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REPORT OF THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

EIGHTH UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC
CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
22 - 27 February 1993
Item 8 (a) of the Provisional Agenda

POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT OF MAPPING PROGRAMMES:

STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Report of the Sixth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names *

(Submitted by United Nations Department of
Economic & Social Development (DESD))

* This meeting was held from 25 August - 3 September 1992 at the
United Nations Headquarters in New York

Chapter I

Organization of the Conference

A. Terms of Reference

1. The Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 25 August to 3 September 1992, in accordance with the Economic and Social Council decision 1988/116 of 25 May 1988.

B. Opening of the Conference

2. On behalf of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Development, Mr. Ji Chaozhu, the Director of the Science, Technology, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Division, Mrs. Dunja Pastizzi-Ferencic, opened the Conference and welcomed delegates.

3. In her opening address, the Director referred to the foresight of the United Nations 25 years ago in convening the First Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1967. She referred to the present information age, and the importance of communication and information technologies, which increasingly affect all aspects of today's society. She stressed the new role of cartography in the service of economic and social development. Current world realities and the requirements posed by sustainable development, she said, placed new challenges

before the Conference. The world, she added, relied on the collective wisdom and expertise of Conference members to find the most effective ways to transliterate and standardize geographical names in order to avoid misunderstanding and facilitate world-wide communication. The Director referred to successful cooperation among countries in the standardization of geographical names and also to the benefits accruing from training courses in toponymy and from various national activities.

4. The Director referred to the Department of Economic and Social Development of the United Nations Secretariat, which was created in March 1992 to increase the effectiveness of the Secretariat in addressing the social and economic priorities of Member States. The new Department, it was explained, expands and enhances technical cooperation in a wide range of activities, including the standardization of geographical names. In conclusion, the Director stated that increased public awareness of the activities of the Conference would help to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations system at international and national levels.

C. Attendance

5. The Conference was attended by 158 representatives and 11 observers from 69 countries, and by 6 specialized agencies and non-government organizations, as well as 3 international scientific organizations. The list of participants is presented in annex I.

D. Election of the President

6. The Conference elected Mr. Abdelhadi Tazi (Morocco) as its President. Mr. Tazi expressed his sincerest gratitude for the honour and the trust given him by the Conference. He briefly outlined Muslim contributions to geographical knowledge of the world throughout most of recorded history, including those of Yaqut Al-Hamawi, who compiled a unique volume on geographical names, and Al Idrisi and Ibn Battuta, all pioneers in geography.

E. Adoption of the rules of procedure

7. The Conference adopted the provisional rules of procedure as contained in document E/CONF.85/2 (see annex II).

F. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Conference adopted the provisional agenda, with minor amendments, as contained in document E/CONF.85/1 (see annex III).

G. Election of officers other than President

9. The Conference elected the following officers:

<u>First Vice-President:</u>	Mr. Richard R. RANDALL (United States of America)
<u>Second Vice-President:</u>	Mr. Hamid MALMIRIAN (Iran, Islamic Republic of)
<u>Third Vice-President:</u>	Mr. WANG Jitong (China)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Art O MAOLFABHAIL (Ireland)
<u>Editor-in-Chief:</u>	Ms. Helen KERFOOT (Canada)

H. Organization of work

10. Officers for the three Committees of the Conference were also elected as follows:

Committee I: National programmes

Chairman:	Mr. William A. ROBERTSON (New Zealand)
Vice Chairman:	Mr. Ernst SPIESS (Switzerland)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Pergiran Haji Matusin MATASAN (Brunei Darussalam)

National standardization (item 5)
Exonyms (item 9)

Committee II: Technical programmes

Chairman: Ms. Ann-Christin MATTISSON (Sweden)
Vice Chairman: Ms. Sylvie LEJEUNE (France)
Rapporteur: Mr. Roger L. PAYNE (United States of America)

Toponymic data files (item 6)
Terminology in the standardization of geographical names (item 7)

Committee III: International programmes

Chairman: Mr. Peter E. RAPER (South Africa)
Vice Chairman: Mr. Naftali KADMON (Israel)
Rapporteur: Ms. Pamela M. OPIE-SMITH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

International programmes (item 10)
Writing systems and guides to pronunciation (item 11)
Toponymic education and practice, and international cooperation (item 12)

11. Items 1-4, 8, 13-16 were considered in plenary meetings.

I. Documentation

12. A list of documents submitted to the Conference is contained in annex IV.

J. Credentials of representatives to the Conference

13. The Credentials Committee, composed of the President, the three Vice-Presidents, the Rapporteur, the Editor-in-Chief, and the Executive Secretary of the Conference (ex officio), reported that the credentials of all delegates were found in order.

Chapter II

Summary of the Work of the Conference

A. Plenary meetings

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 Fifth Conference (item 4)

14. The report of the Eastern Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic) (E/CONF.85/L.3) pointed out that the official romanization system for Hebrew was used by all government agencies in Israel, but that some agencies within the private sector still employed different conversion methods. The widespread occurrence and treatment of exonyms derived from the Bible was also addressed, as well as cooperation with other linguistic/geographical divisions.

15. Austria reported (E/CONF.85/L.8) that a working group had been established on the spelling of geographical names in Austrian teaching materials. In response to a query, the delegate reported that within a toponymic experts' commission formed by the government of South Tyrol for geographical names in this area, no agreement could be reached between the German-speaking language experts from Austria and Switzerland, on the one hand, and the expert from Italy on the other.

16. The report of Romania (E/CONF.85/L.19) stated that toponymic activity had increased since the last conference and in recent years work on standardization had been undertaken in close conjunction with mapping activities.

17. The report by South Africa (E/CONF.85/L.22) covered meetings and activities of the National Place Names Committee, efforts to ensure implementation of UN resolutions on standardization of geographical names, and toponymic publications which had been produced. The report also indicated that contact had been made with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), since concern had been expressed by the ECA over the non-participation by some African countries in the activities of the Group of Experts. Efforts were being made by South Africa to assist neighbouring countries in organizing national toponymic programmes.

18. Sweden reported (E/CONF.85/L.24) that the use of exonyms in cartography had been reduced, but that educators and the media had differing views on the matter. The report also addressed the treatment of Saami and Finnish names in multilingual areas.

19. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reported (E/CONF.85/L.31) that geographical names in the country had long been established in a standard form and were disseminated by the national map series which comprised scales of 1:1,250 and smaller. The establishment of a national GIS, in which toponymy would be uniform for all applications, was in the final stages of establishment. A gazetteer based on the 1:50,000 scale maps existed for Great Britain. The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names had developed, in conjunction with the government authorities in the Maldives, a romanization system for the Maldivian language. Gazetteers for use by official bodies had long been produced by the use of computer technology.

20. The Romano-Hellenic Division (E/CONF.85/L.33) reported on a meeting held in Paris in 1990. Most of the work concentrated on the subject of exonyms, including the preparation of a document showing exonyms used in each language of the division for the names of countries, capitals, and administrative regions.

21. France reported (E/CONF.85/L.34) that the standardization of geographical names continued in several areas: in the updating of the basic map at 1:25,000 scale and the publication of general maps; in the refinement and development of various toponymic and cartographic databases; and in general research and preparation of lists of geographical names. In response to an inquiry, it was said that there were occasional name differences on maps produced by various mapping bodies, but it seemed impossible to guarantee absolute consistency in orthography because of different ways of treating dialectal toponymy.

22. The Dutch and German-speaking Division reported (E/CONF.85/L.36) on meetings held in 1989, 1990 and 1991. Much attention had been devoted to the United Nations glossary of terms used in the standardization of geographical names. On another matter, it was stated that the Government of the Netherlands would be willing to provide half the cost of a two-week training course in toponymy for African participants, if the United Nations would secure the other half.

23. The report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division (E/CONF.85/L.39) made the point that the problem of exonyms had been always has been the subject most discussed at meetings. Most countries of the division support the donor principle. The United Kingdom remarked that romanization that does not consider the interests of the receiver language was not to be recommended. The delegate of Czechoslovakia, who presented the division report, agreed with this. He also stated that for some languages of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union) a romanization system did not exist. This situation should be noted and those countries

involved needed to be presented with relevant resolutions of the Conference.

24. The report of Canada (E/CONF.85/L.41) referred to a wide variety of subjects, among them the goals of its national names authority: dissemination of toponymic information, the field recording of geographical names, the automation of toponymic databases and data availability, and the development of national policies and procedures for geographical naming in the official and aboriginal languages of Canada.

25. The report of New Zealand (E/CONF.85/L.58) stated that the occurrence of Maori names predominated in the North Island, whereas English names were in the majority in the South Island. In general, Maori names refer to physical features, such as rivers and mountains, and English names apply to settlements. The policy of New Zealand was to reflect the history and culture and to preserve original Maori placenames.

26. Iran (Islamic Republic of) (E/CONF.85/L.60) reported on progress made since the Fifth Conference. The Central National Geographical Names Authority was reorganized within the National Geographical Organization. A new village identification booklet had been published and about 6,500 names had been collected in the field, in connection with the production of map sheets at 1:250,000 scale. Those had been added to the names database, bringing the total number of computerized records to 44,000. A list of name changes and new names within the country, and a revised list of country names in the Farsi language were presented.

27. Switzerland (E/CONF.85/L.37) reported that although a federal decree placed the authority and responsibility for geographical names with each of the 26 cantons, attempts were being made to establish a national names authority. This would coordinate canton names commissions, function as an advisory body to the federal government, and represent the country at international meetings. Other items reported were the collection and treatment of names, complicated by the existence of four national languages in the country, and the initial development of a geographical names database based on the National Topographic Map Series.

28. The report of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division (E/CONF.85/L.59) noted that the next meeting of the Division was planned for late in 1992 and that non-member nations would be invited. It was reported that New Zealand was preparing a placenames map of the division area that would show official names as recommended by each country. Malaysia remarked that further attempts would be made to encourage member countries that

have not been active to participate at the next divisional meeting.

29. A videotape illustrating toponymic field work was presented by Finland. Copies of this videotape can be obtained from the Finnish Research Centre for Domestic Languages. Finland stated that the video tape was intended for training courses and to provide information on the state of progress in standardization, but had only limited distribution abroad so far.

30. The report of Finland (E/CONF.85/L.68) described the progress in field collection of toponyms, and announced the development of several toponymic data files. The use of foreign names in the Finnish media was often at variance with the recommendations of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names because of the lack of reliable information about name changes. The Seventeenth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was held in Helsinki in 1990. A gazetteer of inhabited places in Finland, containing about 25,000 entries, was published in 1990.

31. The report of the Russian Federation (E/CONF.85/L.18) listed the principal activities of the Permanent Joint Committee on Geographical Names during the years 1987-1991. The Joint Committee was prepared to cooperate with names authorities in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and in other countries.

32. The report of Hungary (E/CONF.85/L.69) stated that the Committee on Geographical Names was a decision-making and advisory body set up by government order in 1989. The introduction of large collective farms had tended to obliterate names of small features, such as farmsteads, but this trend was reversing. The changing of street names had become an important issue. Recent activities included the development of a toponymic database.

33. Japan reported (E/CONF.85/L.71) that it had no single central agency for officially dealing with names. Many newly discovered undersea features, as well as Antarctic features had been named. No progress was reported on romanization.

34. For the first time Estonia presented a report (E/CONF.85/L.75). Most Estonian names, which for some time had been used outside Estonia via Cyrillic transliteration, had been restored to their primary forms. Estonia hosted a regional meeting of the Baltic States on the standardization of geographical names in 1992. This was the first such meeting.

35. In the report of Thailand (E/CONF.85/L.79) it was stated that a national names authority is being established in the Royal Thai Survey Department. Two romanization systems for the Thai language had been produced by the Royal Institute: one is a transliteration system, a two-way conversion system which ignores pronunciation; the second is a transcription system which provides the correct pronunciation of the Thai words. The National Gazetteer based on the 1:50,000 topographic maps will form the base for a Geographical Names Information System. Thailand convened the fourth meeting of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division in Krung Thep in 1988.

36. Czechoslovakia reported (E/CONF.85/L.82) that a standardizing authority had not yet been established although both the Czechs and the Slovaks had advisory boards. As regards romanization of names from the nations of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the romanized Russian forms would probably be used. The GOST 83 system was being only partially applied in the present Russian Federation. This has led to hesitancy in the use of this system. Czechoslovakia planned to issue a domestic version of the technical terminology glossary.

37. Norway reported a large number of activities on names standardization (E/CONF.85/L.83) and mentioned in particular a new law relating to geographical names. Norway mentioned also a documentation project at the University of Oslo that was transferring earlier collected names material from archive cards to electronic data files. A three-volume computer-based gazetteer of the 1:50,000 scale maps, containing 340,000 entries, had been published. The report also referred to a list of some 5,000 foreign names, in which the number of exonyms had been reduced.

38. The report of the Netherlands (E/CONF.85/L.89) mentioned the official status of the Frisian minority language in the province of Friesland. It further stated that no official national geographical names authority existed in the Netherlands. Since the last Conference, map-based gazetteers have been revised. Experts from the Netherlands took part in a number of training courses in toponymy. The governments of Belgium and the Netherlands had established a new body, the Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union) to produce a list of country names.

39. Ukraine, in its report (E/CONF. 85/L.91), stressed the importance of geographical names to the new State established in 1991. At present, a lack of standardization of orthography in the Ukrainian language still exists. Ukraine also expressed its wish to join the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

40. Germany reported (E/CONF. 85/L.92) that as a result of the unification of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic a supplementary volume to the Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany (1981) was in preparation. This would lead to a unified gazetteer based on a map at scale 1:500,000. A new edition of toponymic guidelines for map and other editors (E/CONF.85/93) necessitated by unification had been submitted to the Conference. It was reported that work on German placenames in the Antarctic area was being maintained.

41. The United States of America/Canada Division in its report (E/CONF. 85/L.95) recorded continuing cooperation between the two member-countries who had reached consensus concerning the treatment of names of geographical features common to both, with a view to reducing possible confusion in feature identification. A document of understanding, which identified suitable principles and procedures, had been signed in 1988. Close contact had also been maintained in matters such as automated processing, treatment of aboriginal/native American/native Canadian geographical names, and various projects of the Group of Experts.

42. Jordan in its report (Working Paper 1) stated that until the establishment of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) in 1975, the majority of maps of Jordan were of British and American provenance. These maps were later edited in Arabic and mistakes had arisen in the placenames, due to double transliteration. A listing of villages in both Arabic and English scripts was produced in 1989. In the early 1980s RJGC adopted a transliteration system based on the Modified Bayrut System. Concerning future work, stress was laid on the special difficulties attending the collection of names in desert areas and on the vital need for a unified Roman transliteration system throughout the Arabic-speaking countries.

43. Indonesia in its report (E/CONF. 85/L.96) stressed the difficulty of producing a gazetteer for such a large multi-ethnic country with a long history of human settlement. A computerized gazetteer for one area was proposed as a national standard. The field work will be expedited by use of hand-held instruments using the global-positioning system. The establishment of the National Names Authority is being processed by the Indonesian Government.

44. In Working Papers 5 and 6, Venezuela referred to the various phases of activity in a pilot scheme of standardization, including preparation, field work, evaluation particularly with reference to indigenous names and to frontier toponymy. A National Commission for Geographical Names had been established by law in 1992. Gazetteers existed based on maps at scale 1:100,000 and 1:250,000. At present The Dictionary of Venezuelan

Geographical Names is being prepared. It will consist of 23 volumes, with other volumes for names in indigenous languages. In addition, a digital toponymic database was being developed.

45. Ireland, in Working Paper 29, reported that a concise bilingual gazetteer had been published in 1989 and that a series of more detailed gazetteers was in process. Since 1987 full-time research into original Irish-language forms of geographical names has been maintained by the Government of the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland. There has been professional collaboration on this project. Urban names have since 1982 been regarded as geographical names and bilingual guidelines for standardization of urban names were issued in 1992.

46. The Celtic Division (Working Paper 48) reported that since the Fifth Conference France has joined the Division.

47. Cyprus reported (Working Paper 36) that since the Fifth Conference the obligatory use of Romanization System ELOT 743 had been sanctioned. To facilitate the use of the system, software packages were available, which accomplished the conversion automatically. It was further stated that in Cyprus a large number of established names had been changed and replaced by the Turkish administration with other names. The representative of Turkey expressed displeasure with this statement and called to refrain from discussion of political subjects which do not belong to the current technical Conference. The representative of Cyprus replied that he did not make political statements and wanted to inform the Conference on the process of renaming of places.

48. China, in Working Paper 35, reported progress since the Fifth Conference. The China Committee on Geographical Names decided in 1988 to carry out supplementary investigation and updating of geographical names all over the country. Principles for the standardization of Chinese placenames have been drawn up by the Committee. Training courses in toponymy had also been organized and documents relating to these were being issued.

49. Sweden reported (Working Paper 37) that a new interactive mapping system had been obtained by the National Land Survey of Sweden. This system has efficient text-editing and panning functions and can be further developed according to requirements. The report describes how the new system works.

50. Morocco confirmed (Working Paper 40) the importance of the standardization of geographical names in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Conferences. Cartographic activity included the production of new maps at 1:25,000 and 1:100,000 and the production of various general and thematic

maps. A national computerized dictionary of geographical names and a dictionary of historic towns were being produced. The National Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, in which research institutions, cartographic agencies and map-users participated, had been very successful and had made many recommendations. The proceedings will be published and widely distributed.

51. Malaysia reported (Working Paper 42) that standardization of geographical names had been undertaken according to guidelines produced by the Permanent Committee. Computer-assisted mapping and cadastral surveying introduced in 1989, for the production of topographic and cadastral maps, were giving impetus to the computerization of geographical names.

52. The Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities stated in Working Paper 45 that geographical names as part of the environment were closely linked to the process of development. Close liaison between the UNCEGN and the relevant non-governmental organizations was strongly recommended.

53. Oman referred (Working Paper 47) to the partly sedentary, partly nomadic nature of its population, which had particular implications for the treatment of geographical names. There was no national advisory body for names. Romanization had practical difficulties for mapmakers and diacritical marks were difficult to use.

54. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reported (Working Paper 49) that twenty years ago the updating and arabization of maps inherited from previous administrations had been commenced. A national committee had begun to collect names and establish a database.

55. Yemen (Working Paper 51) stated that following unification in 1990, much attention was being given to geographical names and their proper treatment.

56. Denmark stated that a Danish national report had been included in the report of the Norden Division (E/CONF.85/L.67).

57. The United States of America stated (Working Paper 21) that one major activity since the Fifth Conference had been a two-day symposium in 1990 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the US Board on Geographic Names (USBGN). Among important conclusions had been a decision to create a Publicity Committee, which recommended the production of a catalogue (Working Paper 20). A brochure about the structure and functions of the USBGN was distributed as Working Paper 17. A major effort

of the USBGN Domestic Names Committee was the development of policies for the treatment of native American names.

58. The USBGN Foreign Names Committee had responded to requests for information about new geographical names, particularly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Working Paper 23 contained two editions of the Foreign Names Information Bulletin. In cooperative agreements with other countries, the Defense Mapping Agency (DMA) provided assistance in methods of dealing with names. DMA is creating the Geographic Names Processing System to transfer some 5 million foreign names from manual to automated files, and the Agency is also working on a digital gazetteer.

Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names (item 8)

59. The United States of America presented Working Papers 13, 14, and 15. As Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Evaluation, the representative reported on the UNGEGN response to resolution 4 of the Fifth Conference.

60. The Convenor reaffirmed (Working Paper 13) the major goal as encouraging the establishment of national standardization processes. He noted the need for more training programmes and for an increased awareness of governments to the benefits of standardization.

61. From evaluation of UN resolutions (Working Paper 14), the Convenor reported that the results of a questionnaire, circulated to help review the resolutions and measures to implement them, were difficult to analyze. He noted some reasons why resolutions were problematic to implement, and noted the need for a resolutions committee to prevent reiteration of existing resolutions. He also stated the need for compendiums of resolutions by subject and by their nature and practicality.

62. In Working Paper 15, the Convenor commented upon the need for future work to be clearly directed at the principal goals of the United Nations Conferences and the UNGEGN.

63. The Working Group had rewritten the Aims and Functions of the UNGEGN (Working Paper 50) to make it more pro-active. With these accepted by the United Nations Conference, it was recommended that the Working Group be disbanded.

64. Canada presented E/CONF.85/CRP.2, a collection of the 138 resolutions from the first five United Nations Conferences,

grouped by subject area and cross-referenced by conference number. This document has also been prepared in French.

Meetings and conferences (item 13)

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
(item 13 (a))

65. This subject was not addressed by the Conference.

Divisional and interdivisional meetings and programmes
(item 13 (b))

66. A draft resolution to create a Baltic Division was submitted by Estonia (E/CONF.85/L.77).

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
economic and social benefits of the national and international
standardization of geographical names (item 14)

67. The United Nations Secretariat presented paper E/CONF.85/CRP.3, entitled United Nations Activities in the Field of Standardization of Geographical Names. The paper provided an overview of the activities of the United Nations in this field. The document provided background information and traced the origin and development of the toponymic activities of the UNGEGN and of the UN Conferences. The Conference expressed satisfaction with this very valuable and useful document, and thanked the presenter for his energetic and valuable service, as a former Secretary of the UNGEGN.

Closing of the Conference (item 16)

68. The President thanked all participants for a very successful Conference, which he said, was indeed a dialogue of civilizations and would promote greatly the standardization of geographical names, a subject of real value to mankind. He also thanked the Secretariat of the Conference for its valuable contribution as well as all the interpreters and the secretaries who had worked so hard during these two weeks to make the Conference a success.

69. At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Dunja Pastizzi-Ferencic, Director of the Science, Technology, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Division, closed the Conference. She referred to the increasing relevance of the subject-matter in the modern world, noting that geographical names are an indispensable tool of economic and social development. Mrs. Pastizzi-Ferencic expressed her pleasure with the manner in which the proceedings had been conducted,

indicating that such a model of communication and cooperation augured well for future dialogue around the world.

Action taken by the Conference

70. At the final plenary session, the Conference adopted eight draft resolutions (for the text, see chapter III, resolutions 1-6, 14 -15.

71. In addition, a recommendation was made to honour the geographical and toponymic heritage of the world and our revered pioneers in this field. For the occasion of the Seventh Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1997, the 30th anniversary of the first such conference, a commemorative event will be planned.

B. Committee I: National Standardization

National Standardization (item 5)

Field Collection of Names (item 5 (a))

72. Japan reported (E/CONF.85/L.72) that in 1960 the National Hydrographic Department and the Geographical Survey Institute formed a joint committee to standardize geographical names. The names of administrative divisions and populated places (their orthography and pronunciation) are standardized by laws and regulations announced in official reports.

73. Norway detailed (E/CONF.85/L.84) the phases of field collection and compilation of the Norwegian Placename Database, established since the Fifth Conference in 1987. This database aims to include all names associated with settlements, farms, and natural features, and should not be confused with the Central Placename Register of the Norwegian Mapping Authority.

74. Canada produced a small-scale reference map (Working Paper 27) to show fieldwork accomplished since 1987. Three categories of completeness and reliability were used, based on how the work was undertaken. This information, plotted according to 1:50,000 National Topographic Series map sheet areas, and updated on a regular basis, can be useful to individual jurisdictions in planning their toponymic activities.

75. Canada presented the table of contents (Working Paper 28), of a recently completed technical guide for the field collection of aboriginal geographical names. The manual provides a possible approach to authorizing, organizing and undertaking a field survey. The guide also contains sample survey forms. The methodology for this manual was developed through private sector work with the Inuit in Northern Canada.

76. Venezuela commented on a programme to collect and standardize the geographical names in the sector of Sierra Parima of the Territorio Federal Amazonas, based on methodology developed by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History. Mexico also commented on research by field scientists in Mexico, associated with training courses and cartographic updates at a 1:50,000 scale.

Office Treatment of Names (item 5 (b))

77. Austria reported on an Austrian Standard of country codes (E/CONF.85/L.9), a published list of 17,400 'Ortschaften' according to communes (E/CONF.85/L.10); and an index of the 2,300 communes (E/CONF.85/L.11).

78. The reports (E/CONF.85/L.43), (E/CONF.85/L.44) and (E/CONF.85/L.45), prepared by the Commission de toponymie du Quebec (Canada) documented the management of toponyms in Quebec, including the programme of commemorative naming, the 1990 expanded edition of the Guide toponymique du Quebec, and the modified policy on the designation of toponyms for living people.

79. Canada reported that Principles and procedures for geographical naming, developed by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names had been updated in 1990. These guidelines, already published in English and French, have now been made available in Spanish.

80. The United States of America commented that the software developed in late 1980's, for the collection of geographical names from maps and other publications for the Geographical Names Information System (GNIS), contained quality control programmes which have proved beneficial.

Treatment of Names in Multilingual Areas (item 5(c))

81. Austria reported (E/CONF.85/L.12) that 91 "Ortschaften" in Carinthia, which has a considerable Slovenian-speaking population, have been designated bilingual by decree of the Austrian Government. This dual naming appears on road signs and will be indicated in the Gazetteer of Austria.

82. Canada reported on the Commission de toponymie du Quebec's revision of its policy on aboriginal names in document (E/CONF.85/L.46). Even if these names are not designated as official, they could be widely disseminated as variant names.

83. Canada reported (E/CONF.85/L.74) on aspects of the work of the federal Translation Bureau in the treatment of non-French-language toponyms for translation of texts into French.

Guidelines have been developed to provide linguistic consistency, and reference lists will be prepared.

84. Several countries referred to the treatment of toponyms in multilingual areas, and a need was expressed for further cooperative action on this subject. Hungary referred to the difficulty of handling geographical names in neighbouring countries with considerable Hungarian population. Hungarian names in these countries are exonyms by definition, because the Hungarian language has no official status there. One solution would be to follow the Austrian example given in E/CONF.85/L.12, and officially declare these settlements bilingual. In this way these Hungarian names would no longer be exonyms.

Administrative structure of national names authorities
(item 5 (d))

85. Israel reported (E/CONF.85/L.4) that its national geographical names authority, the Government Names Commission, was established in 1951. The Commission provides official status to names which are then legally binding on all institutions of the government, as are the official rules of romanization. Provision is made for appeal against a ratified name through a Court of Justice. There is some variation from official names usage, especially in romanization by private and even public bodies, such as in tourist literature produced for different languages.

86. Austria referred (E/CONF.85/L.14) to a brochure prepared to provide information on the Board of Geographical Names, and on the institutions represented on the Board. It is hoped that the Board, presently an unofficial body, will in the future achieve a more official status.

87. Brazil stated (E/CONF.85/L.78) that its Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) established its first geographical names sector in 1948. A current project is the inventory and organization of geographical names, which involves the systematic collection, organization, and consolidation of names for physical and cultural features. The information collected and to be collected will be stored in the geographical names database, which is being planned.

88. Several countries commented on various degrees of integration of geographical names, census data, and mapping activities, aimed at avoiding duplication of efforts.

89. Norway addressed (E/CONF.85/L.85) the Norwegian Place-Name Act legislated in 1990. The standardized names are to be based on local pronunciation and current spelling rules in one of the

two main Norwegian languages. Spelling rules for Saami and Finnish names have also been established. An Appeals Committee has been set up to deal with complaints about standardized forms of names.

90. The administrative structure of Canada's geographical names standardization, Working Paper 33, includes an advisory committee on names for undersea and maritime features. Its scope and functions are described in a brochure available to the public.

Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors:
(item 5 (e))

91. China reported (E/CONF.85/L.1) that the use of the Chinese phonetic alphabet (Pinyin) since 1977 had resolved confusion in the spelling of Chinese names. Of the 56 nationalities in China, Han constitutes 92 percent of the population. Delegates requested clarification of the romanization guidelines of Han, particularly with respect to the apostrophe before the letters a, o or e (for example, when not in the first syllable). In Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet and other national autonomous areas, minority scripts (rather than Han) are used to write the placenames. China was commended for the effort to use the Tibetan, Mongolian and Uygur languages.

92. Toponymic guidelines for the Netherlands were presented (E/CONF.85/L.2). Material included names in Frisian, which has official status only in the province of Friesland; these names are standardized by the Toponymic Working Group of the Frisian Academy.

93. Austria referred to its guidelines originally submitted in E/CONF.74/L.2, as a sample of format and content. In documents E/CONF.85/L.14 and Working Paper 41, Austria presented a revision of the guidelines, particularly referring to the adjustment of the linguistic maps to the census of 1991 and inclusion of Slovenian minority names in the Gazetteer of Austria.

94. South Africa reported (E/CONF.74/L.23) that a third edition of its toponymic guidelines had been necessitated by a revision of the orthographic rules of both Afrikaans and Zulu.

95. The Coordinator for toponymic guidelines expressed gratification at the increase in the number of toponymic guidelines prepared for the Conference. In view of the importance of such guidelines, the Coordinator urged countries which had not yet prepared guidelines to do so as soon as possible, and encouraged the publication of a compendium of these guidelines through the UN Secretariat.

96. Canada submitted updated guidelines (E/CONF.85/L.47), noting the addition of abbreviations of generic terms for use on topographic maps, and a list of geographical names made official in both English and French.

97. Guidelines for Estonia (E/CONF.85/L.76) were summarized, and spelling rules and pronunciation of geographical names in the official language (Estonian) noted. In some areas, names may be standardized also in the minority languages of Russian and Swedish.

98. Germany presented full toponymic guidelines (E/CONF.85/L.93), revised and enlarged since the unification of Germany in 1990. A list of addresses is included for the user seeking further information.

99. Ireland's guidelines (Working Paper 3) contain information on names in both official languages (Irish and English), including writing conventions and pronunciation.

100. The United States of America informed the Conference that its 1989 guidelines continue to be in effect.

Exonyms (item 9)

Categories and Use of Exonyms (item 9(a))

101. Even though there was no paper presented specifically on this subject, the Conference received numerous comments (see paragraph 106).

Principles in Reducing the Use of Exonyms (item 9 (b))

102. Israel, aware that exonyms cannot be entirely eliminated, proposed (E/CONF.85/L.7) the reduction of their number by using a "donor system", whereby a country recommends a particular list of traditional names for which other countries could use exonyms (preferably as subsidiary forms), with endonyms being used for all other names.

Provisional List of Exonyms (item 9 (c))

103. The Dutch and German-speaking Division presented Working Paper 4, Guidelines for the preparation of lists of exonyms. A clear distinction was made between cartographic publications for national and international use. Although exonyms may appear on products for national use, they should be avoided in international cartography.

104. The United States of America submitted Working Paper 22 listing English-language exonyms deleted, changed or added to the foreign placenames files of the US Board on Geographic Names since 1988. This information complements the Gazetteer of Conventional Names, of which the third edition was published in 1988. Exonyms (or "conventional names") will be monitored with a view to the reduction of their number, where appropriate.

105. Working Paper 26, List of Exonyms for Countries, Capitals and Administrative Divisions of Europe, was prepared by the Romano-Hellenic Division and presented by France. At this time, Baltic countries, Yugoslavia and countries in the former USSR have not been included in the list. The initial emphasis was on names of administrative divisions. Other names were considered to be the responsibility of individual European countries. This document received considerable commendation.

106. The Conference agreed on the usefulness of reducing exonyms, as has been discussed in previous conferences and seminars. However, exonyms may sometimes be used in local communication. Increasingly, endonyms are being accepted, particularly where they are easily understandable.

Action taken by the Conference

107. The Conference adopted one draft resolution (for the text, see chapter III, resolution 7)

C. Committee II: Technical programmes

Toponymic data files (item 6)

Data collection procedures (item 6 (a))

108. Canada presented the Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files (E.CONF.85/L.40). It was identified that the primary tasks of the group are:

- 1) to collect information on toponymic databases (whether automated or manual), through a questionnaire (E/CONF.85/INF/7);
- 2) the need to recommend that guidelines on toponymic databases be made more widely available and that software, free of copyright restrictions, be disseminated;
- 3) the need to include a basic workshop on automated databases in the various training courses.

109. Sweden elaborated on the results of the above mentioned questionnaire to which paragraphs 110 through 121 refer. So far there had been 33 replies from 27 countries, and therefore, there was too little information available from which to draw any meaningful conclusions.

110. The following countries or areas had responded before 17 August 1992 to the questionnaire distributed by the United Nations: Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Canada, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Congo, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Hong Kong, Hungary, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

111. The questionnaire did not concentrate only upon national toponymic databases and, therefore, the responses dealt with databases covering special categories of names in several nations.

112. Canada, Denmark, Hong Kong, Hungary, Malaysia, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America have established digital national databases where the coverage is uniform and names are treated by a national names standardizing committee/authority.

113. Israel mentioned that its national digital database is both multilingual and multiscrptual, and the first to be so.

114. The United Kingdom has a complete national toponymic database derived from very large-scale mapping and is now in GIS format, and Switzerland's database is based on that country's topographic map series. There are advanced plans for digital toponymic databases in Ethiopia, the Philippines and Thailand.

115. All nations having toponymic databases are collecting their names from official maps and/or from field work. Historical material, including historical gazetteers, are other sources used by several nations.

116. The most common map scale is 1:50,000 used by 15 nations, however, several databases are based on various scales. The list of data elements or fields of information shows fourteen major elements. The main fields in existing databases seem to be type of feature, map sheet, coordinates, administrative units, source of name, status of name and variant names.

117. Most of the responses indicate continuous updating, the most common sources of updates are decisions made by national names authorities, published maps and field work.

118. The most common reasons given for producing toponymic databases are mapping applications and the creation of a national gazetteer. The questions regarding the Roman alphabet, diacritics and other languages should be dealt with more thoroughly in the future.

119. Almost every nation having a toponymic database also has documentation available. The documentation is mostly user manuals in hardcopy format, but a few have digital documentation.

120. Several nations are asking for technical and financial support. Specifically, there are questions about the role of the United Nations and the role of the linguistic divisions of the UNGEGN. Also, decisions on appropriate international data elements and data exchange standards have been requested.

Data elements required (item 6 (b))

121. The United States of America presented document E/CONF.85/L.26 on behalf of the Place Name Survey of the United States (PLANSUS). The Format and Attribution Committee of PLANSUS had determined a specific set of required data elements that must be utilized in carrying out toponymic research to be sanctioned by PLANSUS. Additionally, the Committee had identified a need for optional data elements which would be maintained by a particular organization.

122. Questions were answered from various delegates on aspects of pronunciation, location, format, the naming of extensive linear features, and source materials. It was explained that PLANSUS was a private organization. It was further elaborated that the goals of PLANSUS are to encourage those doing toponymic research, in accordance with the formatting procedures established by the National Geographic Names Database of the U.S. Government.

123. Canada introduced document E/CONF.85/L.48 which detailed "core" data fields required for that country's federally-maintained database. Names are recorded for physical features and populated places, but not for buildings or streets. Some two-thirds of the entries have been approved by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN); the remaining names were unofficial or cross-reference entries. The history of the development of names records in Canada was outlined. It was noted that in recent years with the introduction of automation, there was sometimes a divergence in approach to aims of toponymic data storage by the federal government and the provincial/territorial authorities. The need to define such core data fields had, therefore, arisen.

Automated data processing (ADP) systems (item 6 (c))

124. Austria referred to document E/CONF.85/L.15 and commented that a data file had been developed by the Austrian Institute of East and South-East European Studies in collaboration with the Austrian National Library containing entries for settlements. The data file made use of both Roman and Cyrillic script, and included variant names.

125. The United States of America presented a document (E/CONF.85/L.25) which was an information sheet describing the U.S. Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). It was explained that all entries and their geographical coordinates were based on 1:24,000 or 1:25,000 scale mapping, and that each name entry in the database was official.

126. Document E/CONF.85/L.51 was presented for the Commission de toponymie du Quebec (Canada), and described the new, updated, toponymic data-processing system (TOPOS) which contained more than thirty data elements. The principal users of this data-processing system were government departments and agencies.

127. Document E/CONF.85/L.73 was presented by Japan. The status of automated data processing in this country was outlined, and attention was drawn to the geographical names data file which would be completed by the end of 1992 by the Geographical Survey Institute. The file would contain 120,000 geographical names, based on the 1:200,000 scale regional maps.

128. An overview of the national Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (CGNDB) (E/CONF.85/L.49) was presented. The hardware and software capabilities of the system were described and the ensuing studies of compatibility with provincial databases were also outlined. It was indicated that the CGNDB was developed primarily for cartographic application and gazetteer production, but that it was not scale-dependent.

129. Venezuela introduced Working Paper 7 and described the design and development of that country's national toponymic database. This included procedures for formatting gazetteers and geographical names dictionaries.

130. The United States of America described the Geographic Names Processing System (GNPS) (Working Paper 8), which was designed for foreign names application in the United States of America. It would contain 4.5 - 5 million entries, generally based on a map scale of 1:250,000, and was intended to be operational in early 1993. The hardware and software requirements were described and it was indicated that the system would make full use of diacritical marks. The system was designed to support map

and gazetteer production and future development would include the ability to handle non-Roman writing systems. It was stated that the database would contain exonyms, mainly names of countries, and that the geographical coordinates for each data entry would represent the location of the feature, rather than the name placement on the map.

Compatibility and structure of systems (item 6(d))

131. Document E/CONF.85/L.50 which described the long-term vision and development plan for a Canadian digital toponymic service was presented. The aim of this plan was to reflect the mandates of provincial, territorial and federal names authorities, and allow the broadest possible dissemination and use of geographical names information. It was indicated that there could be opportunities in the future to link government and academic databases for research purposes.

132. Austria indicated in document E/CONF.85/L.16 that in the Central Statistical Office two national digital files were available: a gazetteer of inhabited places and a register of buildings and street names. Another file had been developed by the Federal Office of Meteorology and Geodesy containing the geographical names of the official Austrian maps at a scale of 1:50,000. It was reported that approximately 60,000 names had been collected, and a further 60,000 were estimated to be collected by 1995.

133. The United States of America presented E/CONF.85/L.29 and outlined general procedures for developing an automated toponymic database. Specific topics to be addressed were the determination of products and applications, as well as database content and requirements. Further attention was given to hardware and software requirements together with methodology for data collection, data entry, quality control and maintenance.

134. Canada presented E/CONF.85/L.52 dealing with the recording of aboriginal names in syllabics and modified Roman alphabet characters. It was stated that Canada has ascribed to ASCII code and ISO standards, but that no standard existed for encoding such writing systems. It was further indicated that Canada did not wish to invent such standards but stressed an immediate need for an interim solution. The United Kingdom recommended patience in dealing with modified alphabets and other scripts and remarked that various bodies, including ISO, were dealing with such topics.

National gazetteers (item 6(e))

135. An update was provided on the data compilation and gazetteer programme of the United States of America (E/CONF.85/L.30). It was indicated that approximately 75 percent of the 25 year project had been completed and it was estimated that the project would take a further ten years. The period of compilation was about 3 to 4 years per state, and a graphic indication of the status of compilation of each state gazetteer was provided. States in active compilation could add thousands of records to the database on a monthly basis. Publication of conventional gazetteers was a slow process and generally required about ten months of editing and processing.

136. Germany reported (E/CONF.85/L.94) that the gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany was published in 1981. A supplementary volume to cover the former German Democratic Republic is in preparation and will be published in 1993. A corresponding data file is being prepared simultaneously. The completed data file of Germany will allow the derivation of a concise gazetteer.

137. The United States of America presented Working Paper 9 to describe its publication of foreign gazetteers since the Fifth Conference. These gazetteers were generally based on 1:250,000 scale mapping and the categories of information were mainly locative. There were two approaches to gazetteer revision: either a total or a limited revision based upon a survey of source materials. Delegates were informed of the increase in revision of gazetteers covering some Latin American countries, a response to the need for information in the anti-drug field. A revised gazetteer of undersea feature names had also been published. It was stated that the inclusion in foreign gazetteers of pronunciation guides was not practical, but that spelling is of paramount importance.

138. In congratulating the United States of America for the production of the Gazetteer of South Africa, South Africa offered its collaboration on future volumes of such a gazetteer, particularly in dealing with orthographical problems related to the country.

Other publications (item 6(f))

139. Austria presented document E/CONF.85/L.17, the introduction to the Comparative multilingual gazetteer of the geographical names of the Danubian countries, which is the index to the Atlas of the Danubian Countries and forms the basis for the data file described in document E/CONF.85/L.15. In response to the inquiry from Czechoslovakia, it was stated that because the atlas was published many years ago, the transliteration systems are those

of ISO 1967 for the Cyrillic script alphabets and ISO 1963 for the Greek alphabet. Therefore, these transliteration systems differ from the newer romanization systems, GOST 1983 and ELOT 793, sanctioned by the United Nations.

140. Romania introduced document E/CONF.85/L.20 describing the national gazetteer of geographical names based upon a map scale of 1:500,000, and published in accordance with resolutions of UN Conferences. The gazetteer is divided into four sections. The first contains the names of departments with their short forms and principal towns; the second and the third contain municipality names with their geographical coordinates; and the fourth contains physical feature names with geographical coordinates. The procedures followed in the drafting of this gazetteer are those found in the toponymic guidelines of Romania.

141. Canada presented E/CONF.85/L.53 prepared by the Commission de toponymie du Quebec and provided an illustrated page from the forthcoming dictionary of geographical names in Quebec. This dictionary details cultural and historical information for some 6,000 names, and is to be published in 1993 with maps and illustrations.

142. Thailand presented Working Paper 32, A list of country names and their capitals. At the request of the Chinese delegation "Taiwan", which was put into the list of Country Names of Working Paper 32 of Thailand and Working 30 of Greece, should be deleted. The United Kingdom representative drew attention to the need for the removal from Thailand's report (Working Paper 32) of the country name "Republic of Macedonia". Speaking on behalf of the European Community, he added that the European Council supported the view of the European Community that such recognition would be conferred only if the boundaries of the new Republic remained the same as those of the former province within Yugoslavia, as they are at the present time, and if the name did not include the term "Macedonia". Greece spoke in support of the statement presented by the United Kingdom.

Terminology in the standardization of geographical names
(item 7)

143. Israel presented the report of the UNGEGN Working Group on Terminology. The Convenor outlined the history of the Working Group, and presented the new version (1.2) of the Glossary (E/CONF.85/CRP.1) stressing adherence to the time frame. It was indicated that comments received before the 31 January 1992 deadline had been evaluated and processed accordingly. It was further proposed that the Conference accept the Glossary and present it to the United Nations for translation into the other official languages of the United Nations. Also appropriate

members of the Working Group should be appointed by the UNGEGN to coordinate the translation of these languages.

144. The United States of America inquired as to the extent of collaboration by the United Nations Terminology Services in the preparation of the document, and wondered if there had been any duplication of effort by the two bodies. It was replied that the Working Group was autonomous, but that the United Nations would be involved in the production of the Glossary.

145. It was reported on behalf of the Place Name Survey of the United States (E/CONF.85/L.27) that PLANSUS would await publication of the (United Nations) Glossary in order to avoid duplication of effort and discrepancies in the production of its own dictionary of toponymic terms. The United States and Canada felt that any glossary prepared by PLANSUS should be specialized and aimed at the research community.

146. Hungary presented document E/CONF.85/L.70, offering remarks on definitions. As the comments included were based on the previous version of the Glossary published in May 1991, several terms had already been corrected. Czechoslovakia supported the corrections of some terms, as mentioned in the paper. Israel thought it necessary to add the term "minority name". The new Glossary had been used for both lectures and exercises at the recent training course held in Pretoria, South Africa.

147. The United States of America presented Working Paper 19 on linguistic terminology in toponymy, and emphasized that approximately one third of the terms in the Glossary were derived from the science of linguistics. It was felt that terminology was needed for purposes of communication and it was recommended that definitions be explicit, objective and parsimonious. The delegate elaborated upon the high level of interrelationship among terms and highlighted the consequent danger of arbitrary additions, deletions and modifications, by providing several examples.

Action taken by the Conference

148. The Conference adopted four draft resolutions (for the texts, see chapter III, resolutions 8 to 11).

D. Committee III: International programmes

Features beyond a single sovereignty (item 10)

Policies, procedures and cooperative arrangements (item 10 (a))

149. Canada presented E/CONF.85/L.54, a Document of Understanding between the USA and Canada on the treatment of names of cross-border features. The Document, which had taken several years to formulate, emphasized the cooperation between the two national names boards, and recognized the important role played by the International Boundary Commission of the USA and Canada, particularly in the updating of border maps. Annex A of the document provides guidance to staff on the treatment of transboundary names.

150. El Salvador requested details of the procedures followed by the USA and Canada as helpful guidelines for the second edition of the country's geographical dictionary.

Features common to two or more nations (item 10(b))

151. The Republic of Korea made a statement concerning the history behind the naming of the sea to the east of the country. It is known in Korea as "Tong-Hae" (East Sea), but is often referred to by others as the Sea of Japan. The Republic of Korea requested that a name or names, acceptable to the parties concerned, be determined through consultation in accordance with relevant resolutions of the Conferences. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea expressed willingness to consult and negotiate with other parties concerned, on this matter. Japan felt that the name "Sea of Japan" had already been accepted world-wide and that the introduction of other names would cause confusion and would not be in line with the aim of standardization. It was suggested that the relevant parties consult each other.

Maritime features (item 10 (c))

152. This subject was not addressed by the Conference.

Undersea features (item 10 (d))

153. Norway informed the Conference of the trend in procedures of companies naming oil fields in Norwegian waters. The names used were often not ordinary undersea feature names, and Norway felt that this trend should be discouraged. In principle, the United Kingdom agreed with the Norwegian representative, but stated

that, generally speaking, by the time an oil-field name was published it was already too late to change it.

Antarctic features (item 10 (e))

154. In presenting Working Paper 38, Germany, drew attention to the existence of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), and outlined the programmes of its Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information. Details were given on the terms of reference of the Antarctic Place-Names programme. Cooperation was advocated by Member Countries between SCAR and the Group of Experts.

155. Norway referred to the problem of naming places in the Norwegian dependencies in Antarctica, and outlined three possible solutions in dealing with foreign names in that area: (a) complete translation of the name; (b) translation of the generic element only; (c) leaving the specific and generic elements as found, provided they are in Roman script. The guidelines followed by Norway in naming Antarctic features were explained.

156. The United States of America presented Working Paper 10 which detailed programmes of the US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) on names in Antarctica. Examples of close cooperation with other organizations were cited, e.g. the US National Science Foundation and the British Antarctic Place-Names Committee. Attention was drawn to the publication in 1988 of a gazetteer of approximately 15,000 names (approved and variant), and to the detailed procedures followed when dealing with foreign names in the area.

Writing systems and guides to pronunciation (item 11)
Romanization (item 11 (a))

157. Thailand presented documents E/CONF.85/L.80 and E/CONF.85/L.81. The former dealt with the transliteration of Thai, and the latter with its revised transcription. The proposed transliteration for Thai had been presented for information to the Fifth UN Conference and to the 15th Session of the UNGEGN, and had been adopted in 1992 by the International Standards Organization (ISO) as a Draft International Standard. The system was a two-way conversion which ignored the problem of pronunciation, and its objective was to provide a means of electronic communication. The aim of the revised transcription system was to facilitate the pronunciation as closely as possible of Thai names by foreigners. The existing system had been applied to all geographical names throughout Thailand since 1967.

158. The Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems introduced Working Paper 11. He enquired which of the

two Thai systems was to be considered for adoption and reminded the Conference that evidence of implementation of a romanization system by the donor country was necessary.

159. The Convenor of the Working Group asked for information on the use of the ELOT 743 system in Greek products, of the GOST 1983 system in Russian products, and on the status of the system for Korean being jointly devised by the two Koreas. The newly independent states of the former Soviet Union were invited to participate in the work of the Group of Experts and to comment on the status of their national languages and scripts.

160. Democratic People's Republic of Korea presented Working Paper 46 as a basis for joint discussion by the two Koreas on the subject of the romanization of Korean. It had been recommended at the 14th Session of the UNGEGN in 1989 that such guidelines be drawn up, and it was unfortunate that no meeting between North and South Korea had taken place. The Republic of Korea recalled that it had already presented guidelines for the romanization of Korean at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987, and expressed its hope that some conclusion could be reached through consultations based on both its guidelines and those of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Conversion into non-Roman writing systems, and writing of names in unwritten languages (items 11 (b) and (c))

161. These subjects were not addressed by the Conference.

Research and experiments in assisting in name pronunciation (item 11 (d))

162. France presented document E/CONF.85/L.35 which described the work undertaken by the Institut Géographique National and the local Topographic Service in the revision of 1:50,000 scale maps of New Caledonia. The revision showed that old maps, from 1955 and 1956, contained toponymic errors and large expanses devoid of names. Two major difficulties were encountered in the work of the Topographic Service: the great diversity of languages and dialects, and the lack of a single standardized writing system. A writing system had been devised, but not all phonetic variants in the field had been taken into account, as it had often been difficult to determine their relevance. The revision of the mapping had been important for the local population since it had helped to safeguard the oral tradition and heritage.

Toponymic education and practice, and international co-operation (item 12)

Existing education and practice (item 12(a))

163. The United States of America presented a syllabus for ADP technology (E/CONF.85/L.28). The representative outlined an ADP training module in courses sponsored by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), and noted that the module was included in three of those four courses. Special training in data collection, office processing and data entry was included. The necessity of beginning the module with the subject of terminology was emphasized, in order to familiarize students with language that they would encounter during the course. The instructor often benefited as much as the students and, as a result, the course was continually being improved.

164. El Salvador, reported that the courses on geographical names sponsored by PAIGH had contributed to the study of toponymy in El Salvador and proposed the distribution of the syllabi and reports of all training courses.

Training courses in toponymy (item 12(b))

165. Canada presented document E/CONF.85/L.55, and reported on the toponymic training course held in Quebec, Canada, in August 1988. The course, aimed at qualified technicians who worked in national cartographic or toponymic fields, was organized by the Commission de toponymie du Québec, primarily for representatives of French-speaking countries, and included a variety of lectures, practical exercises, demonstrations and field work. The course covered all aspects of names treatment, including the standardization and maintenance of names records in a digital environment. Suggestions on future course content were made by participants.

166. Canada presented document E/CONF.85/L.56 which listed papers gathered by Canada as a suggested "training kit". The papers in English, but based on material presented in Quebec in 1988, provided material on subjects ranging from the role of national toponymic authorities to place-naming in a bilingual context. Canada explained that, in order to reduce publication costs, the papers had been photocopied and spiral-bound, rather than printed.

167. Ireland expressed concern at the lack of advance notice of such courses, and suggested that formal notification be given, if necessary to individual foreign ministries, in order to heighten national awareness of toponymic training courses. Israel suggested the UNGEGN Newsletter as one possible means as a means of notification and publicizing of such courses.

168. Mexico spoke of the country's intention to modernize its training system, and felt that the material gathered from courses discussed at this Conference would be helpful in the planning of national training courses.

169. The Netherlands presented the report of the Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymy Courses (E/CONF.85/L.87). The delegate spoke of the courses sponsored by UNGEGN and by PAIGH, and thanked Canada for providing training kits. He made a plea, echoed by the Chairman, for more funds from the UN to continue and enhance training courses, and expressed his opposition to the idea of standardizing such courses. He felt that the courses should be adaptable in order to address the particular needs and problems of the country concerned.

170. Norway agreed, and stated the opinion that courses should be flexible and designed for different levels to suit different purposes.

171. Ukraine asked that the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union be notified of, and be invited to attend, future training courses.

172. The Netherlands reported (E/CONF.85/L.86) on the training course held in Pretoria, South Africa, in June and July 1992. Forty participants from Namibia, Botswana and South Africa, half of whom were mother-tongue speakers of African languages, attended. Two major decisions had resulted from the training course: to establish a Southern African geographical names dictionary unit, and to begin a Southern African placename survey. Perhaps too little attention had been paid to the question of funding toponymic activities, a subject which should be included as a possible topic in future training courses.

173. Israel introduced Working Paper 31 which outlined the innovations of the Pretoria training course. Attention was drawn to the structure of the course, which had been organized in nine daily modules. These modules allowed an overview of the subject of geographical names, both in theory and practice, paying special regard to African languages. The main innovations had been the actual operating of a digital toponymic data base and processing of data by participants, as well as research in toponymy and a wider treatment of cartography. Israel presented a series of slides on different aspects of the course in Pretoria.

174. There followed a discussion evaluating the content and success of the course held in South Africa. There had been positive feedback from participants, which had led to plans for a field-work training course in the region in the near future. An

important element of the course in Pretoria had been the successful introduction of automation to the participants.

175. New Zealand felt that papers and practical exercises from training courses were extremely valuable and hoped that the proceedings of the course held in South Africa would be made available. This prompted discussion on the publication and dissemination of the findings and reports of the course.

176. The Netherlands related difficulties in finding sponsorship for the editing, printing and distribution of proceedings of the previous training course in Indonesia (1989). South Africa remarked that related costs incurred by the Pretoria course had been partially covered by the attendance fee, by the University of Pretoria, and by sponsorships. The documentation would also be offered for purchase to as wide an audience as possible. Israel suggested that a resolution be tabled asking the UN to help finance and produce these reports; the Conference agreed.

Exchange of advice and information and exchange of personnel (items 12 (c) and (d))

177. These subjects were not addressed by the Conference.

Technical assistance (item 12 (e))

178. The United Kingdom presented document E/CONF.85/L.32 and Working Paper 25 and expressed the opinion that, given the present-day power and availability of micro-processors and personal computers, the transfer of technology to those countries requesting assistance in their toponymic activities posed fewer problems than the transfer of knowledge in dealing with the names themselves. As the quality of the names needed to populate a database depended heavily on the quality and consistency of the names as given in the writing systems used, and of romanization systems where such systems are employed, the representative felt that experience in a production, rather than class-room, environment was vital.

179. Canada presented document E/CONF.85/L.57 as a basis for discussion on the subject of technical assistance in developing national geographical names standardization programmes. The representative thanked the USA for help in drafting the document, outlined the basic rationale for names standardization procedures, and invited input from delegates to develop the document further to elaborate on the outline of possible steps to follow in providing technical assistance.

Co-operation with international organizations (item 12 (f))

180. The Netherlands introduced document E/CONF.85/L.88, a report on coordination between the UNGEGN and other organizations, and a draft brochure on the work of the UNGEGN for distribution to those organizations. The brochure had been written in response to various requests and had been prompted by many misconceptions about the work of the UNGEGN which had become apparent during the International Cartographic Association Conference held in Bournemouth, United Kingdom, in 1991. Comments had been invited on the contents of the brochure, and publication of a revised edition of the brochure can be expected shortly.

181. The Chairman informed the Conference of coordination between the UNGEGN and the International Committee on Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), the congress of which had been hosted by Finland, and on the new liaison established between the Chairman of the UNGEGN and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

182. The liaison officer for the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), introduced Working Paper 12. It supplemented a statement made at the 15th Session of the UNGEGN in 1991. He spoke of the continuing collaboration between IOC and IHO on charts of world oceans depicting undersea features and their names. The specifications for these charts were decided by member states. The Officer outlined the role of the Subcommittee on Geographical Names and Ocean Bottom Features (SGN), and drew attention to the format of a gazetteer produced by that body.

183. In response to questions, the Officer stated that there were principles emerging on the prerogative of maritime nations to name features within their Exclusive Economic Zones.

Cooperation with public information media (item 12 (g))

184. Canada presented Working Papers 33, 34 and 44 as examples of brochures which may be useful to other bodies. Working Paper 34 consisted of publicity material for the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN), and was aimed at heightening awareness in Canada of the existence of a mechanism for standardizing geographical names. Working Paper 44 had initially been formulated as a response to the many queries received by the CPCGN on the attribution of new names to features in that country. (Working Paper 33 had been dealt with under agenda item 5d).

Cooperation with national and international agencies and other bodies (item 12 (h))

185. The United States reported (Working Paper 8) on the work of PAIGH carried out since the Fifth UN Conference. Four two-week courses in names standardization had been held in Latin America under the auspices of PAIGH, and a fifth was planned in Brazil later in 1992. Attention was drawn to the syllabus of the course and the Conference was informed that an effort was made to ensure that the course content was appropriate for the country concerned.

186. Mexico confirmed that the PAIGH course held in the country had been a success, and spoke of the regionalization of toponymic activity through the establishment of ten offices in Mexico.

187. Venezuela stated that the establishment of that country's Comision Nacional de Nombres Geograficos in April 1992 had been a positive result of PAIGH courses.

188. El Salvador informed the Conference that a committee for names standardization was being established in El Salvador. Field classification of names was being updated by automation as a result of knowledge gained from the PAIGH courses.

189. The delegate from Brazil assured the Conference of the country's intention to contribute to the success of the Fifth PAIGH course to be held in Brazil in 1992.

190. Botswana reported the difficulties met by the Botswana Place Names Commission (PNC) in respect of its authority, permanence and legal status. It is hoped that international contact initiated through the attendance at the Pretoria course and this Conference will go a long way for Botswana to improve the attitude of the authorities and the public towards the work of the PNC and thus enhance its work. Guinea spoke of similar problems, and called for the broadest circulation possible of documentation produced by training courses.

Action taken by the Conference

191. The Conference adopted two draft resolutions (for texts, see chapter III, resolutions 12 and 13).

Chapter III

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE

1. Creation of an Africa South Division, a Baltic Division and an Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division

The Conference,

Considering that the composition of the linguistic/geographical divisions should enhance the work of the UNGEGN,

Recommends the creation of the following new linguistic/geographical divisions to be called:

Africa South Division,
Baltic Division,
Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division.

2. Re-activation of the Latin America Division

The Conference,

Considering that the linguistic/geographical division of Latin America was not represented at the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names,

Recommends that the countries of Brazil, El Salvador, Spain, Mexico, Portugal and Venezuela re-activate this division, initially embodying those six countries, but later strengthened by the participation of all the countries of Latin America.

3. Statement of Aims and Functions of the UNGEGN

The Conference,

Noting that Resolution 4 of the Fifth United Nations Conference recommended that a Working Group be established to evaluate the activities of the UNGEGN,

Taking note further that the Working Group has prepared a revised version of the Aims and Function in the Statute of the UNGEGN (Working Paper 50), designed to give the UNGEGN a more active role,

Having considered the revision of the Statute of the UNGEGN presented by the Working Group as an initial step towards improving the functions of the UNGEGN,

Recommends the adoption of revised Aims and Functions of the Statute of the UNGEGN (Part I - Aims and Part III - Functions), as mentioned in Working Paper 50 of this Conference, to replace the corresponding parts of the Statute adopted at the 12th and

13th Sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), and endorsed by the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

4. Working Group on Evaluation

The Conference,

Taking note that the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names created a Working Group to evaluate the activities of the UNGEGN, including a review of resolutions passed at the five United Nations Conferences on the standardization of geographical names,

Compliments the Working Group on Evaluation on the completion of its task and acknowledges its disbandment,

Endorses the recommendations of the Working Group on Evaluation regarding:

- (a) the actions covered by the revised Aims and Functions of the Statute of the UNGEGN (Resolution VI/3);
- (b) the classification of conference resolutions according to their relevance to the work of the UNGEGN;
- (c) the need for the Secretariat to maintain a list of national geographical names authorities;
- (d) the need to request oral presentation of only the summaries of written reports of nations and divisions, at the United Nations Conferences;
- (e) the need to promote national and divisional activities.

5. Working Group on Publicity and Funding

The Conference,

Noting the need to increase interest of the international community in the standardization of geographical names,

Noting further that there is a lack of dissemination of information, both of a popular and a professional nature, on current work, on past achievements and on benefits derived from standardization,

Noting further that this lack of publicity material stems, among other reasons, from a lack of funds,

And noting further the need for funding for the UNGEGN activities,

1. Recommends the establishment of a Working Group on Publicity and Funding within the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, to work in close cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat;
2. Further recommends that this Working Group investigate methods and means to ensure that adequate funds be

allocated to the activities of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

6. Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

The Conference,

Noting the positive results of the work accomplished on the standardization of geographical names at both the national and international levels by Member States of the United Nations,

Noting also the essential role played by the present Conference in the co-ordination of those efforts,

Recognizing the necessity of continuing this important work,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Iran for its offer to act as host for the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names;
2. Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in Iran in the second half of 1997.

7. Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors

The Conference,

Noting with appreciation the increasing number of countries preparing Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors,

Considering that wider dissemination of these toponymic guidelines is essential to maximize their usefulness,

Recommends:

- (a) that toponymic guidelines be published in combined volumes, in at least one of the working languages of the United Nations,
- (b) that provision be made for such publication by the United Nations Secretariat, in the World Cartography Bulletin.

8. Information from countries regarding changes in geographical names

The Conference,

Bearing in mind the political changes which have occurred in the world during recent years and which have a direct bearing on geographical names,

Recommends that countries transmit to the Secretary of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names information regarding changes in geographical names every six months,

wherever possible, in order to enable the Secretariat to communicate those changes through the UNGEGN Newsletter or any other publication, at its convenience.

9. Recognition of national standardization

The Conference,

Recognizing the cultural and historical significance of geographical names,

Aware of the sensitivity to deliberate changing of geographical names, which could lead to the loss of cultural and historical heritage,

Discourages the unauthorized changing of geographical names which have already been established by a legally-constituted entity and nationally recognized,

Endorses and Reaffirms Resolution 16 of the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which emphasizes that geographical names given and/or standardized by a body other than that nationally authorized, should not be recognized by the United Nations.

10. List of Country Names

The Conference,

Recalling that the Working Group on Country Names of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) which was established at the 5th Session of the Group of Experts, submitted to the 12th Session of UNGEGN, (in implementation of recommendations III/6 and IV/10), a list of country names in the official language(s) of each country,

Noting that in the case of languages not written in the Roman alphabet, the names should be accompanied by their romanization through a romanization system recognized by the United Nations, and in the absence of such a recognized system, in any other romanization system,

Noting also that with the assistance of the UN Terminology Section, the names of the countries in each of the six official languages of the United Nations were compiled,

Noting also that the Documentation, Reference and Terminology Section publishes and regularly updates a list of country names in all six official languages of the United Nations, but that the list of country names in the official language(s) of each country that is recognized by the United Nations, is not disseminated or updated,

Recalling also Resolution 11 of the Fourth Conference, Recommends that a list of country names in their official language(s) be established and regularly updated.

11. Glossary of Toponymic Terminology

The Conference.

Noting that a new Glossary has been prepared by the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, as recommended by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names at its 15th Session,

Noting further that in accordance with the same recommendation, this Glossary was compiled, in the first stage, in English only,

Recognizing that, to achieve maximum effect in the standardization of geographical names at national and international levels, the Glossary should be available to as wide a readership as possible,

Recommends:

- (a) that the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology be asked to continue to function, with the aim of producing a multilingual dictionary of toponymic terminology to include the remaining five official languages of the United Nations;
- (b) that the United Nations Secretariat be asked to supply, within an agreed time-frame, a translation of the new Glossary from the English text into each of the other five official languages of the United Nations;
- (c) Recommends further that the UNGEGN, at its 16th Session, appoint one or more experts to the said Working Group, to coordinate, and be responsible for, the translation into each of these languages;
- (d) Recommends also that the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology be asked to review periodically the glossary and update it as necessary.

12. Liaison with the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)

The Conference.

Recalling the existing Statute (1987, revised 1992) parts I(b) and III(h), of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, by which information on the work of national and international bodies on the standardization of geographical names is to be collected, and by which liaison with other international organizations dealing with related subjects is to be maintained,

Aware that the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) as a scientific advisory body to the Antarctic Treaty System has a Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information

which is responsible for collating geographical names in the Antarctic,

Noting that the Group of Experts needs to be adequately informed of the naming activity taking place in the Antarctic;

Recommends that the Group of Experts:

- (a) Recognize the working procedures on Antarctic place-names being established by the SCAR Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information;
- (b) Establish liaison with SCAR for the purpose of communicating between the two bodies and providing periodically a written report to UNGEGN on relevant SCAR activities .

13. Training Courses

The Conference,

Considering that there is still a major lack of experience in developing countries in the field of toponymy,

Noting the great interest those countries have expressed in receiving technical assistance,

Recalling Resolution 21 of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names referring to "Education and Training",

Recognizing the positive impact of the training courses held in between 1987 and 1992 in Canada, in four Latin American countries, in Indonesia and in South Africa,

Bearing in mind the substantial financial help offered by various governments,

Recommends that seminars and training courses on applied toponymy should be financially assisted by the United Nations and organized by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names or other qualified experts for participants from developing countries.

14. Vote of thanks

The Conference,

Taking note of the short duration of the Conference,

Expresses its thanks to the Secretariat and the staff of the United Nations for their support without which the Conference could not have completed its business on time.

15. Vote of thanks

The Conference,

Expresses its heartfelt thanks to the United Nations Secretariat for the excellent arrangements and services provided for the Sixth Conference;

Extends its appreciation to the Government of the United States of America, for the generous hospitality extended to participants, through the United States Board on Geographic Names;

Expresses its gratitude to the President of the Conference for his leadership and the excellent manner in which he looked after the welfare of participants;

Expresses its thanks to the Officers of the Conference and to the officers and staff of the United Nations including the interpreters and translators for their hard and dedicated work.