own names are urged to do so. This function should be carried out by a national names authority. The hierarchical place of such authority should be consonant with the governmental structure in each country. The composition and procedures of such a body should be such as to give the greatest chance of success in a name standardization programme appropriate for that country.

While the form, status, function and procedures of name standardizing bodies may vary considerably, in any case it is desirable that:

- (1) the authority of the standardizing body should be clearly stated;
- (2) the standardizing body should deal with name policy as well as with individual names;
- (3) provision be made for consideration of the effects of actions on government agencies, private organizations and other groups, and for reconciliation of their interests, as far as possible, with long-range interests of the country as a whole;
- (4) record keeping and publication procedures be such as to make standardized names available as promptly and widely as possible;
- (5) continuity of the standardizing body be provided for.

It is recommended that names authorities publish standardized names in gazetteer form as well as on maps since much information necessary for the proper understanding and interpretation of names cannot be included readily on maps.

The methods of determining the actual name and its correct writing should be adapted in each country to the combination of name problems requiring solution and the volume of names that the country proposes to standardize.

It is recommended that for each name which is to be standardized there should be as complete a research as possible to provide information on the following points:

1. Spelling on old maps
2. Spelling on existing modern maps
3. Spelling in cadastral documents and in land registers
4. Written and spoken form of the name, and its meaning, according to the local inhabitants.

/...

For point 4 it will be useful to provide for the recording of the name in a precise phonetic notation or, if possible, on tape.

It is recommended that the character and extent of the feature named should be determined as accurately as possible.

The personnel employed in the initial processes of assembling information on names should have training adequate to recognize and deal with the linguistic and geographic phenomena that they are likely to encounter. (a,v)

It is important to take into account the problem presented by cartography (i.e. the existence of maps already in use and the constant production of new maps for a multitude of purposes), but a proper treatment of names requires a specialized knowledge. There must be a close liaison between national cartographic agencies and national names authorities in their parallel programmes.

Recommendation II

Actions by national names authorities will be more readily agreed upon, more easily accepted, and less subject to change if they are based on broad general principles clearly stated and made widely known. These may be either generalizations about toponymic phenomena or statements of courses of action, or both. The principles could usefully relate to the relative weight to be given different sources of names or written forms, or to different kinds of usage, such as local spoken usage, usage in current published books, maps or current official records, or usage in published historical material. It will facilitate determination of the actual name when usage differs, and promote objectiveness in making determinations of this and other kinds if principal reliance can be placed upon principles.

If it is agreed that the most important result of geographic name standardization is the efficiency with which the names identify and facilitate reference to individual geographic entities, it will be easier to formulate pertinent principles and to make decisions wisely on many matters such as retention of existing names versus replacement by new ones. Furthermore, the fact that actions are taken on this basis will go far toward wide acceptance of them. National names authorities will find it useful to formulate such general principles as early as possible, to re-examine and refine them from time to time in the light of observed effects of applying them, and to add new ones as new knowledge is acquired.

If frequent exceptions have to be made, it will probably be useful to restate the principles. However, much of the value of a guiding principle comes from following it as uniformly and for as long a time as possible. The principles should, therefore, be as sound as possible in the beginning. It will contribute to such soundness if principles reflect, or are based upon, observed or deduced habits and attitudes of the people towards geographic names, and upon analyses of toponymic phenomena.

In countries where most names have written forms established in usage, the principles will probably be derived in considerable part from study of the written forms. Such study of written forms as has been done in other countries should be placed at the disposal of the national names authority, since it is possible that studies of names by persons in other countries may draw attention to, or suggest solutions for, problems that may have been regarded as sources of inconvenience but not as capable of solution.

In countries where many names have no written forms, or none that are fixed, the first statements of principles will perhaps be limited to those relating to the recording and editing processes, or to the rendition of such names in terms of a national or principal language. (a,c,h)

Recommendation III

In any country where considerable numbers of names are yet to be standardized in their written forms, careful consideration should be given to the advantages of systematic treatment in producing standard forms more cheaply, quickly and uniformly. Since retention of certain well established names will be preferred in many instances, the national names authority should formulate general principles governing such exceptions to systematic treatment. This may clarify the extent to which systematic treatment is applicable. Systematic treatment should not operate to suppress significant elements in the names treated. Nor should standardization be based on translation unless that translation is in local use. (k)

Recommendation IV

A national names authority should take cognizance of confusion arising from use of the same name for several entities of the same kind, and take appropriate measures to reduce duplication that now causes confusion or is likely to do so. Such measures might take the form of replacement of some of the duplicated names by others acceptable locally, or the addition of something to some of the duplicated names to make them different.

Formulation of a statement of the degree of duplication that is considered tolerable may shed light on the problem and assist in its solution. (j)

Recommendation V

Many names may already have been fixed by law but it is likely that even in this field, the process of assigning new names or of changing existing names should provide for consultation with the national names authority as well as for a report by the national names authority on the probable consequences of the proposed new naming or change. (a,c,e,h,v)

Recommendation VI

When it is considered advisable by the name-standardizing authority (1) to approve for standard use a name or spelling that differs from that in local usage, or (2) to select standard names or spellings from among alternatives, the general public or those most affected should be consulted, or informed of intention in advance, and given an opportunity to comment. This will increase acceptability and decrease likelihood of error. (n)

Recommendation VII

It is recommended that if they have not already done so, countries of complicated ethnic and linguistic constitution consider and attempt to solve the problems brought about by the existence within their boundaries of names from unwritten languages, or from minority languages (written or unwritten) or from dialects of the principal languages. Since the solution of these problems may be exceedingly difficult it is suggested that such countries can work together with, and profit from, the experience of other nations with similar problems to bring about solutions satisfactory for their own needs.

/...

It may be useful for countries to distinguish between minority languages spoken by people living en bloc and those spoken by people dispersed among speakers of the principal language.

For the treatment of names from unwritten languages two stages are necessary. First, for recording names from oral evidence, one can develop an unambiguous phonemic notation for each language applying to that language alone. Alternatively, where there is in use a phonetic alphabet adaptable to a number of unwritten languages, e.g. the International African Alphabet, it may be advantageous to apply it. Second, one can write the names in final form by means of regular correspondence established between that phonemic notation or phonetic alphabet and the writing system of the principal language of the country concerned.

If a minority language is written in the same writing system as the principal language with minor modifications, it is recommended that the modifications be retained in standardizing the minority language names.

If a minority language is written in a writing system different from that of the principal language, it is recommended that the names be rendered systematically from the minority language by transliteration or transcription as appropriate. (e)

Recommendation VIII

In standardizing the names of physical features, national names authorities should take cognizance of the problem of establishing exactly to what feature a name applies, and what are its limits. Local usage is generally the most satisfactory source of such information, but where local usage is vague, or where the feature is so large that it is not recognized in local usage, the national names authority may usefully establish its limits for purposes of uniform reference.

As need arises for names for parts of features that are named in their entirety, there may be advantages in a systematic treatment following either a wide-spread national practice of naming such parts of features, or regional practices. If systematic treatment is adopted as a general principle, this should be clearly stated, together with circumstances in which exceptions may be made.

The fewer the changes in proposed new names that must be made by a national names authority, to bring them into accord with principles, the better.

If there are large natural features such as rivers for which there are now only local names for parts of the feature, it may be well to anticipate the need for a name for the entire feature and provide one; otherwise different names or forms may arise almost simultaneously when the need arises.

It is recommended that in national gazetteers the names of parts of natural features be additionally defined by reference to the whole, and that the names of extended natural features be defined as necessary by reference to their constituent parts. (b,d)

Recommendation IX

It is recommended that in standardizing collective names (such as those referring to an agglomeration of inhabited places), the national gazetteer should specify, where appropriate, the names of the entities to which a collective name refers.

Names of administrative divisions are often collective names in this sense and it is recommended that national gazetteers should be supplemented by a complete list of administrative divisions and subdivisions and their constituent entities; provision should be made for the issue of revised lists as the administrative structure of the country changes. (p)

Recommendation X

It is recommended that in countries where many names have optional parts any uncertainty as to what is optional should be removed. This can be done for legal and administrative names by statement of both the full name with generic term and the short name without generic term.

It is recommended, in the interest of uniformity and simplicity, that names without optional parts should be used whenever possible, that optional parts should not be added to existing names, and that the national names authority should state when the optional parts of existing names that are retained should or should not be used. (g)

Recommendation XI

It is recommended that national names authorities distinguish clearly between a generic term that forms part of a name and a work that may be used to tell the kind of feature it is, but is not part of the name; otherwise there may be confusion as to whether the designating word should be included in the standard name.

It is recommended that the standardizing procedure should not operate to suppress generic terms that are used locally or regionally, though more widely used terms may be used (in addition to and not as a part of the name) to indicate the nature of the feature. (q.1)

Recommendation XII

Studies should be made of the nature of named entities in any country, and of the varied meaning of words used to designate them since they will probably bring to light unexpected facts relevant to getting and conveying to others an understanding of the entities named, and indicate the inadequacy of ordinary dictionaries in this branch of knowledge. (p)

Recommendation XIII

It is recommended that national gazetteers should include a glossary of the generic terms occurring in the names standardized, particularly for those terms that have special or local significance. (p,q,l)

Recommendation XIV

In the interest of both national and international standardization, in countries where some names occur in parallel syntactical or grammatical forms, the national names authority should consider making one of these forms the standard name, either according to a general rule or name by name. (f)

Recommendation XV

It is recommended that in all countries, in whose languages the definite article can enter into geographic names, the national names authority should



determine which names contain the definite article and standardize them accordingly. For languages in which both definite and indefinite forms exist for all or most names, it is recommended that standardization be based on one or the other form. (r)

Recommendation XVI

It is recommended that all countries set up standards for the use of abbreviations of elements in their geographic names. Such standards should take into consideration the structure of the language or languages concerned so that unambiguous interpretation of abbreviations will be possible. For some languages quite simple standards will suffice such as the requirement that a given abbreviation stand for one and only one word. For other languages, it may be necessary in abbreviations to differentiate inflections such as gender, case and number or to distinguish between cardinal and ordinal numerals. (q.2)

Recommendation XVII

It is recommended that in countries with place names whose printing form either does not agree with that of the language as a whole or varies from name to name without apparent reason, the national names authority should consider the advantages of making the printing form for geographic names consistent. This recommendation would not apply to printing form differences that have grammatical or semantic significance in the language. (l)

Recommendation XVIII

It is recommended that all countries set up standards for expressing the location of geographic entities within their boundaries to a degree of precision commensurate with unambiguous identification, whether location be stated in terms of geographic co-ordination, by reference to other established points, or both. (o)

Recommendation XIX

It is recommended that names authorities include in gazetteers such information on geographic names as gender, number, definite and indefinite forms,

position of stress, tone and pronunciation where such information will make the names more readily understood and usable nationally and internationally. (u)

Recommendation XX

It is recommended that Arabic-alphabet countries regularly provide complete documentation for all geographical names, including the provision of all vowels and the notation of unvoiced and doubled consonants, e.g. vowel points, tashdids, hamzahs and sukūns in Arabic.

It is also in point that since modern practice has come to require the rendition of Arabic, Persian and other Arabic alphabet names in terms of standard language forms, such documentation is a prerequisite to international use of nationally standardized forms.

For such languages as Siamese and Amharic where the existence or absence of certain vowels and the doubling of consonants are not indicated in the writing system used, the names standardizing authority should provide phonetic or other notation in respect of these points, so that there may be uniformity of transliteration and transcription at the international standardization stage. (s)

Recommendation XXI

It is recommended that the names authorities of all countries that use an ideographic writing system for which there is an alternate or auxiliary alphabet or syllabic script, provide as far as possible the alphabetic or syllabic writing for each geographic name. (t)

CHAPTER IV

Question of Calling an International Conference and Sponsoring
of Working Groups

16. The Group considered the matter of the desirability of holding an international conference on the subject of standardization of geographical names and of the sponsoring of working groups based on common linguistic systems. In making the study, account has been taken of the views expressed by Governments in reply to the Secretary-General's inquiry, and of the work achieved by international scientific organizations. In view of the fact that implementation by national bodies of standard methods for dealing with geographical names requires the agreement and support of the countries concerned, the Group was unanimous in its concurrence that it is imperative to hold an international conference to study national and international problems involved, to exchange technical information and to reach agreement on concrete steps to be taken.

17. Moreover, it has also become apparent in recent years that the toponymic problems of one country commonly recur in other countries. This suggests that each country has something to gain from comparison of such problems and of the efficacy of efforts to solve them, since the experience of each country is relevant to comparable problems in other countries. Such experience means individual efforts as well as collective efforts by groups of Governments. A sharing of this experience and a comparison of problems would be highly profitable.

18. The profit that arises from the sharing of experience has been amply demonstrated at the meeting. All of the experts were agreed that each had learned much from elaboration of the problems by the others and the joint evaluation of alternative methods of dealing with them.

19. In the opinion of the Group such conference will have the greatest chance of success after the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (a) Interest has been shown by a great number of countries in this undertaking and ground work on domestic standardization has been solidly laid;
- (b) Thorough preparation is made with regard to the arrangements for the conference, including a clear outlining of the technical problems involved.

20. With regard to (a), one way to ascertain the degree of interest of countries would be to survey, through reports by Governments to the Economic and Social Council, within two years, the implementation of the technical recommendations of the Group stated in the previous chapter. Such reports should include a statement on what has already been done with regard to domestic standardization and on what remains to be accomplished, including reference to special problems encountered and technical assistance required.

21. With respect to (b), it is believed that in view of the complexity of the various problems of national and international character involving different linguistic systems, it would be useful to have a small advisory group composed of linguists, geographers, cartographers and other principal users of geographical names to assist the Secretariat in the preparation of such a conference if it is called. The primary task of this advisory group would include the following:

Preparation of the technical agenda for the conference, taking into account the reports received from Governments referred to above and the work achieved by international scientific organizations pertinent to this problem. The services of this advisory group could also be made available to regional meetings or seminars, grouping countries of the same language or the same writing system, initiated by the countries concerned.

22. In the interest of promotion of international uniformity in the writing of geographical names and of elimination of confusion harmful to an orderly national and international standardization, it is highly desirable that the interested Governments could apply individually or collectively to the United Nations for advice and assistance in solving specific problems.

ANNEX I

List of selected technical terms

1. geographical name: a proper name, consisting of one or more words, used to designate an individual geographic entity.
2. toponym: the name of a natural feature.
3. place name: the name of a populated place.
4. feature name: the name of a natural feature.
5. geographic entity: a comprehensive expression referring to any object or place which has a geographic name.
6. natural feature:
(or physical feature) any natural entity which may have a geographic name.
7. hydrographic feature: any body of water, including flowing water on land.
8. cultural feature: anything made or significantly modified by man, including a road, railway, bridge, etc.
9. populated place: any inhabited place.
10. generic term: the noun element of a geographic name indicating the type of entity.
11. specific term: the element of a geographic name identifying the type of entity.
12. map information: words on a map which do not constitute a geographic name but which indicate the presence of something or a characteristic of the area.
13. transliteration: the letter-for-letter transfer of a name from one alphabet to another alphabet.
14. transcription: the transfer of a name from one language to another on the basis of pronunciation; usually, but not necessarily, connotes transfer involving a non-alphabetic language. Not used in the lay sense of "copying".

15. official language: any language recognized at the national level which may be used in the legislature and the courts. Some countries recognize more than one language as official. A language that has some official sanction in part of the country, but not nationally, would not normally be considered an "official language".
16. national language: the dominant language, pervading all or most of a country.
17. principal language: the language most used within a country; if more or less evenly divided, there might be more than one principal language, e.g. French and Flemish in Belgium.
18. minority language: any language not used by a significantly large (or minor ") part of the country's population.
19. dialect: a local form of a language.
20. patois: a variant form of a language, less wide-spread than a dialect.
21. writing system: any systematic method of writing.
22. syllabic writing system: a writing system using phonetic characters corresponding to syllables, e.g. kana in Japanese.
23. phoneme: the minimum unit of significant sound in the structure of a language; a distinctive sound or range of sounds interpreted by speakers of the language as one sound, and having a greater or lesser number of allophones.
24. diacritical mark: any mark added above, below or inside a letter as ordinarily written, including tone marks where appropriate.
25. modified letter: e.g. Icelandic ^Xö, Danish ø, Polish Ź and the ligatured letter æ.
26. vowel point: a mark placed above, below, or inside a letter to indicate a vowel, e.g. in Arabic or Hebrew. Whereas diacritical marks modify an existing letter, vowel points denote a sound which commonly is not written.

27. domestic standardization: the process whereby the authorized agency fixes a name or names on behalf of the users thereof, whether such use becomes compulsory or not.
28. alternate name: one of two or more names for the same thing.
29. variant name: a name other than that (or those) standardized or approved.
30. conventional name: a name used widely or over a long period which warrants retention even though not otherwise approved, e.g. "Vienna" for "Wien".
31. national names authority: a body having authority and instructions to standardize names within a country.
32. official publication: any map, list, guide, etc. having official status but not necessarily representing official standardization of names or spellings.
33. printing form: the manner in which the letters are put together as regards, e.g., capitalization, spelling or hyphenation.
34. designation: a common noun indicating the type of thing named. A geographic name does not always contain a generic term, and when it does the generic term does not always make clear the nature of the thing named.
35. co-ordinates: geographical co-ordinates.
36. gazetteer: a list of geographic names identifying the nature and location of the thing named. Most lists of names issued by standardizing bodies are gazetteers.
37. geographical dictionary: a compilation of geographic names that provides the identifying and locating information included in gazetteers and such additional geographic information as population, area, resources, etc.
38. name index: usually a list of names in a publication, indicating the place in that publication where the name in question appears.

39. dictionary: a collection of words giving all the definitions of each word that are known to the compiler.
40. glossary: usually confined to a group of words on a specialized subject; more likely than a dictionary to specify the meaning which should properly be attributed to a word.
41. vocabulary: the stock of words of an individual or a group.

ANNEX II

List of national authorities dealing with
geographical names ^{1/}

AUSTRALIA:	Division of National Mapping, ^{2/} Department of National Development
BELGIUM:	<u>Commission sur la Toponymie, Ministère de l'Instruction Publique</u>
BRAZIL:	<u>Conselho Nacional de Geografia, Gabinete do Secretario-Geral</u>
CANADA:	Canadian Board on Geographical Names, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys
CHINA (Republic of):	Geographic Section, Department of Lands, Ministry of the Interior
DENMARK:	<u>Stednavneudvalget</u> ^{3/}
FEDERATION OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND:	Geographical Place Names Committee (for Northern Rhodesia), Office of the Surveyor-General in Lusaka Standing Committee on Geographic Names for Southern Rhodesia
FRANCE:	<u>Commission de Toponymie, Institut Géographique National</u>
GERMANY (Federal Republic of):	<u>Ständiger Ausschuss für die deutsche Rechtschreibung geographischer Namen, (c/o Bundesanstalt für Landeskunde und Raum Forschung)</u>
GREECE:	Council on the Names of Greek Places, Ministry of the Interior
GUATEMALA:	<u>Instituto Geográfico Nacional, Direccion General de Cartografia</u>

^{1/} Based on information available at the U.S. Board on Geographical Names; unless indicated, the authority is in the Capitol of the country.

^{2/} Co-ordinates standardizing activities of the individual States.

^{3/} For Greenland: Det grønlandske Stednavneudvalg, Ministeriet for Grønland.

INDONESIA: Komisi Istilah Ilmu Rumi

ISRAEL: Government Names Committee, Office of the Prime Minister

KOREA
(Republic of): Place Names Standardization Committee, Central Geographic
Institute

LIBERIA: Board of Geographical Names

MOZAMBIQUE: Comissão Consultativa de Toponímia, Archivo Nacional

NEW ZEALAND: New Zealand Geographic Board, Department of Lands and
Surveys

NORWAY: Norsk Stadnaumarkiv

POLAND: Instytutu Geografii, Polska Akademiya Nauk

SPAIN: Comisión de Toponimia, Consejo Superior Geográfico

SWEDEN: Ortnamnskommissionen, Svenska Ortnamnsarkivet Kungl,
(in Upsala)

UNION OF
SOUTH AFRICA: Place Names Committee, Department of Education, Arts and
Science

UNITED KINGDOM: Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British
Official Use (c/o Royal Geographical Society)
Antarctic Place Names Committee, Research Department of
the Foreign Office

UNITED STATES: Board on Geographic Names, Department of the Interior

USSR: Postoyannaya Komissiya po Voprosam Transkriptai,
Glavnoye Upravleniye Geodezii, Kartografii i Aerofotos'emki

VENEZUELA: Instituto Geográfico Nacional

