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DRAFT REPORT OF COMMITTEE III
prepared by the Rapporteur
Special Mapping

TU-142

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Special mapping

I. Thematic and special maps

The following documents on thematic maps were studied with interest by the Committee:

(a) The design of maps and map-making techniques:

Techniques for making thematic maps (E/CN.14/CART/158) submitted by France;

(b) The maps themselves:

Summary of topographic and cartographic work carried out in the Republic of Chad from 1 January 1963 to 30 June 1966 (E/CN.14/CART/160) submitted by Chad;

Summary of topographic and cartographic work carried out in the Republic of Gabon from 1 January 1963 to 30 June 1966 (E/CN.14/CART/163) submitted by Gabon;

Maintaining current base information for aeronautical charts (E/CN.14/CART/175) submitted by the United States of America;

Geomorphological cartography in Tunisia (E/CN.14/CART/181); Report on the cartographic activities of the Tunisian Pedological Department (E/CN.14/CART/182); and Report on the possible applications of thematic cartography to Pedology (E/CN.14/CART/183), all of which were submitted by Tunisia;

Pedological maps at 1:1,000,000 of various French-speaking countries (E/CN.14/CART/187) submitted by France;

The geological map, a basic document (E/CN.14/CART/223) submitted by the Association of African Geological Surveys.

The Committee noted that in several of these papers and the resultant interventions the necessity was emphasized of simplifying and standardizing various constituents of thematic maps, in particular: scales, colours,

symbols and legends; it also noted that these simplifications could be made only through close and constant co-operation between the compilers of the maps (scientists or technicians) and cartographers.

It emphasized that thematic maps should wherever possible and desirable be based on regular topographic documents.

The Committee noted with satisfaction the efforts made since the First Conference towards standardizing legends, colours and symbols in the fields of pedology (several African states and ORSTOM), meteorology (WMO) and economics (International Cartographic Association, Comité français de cartographie). It noted with interest the information given by the representative of ICAO on methods for bringing aeronautical charts up to date and the various offers of practical assistance in this field and approved the principle of sub-regional conferences to study common problems.

Generally speaking, the Committee, on examining the papers presented, noted that progress in the compilation and publication of thematic maps, particularly in the fields of geology, mineral deposits, pedology and geomorphology was increasing, but still inadequate. It emphasized the advantage of such maps for developing countries, both as a tool for present or future exploitation and for educational use; it urged that the various national authorities which were aware of the value of such maps should as far as possible promote their compilation and publication and should be ready to exchange them, lists being prepared for that purpose.

II. Atlases

The Committee examined the following documents in this connexion:

Report on cartographic activities in Kenya, 1963-1966
(E/CN.14/CART/150) submitted by Kenya;

Progress report of the Federal Republic of Cameroon on cartographic work carried out since the First United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa (Nairobi 1963) (E/CN.14/CART/162) submitted by Cameroon;

Summary of topographic and cartographic work carried out in the Republic of the Congo from 1 January 1963 to 30 June 1966 (E/CN.14/CART/165) submitted by the Congo (Brazzaville);

The national resources inventory (E/CN.14/CART/169) submitted by the United States of America;

Atlas of Tunisia - problems and suggestions (E/CN.14/CART/184) submitted by Tunisia;

National atlases and scientific research (E/CN.14/CART/185) submitted by France;

Maps and atlases as teaching aids (E/CN.14/CART/199) submitted by Czechoslovakia;

Report on cartographic activities in Tanzania 1963-1966 (E/CN.14/CART/200) submitted by Tanzania;

Progress report on the atlas of Morocco (September 1966) (E/CN.14/CART/222) submitted by Morocco;

The revised atlas of Africa (E/CN.14/CART/228) submitted by the USSR.

The Committee was gratified at the growing interest which seemed to be shown in national atlases, and which manifested itself in new publications or projects (Congo, Tunisia, Ivory Coast), the revision of old publications for the purpose of bringing them up to date (Kenya, Tanzania), or the publication of new maps (Morocco).

After hearing several interventions by members both on the substance of the question and on ways and means of implementation, the Committee considered that each country should work out plans for its own scientific or practical atlases, taking into account the means at its disposal, the area of its territory and the aims in view.

Mentioning the large volume of experience of competent bodies in various countries (Chad, France, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Uganda, USSR, etc.) the Committee pointed out that it was always desirable for specialists such as geographers to be responsible for the design and compilation of atlases; collaboration between these specialists and cartographers was as necessary and should be as constant as in the printing of a single thematic map.

The Committee also emphasized that the publication of an atlas was a necessary but long and burdensome task and that there must consequently be support from a body such as a permanent committee or department to ensure a constant supply of the necessary funds. A project for an atlas would seem to be suitable for integration in a plan.

The Committee also noted with satisfaction interventions emphasizing the two main uses of atlases -- in education and in planning. In the latter connexion it recognized the value of atlases that gave an inventory of national resources, as a basis for and a summary of pre-investment studies.

The Committee recommended that atlases covering homogeneous areas within a single country should be published at scales varying according to the size of the area in question, the nature and importance of the basic documents, statistical or otherwise, and the aims pursued.

On the other hand, it considered that the great intrinsic educational value of maps and atlases can only be increased by co-operation between teachers and cartographers, which would make them completely efficient aids.

The Committee, convinced of the importance of atlases and of the role that they play and desirous to maintain their scientific, technical

and educational value at a high level, warmly recommended that the greatest attention be devoted to the origin and quality of basic documents, cartographic or otherwise, particularly when the latter come from outside the countries concerned, and insisted that the source and date of the source should always be mentioned on the maps, in the commentaries on the maps or in the index.

The Committee made no statement on the distinction between "scientific" atlases and "normal" or "practical" atlases; it seemed natural to the Committee that every atlas should be prepared from reliable and accurate data, whether topographic, planimetric or thematic; the basic scale selected, and, above all, the nature of the documentation used, its elaboration into more or less complex combinations, determined the scientific value of an atlas.

Finally, in the practical field, the Committee recommended that atlases be made in a form that would facilitate the indispensable process of bringing them up to date by the substitution or addition of maps and notes.