

Metzger  
36 July 1995

**CORRIGENDUM**

**UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

**NEWSLETTER NO. 15**

**MAY 1995**

Regrettably in processing the contributions to the Newsletter, certain errors were introduced.

Experts are requested to amend the text of the Newsletter as follows:-

**Page 10, 14th line from the bottom of the page**

Delete "at present time" and insert "at the present time".

**Page 11, 21st line from the top of the page**

Delete "date" and insert "data" to read "guaranteeing that the data is up-to-date".

**Page 12, 3rd line from the bottom of the page**

Delete "terms" and insert "term", to read "having adopted the term for use.....".

**Page 13, 5th line from the top of the page**

After "1967" insert "and" to read "Yet in 1967 and in all.....".

**Page 13, 7th line from the top of the page**

Delete "Onomastic" and insert "Onomastics".

**Page 13, 16th line from the top of the page**

Delete "Onomastic" and insert "Onomastics".

**Page 13, 6th line from the bottom of the page**

Delete "Somehow the eye of UNGEEN has" and insert "Somehow the eyes of UNGEEN have.....".

**Page 13, 2nd line from the bottom of the page**

Delete "ethno-morass" and insert "ethno-political morass."

**Page 14, 5th line from the bottom of the page**

Delete "Geneva" and insert "Genève" to read "Genève which UNGEEN would define as an 'endonym'."

**Page 16, 2nd line from the top of the page**

The word "situated" is the end of a paragraph. The rest of the text forms a new paragraph, beginning with the words "The definition of....."



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**UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT  
SERVICES**

**UNITED NATIONS  
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

*Newsletter*

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## NOTE

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

## PREFACE

### Message from the Chairman

#### The UNGEGN and the Future

I thank all those experts who responded to my request for advice and suggestions on ensuring that the UNGEGN remains relevant and effective, especially in view of the restructuring of various United Nations bodies. On the basis of their responses, the following conclusions are reached and recommendations made:

1. Most original work was done in the earlier years of the Group's existence: most thorny issues were deliberated and solutions to problems found; appropriate procedures were determined for carrying out the activities of the Group; and most relevant resolutions were adopted then.
2. What remains to be done is to carry out the actions necessary to implement resolutions already adopted and decisions already taken; to ascertain what new challenges and opportunities exist for this unique Group; and to streamline the activities and procedures of the Group to ensure a minimum of wastage of time, energy and money.
3. In this regard the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation should be reconstituted.
4. The Convener of that Working Group should establish, with the cooperation of the Chairman of each Division, and that of the respective Conveners of the other Working Groups:
  - (a) which countries do not yet have national names authorities, bodies or persons;
  - (b) which countries do not yet have standardizing programmes;
  - (c) which countries do not yet have Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors;
  - (d) which countries do not yet have gazetteer series, map series, and other means of dissemination of standardized geographical names;
  - (e) which countries do not yet have lists of exonyms prepared or in preparation;
  - (f) which countries, where relevant, do not yet have romanization keys or transliteration tables;
  - (g) which countries require assistance as regards toponymic training courses; and
  - (h) any other matter which requires attention and rectification.
5. The findings should be tabulated to facilitate speedy perusal and control of progress in rectifying matters.
6. Each country, where relevant and appropriate, should be visited by a small group of experts (for example the Chairman, the Convener of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation, and one or two other experts in the relevant field)

to encourage and assist in establishing a national names authority, arrange a toponymic training course, give guidance in gazetteer and map production, and in the preparation and production of Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors, lists of exonyms, romanization keys, etc.

7. The Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation should furthermore continue to review in detail all procedures and activities of the UNGEGN, including its Sessions and the Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, critically appraise each of these, identify which are relevant, which are in line with United Nations priorities and strategy, and which should be eliminated or amended. Those recommendations already made and decisions taken in this regard should be implemented forthwith.
8. A trust fund should be established as soon as possible to provide funding for such visits; for the funding of toponymic training courses where these are necessary; for the preparation and distribution of documents such as working papers, reports, etc., to experts and member countries unable to participate in UNGEGN Sessions and United Nations Conferences.
9. Mechanisms should be devised to ensure the speedy implementation of recommendations of Sessions of the UNGEGN and resolutions of the Conferences.
10. If the UNGEGN Newsletter is to continue, a programme should be devised to ensure the submission of contributions by Chairmen of Divisions, Conveners of Working Groups, and Experts, perhaps on the basis of a system of rotation.
11. To obviate repetitive discussions of matters settled and agreed to in former years, but unknown to newer experts, etc., a comprehensive document should be compiled containing details of such decisions, including references to working papers in which the pertinent matters were dealt with.
12. A manual should be compiled containing, inter alia, the terms of reference of the UNGEGN, its aims and functions, rules of procedure, resolutions adopted, progress made, and any other information useful to experts, cartographic and other editors, and decision makers, and for promotion of the work of the UNGEGN.

Peter E. Raper  
UNGEEN Chairman

## I. NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

### A. Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)

News from the Islamic Republic of Iran

#### H. Malmirian (Islamic Republic of Iran)

The Islamic Republic of Iran as the head of the Asia South-West Linguistic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names hosted the Fifth Regional Meeting of the Division from 24-26 January 1995 in Tehran with delegates participating from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

In the course of the meeting, the resolutions of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Sessions of UNGEGN and the resolution adopted in the Sixth UNCSGN, the background of international activity on the Standardization, national report, the list of exonyms prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the manners of romanization of geographical names (Toponymic Guideline), and the manner of regional communications and exchange information on the Standardization of Geographical Names were thoroughly discussed, and the delegates adopted a resolution of 11 articles.

### B. East Europe, North and Central Asia Division

First Session, Kiev, 24-28 October 1994

#### V. Boginskij (Russian Federation)

The First Division session was held in Kiev (Ukraine) from 24 to 28 October 1994. The session was attended by representatives from Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and United States of America.

The following items were discussed:

1. Information on the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of geographical names;
2. Information on the Twelfth East Central and South-Eastern Europe Division session;

3. **National standardization:**
  - National names authorities;
  - Field collection of names;
  - Office treatment of names;
  - Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors;
  - Toponymic data files;
  - Automated data processing systems;
  - National gazetteers and dictionaries of geographical names;
4. **Exonyms:**
  - Categories of exonyms and degree of their use;
  - Principles to be followed in the reduction of exonyms;
  - Lists of exonyms;
5. **Writing systems:**
  - Romanization systems in the countries with non-Roman script;
  - Conversion in the countries with Cyrillic script;
6. **Measures taken and proposed to implement the United Nations resolution on the standardization of geographical names;**
7. **Other business.**

The Chairman of the Ukrainian National Council on Geographical Names informed the session on the main results of the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

The Ukraine reported on the Twelfth East Central and South-East Europe Division session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Armenia informed the session that national authority on geographical names had not yet been established in the Republic, so standardization of geographical names was not carried out.

Belarus reported that the Committee on Geodesy had been disbanded and its structure was being reorganized. The Minsk cartographic factory and Belarussian cartographic-geodetic enterprise deal with the standardization of geographical names at present. The need to establish a national council on geographical names was pointed out. The Committee on Geodesy adopted a national romanization system that was developed together with the Institute of the Belarussian Language named after Yakub Kolas. The system is still being refined.

Bulgaria informed the session that the Council on Orthography and Transcription established more than 25 years ago, had resumed its activity. National standardization of geographical names has been accelerated. A number of gazetteers and manuals have been released.

The Kyrgyzstan stated that national standardization of geographical names was not yet carried out. Cartographic production is published in the Russian language. The Republic is going to transfer to Roman script. Efforts are being taken to reconstruct Kyrgyz toponyms as well as to restore lost microtoponyms.

Lithuania reported in detail on the development of geographical names data files.

Poland clarified the structure of the gazetteer "Geographical Names of the Republic of Poland" and described methods to compile a list of exonyms.

The Russian Federation informed the session that the Government of Russia had established an interdepartment Commission on Geographical Names. It was stressed that in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, decisions on geographical names required federal laws. The information was submitted on preparing draft laws on geographical names and developing normative, methodological and reference documents. The session was informed of the Seventeenth United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Session. Unfortunately, the only representative from the East Europe, North and Central Asia Division to this Session was the expert from the Russian Federation.

The United States of America reported on the computer database on geographical names in the Board on Geographical Names and romanization system for non-Roman scripts.

Turkmenistan informed the session that it lacked specific authority engaged in standardization of geographical names. Transfer to Roman script is planned. Meanwhile, cartographic production is issued in the Russian, Turkmen and English languages.

Estonia reported on the standardization of Estonian toponyms, and Estonian rendering of foreign geographical names as well as on romanization systems used to render names within the boundaries of the former USSR. It was pointed out that an automated toponymic data file was being developed. Lists of Estonian toponyms are being compiled.

The Ukraine reported on the situation with the standardization of geographical names, establishing the Ukrainian National Council on Geographical Names. It was noted that a romanization system for Ukrainian Cyrillic was developed. The romanization system adopted by the Ukraine Main Administration of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre is used in publishing cartographic production for international use.

While discussing Division staff, the session adopted the following decisions: Armenia, Belarus, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine expressed their wish to work on a permanent basis; Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, United States of America and Estonia wished to participate as observers. The Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan need additional consultations to decide upon the form of their participation.



The countries that expressed their wish to work on a permanent basis unanimously nominated the Russian Federation to coordinate the Division's activities until the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Mr. Boginskij (Russian Federation) was elected the Chairman of the Division and Ms. Krinitzkaya (Ukraine) its Vice-Chairman.

The session of East Europe, North and Central Asia Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names recommended that its member countries which lacked national authorities on geographical names accelerate their establishment.

### C. United States of America - Canada Division

#### News from the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

##### Helen Kerfoot (Canada)

The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) held its annual meeting in Victoria, British Columbia, in September 1994. We welcomed Roger Payne, Executive Secretary of the United States Board on Geographic Names, and Jun'ichi Kaneko, Head of Map Sources Material at the Geographical Survey Institute of Japan, to participate in toponymic discussions. The main topics of concern to federal, provincial, territorial and academic members of the CPCGN included: world-wide dissemination of toponymic data through Internet; production of a second edition of the **Canada Gazetteer Atlas** and of a national gazetteer (paper copy and digital); data standards and exchange between federal and provincial/territorial levels; Aboriginal toponymy in Canada; and guides for field collection.

The CPCGN meets for one and one-half days each year, and several advisory groups (e.g. toponymy research, digital toponymic services, and nomenclature) meet earlier in the same week.

During November 1994, Helen Kerfoot participated in the work of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australia, at its annual meeting in Ballarat, and in the Geographical Names Workshop organized by the Department of Survey and Land Information of New Zealand (DOSLI) in Wellington. Canada shares much in common with these two countries in the treatment of Aboriginal toponymy and in questions of possible double naming, and with Australia in the federal-state/provincial structure in which geographical names boards are established and operate.

## Recent publications

### (a) Commission de toponymie du Québec

**Noms et lieux du Québec - Dictionnaire illustré (1994).** Ce dictionnaire toponymique contient plus de 6 000 rubriques, 20,000 toponymes, plus de 700 photos et 38 cartes, la plupart en couleurs. Les rubriques s'appuient notamment sur des renseignements géographiques et historiques.

**Fichiers des toponymes populaires** - 13 000 noms géographiques répertoriés alphabétiquement. Il s'agit de noms de lieux habités qui, sans être nécessairement officiels, sont souvent utilisés à la place du nom de la municipalité à laquelle ils appartiennent.

### (b) Alberta

**Place names of Alberta, Vol. III: Central Alberta.** This illustrated publication lists official names with position, history and meaning. Volume IV on Northern Alberta is in preparation. Volumes I and II on the mountains and Southern Alberta are already available.

### (c) CPCGN Secretariat

**Gazetteer of Canada series** - recent volumes are available for Nova Scotia (1993), Manitoba (1994) and New Brunswick (1994); these gazetteers may also be obtained as digital files. The **Répertoire toponymique du Québec** and its 1993 cumulative supplement continue to be available, as does the **Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names of 1987**. Prices available on request.

**Native Canadian geographical names: an annotated bibliography/La toponymie autochtone du Canada: une bibliographie annotée.** The bilingual publication has been updated to 1995 and contains over 1,400 entries (mostly Canadian; indexes by location and native groups/languages). Price: \$12 Canadian for the second edition.

**Guide to the field collection of Native geographical names and Guide pour la collecte sur le terrain de toponymes autochtones** - available in English and French.

**Principles and procedures for geographical naming / Principes et directives pour les noms de lieux** - available in English, French and Spanish.

**Canoma** - The CPCGN's newsletter Canoma, Volume 20, numbers 1 and 2 were published in 1994. An index of 20 years of 2 issues per year has been prepared.

## **Digital data**

National Canadian digital names files are available in ASCII format from the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base, and individual provincial digital files may be available from some jurisdictions.

In August 1994, Canadian GeoNames was launched on Internet for world-wide consultation. All official geographical names and locational data can be queried (with instructions in either English or French) through our World Wide Web site, which is updated daily. The Universal Resource Locator (URL) to access the database is:

[http:// www-nais.ccm.emr.ca/cgndb/geonames.html](http://www-nais.ccm.emr.ca/cgndb/geonames.html)

Currently the national toponymic database is being linked to Statistics Canada data, undersea feature names information, and data on the National Topographic System map availability.

## **Recent name changes**

The City of Miramichi in New Brunswick was created on 1 January 1995. It includes the former towns of Chatham and Newcastle, the villages of Douglastown, Loggieville and Nelson-Miramichi, as well as several adjacent unincorporated rural communities.

On the same date, the District Municipalities of Abbotsford and Matsqui in British Columbia were amalgamated into the City of Abbotsford.

The first of April 1995 saw the expansion of the city limits of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. At the same time the new towns of Stratford and Cornwall were created in southern and western Charlottetown. The limits of Summerside were enlarged and it became a city.

## **Policy developments**

Agreements continue to be signed between federal and provincial/territorial governments regarding the sharing, exchange and use of toponymic data.

La Commission nationale de toponymie de France et la Commission de toponymie du Québec ont conclu une entente de coopération touchant des points d'intérêt de GENUNG (règles de traitement toponymiques, Répertoires concis, procédés informatiques).

Information on geographical names or Canada's toponymic programme may be obtained through the:

CPCGN Secretariat  
650-615 Booth Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada, K1A 0E9  
Fax: 613-943-8282  
e-mail: [hkerfoot@emrl.emr.ca](mailto:hkerfoot@emrl.emr.ca)

## II. NEWS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

### A. Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

#### H.A.G. Lewis (Chairman)

In the closing stages of the Seventeenth Session of UNGEGN, I prepared a list of matters which the Working Group should consider in the period up to the next session. Unfortunately, the list was mislaid and attempts to recover it have not been successful. I give below a modified version of it.

Four years ago, a questionnaire was sent out to UNGEGN members requesting the status of gazetteers and, in considerable detail, the particulars of equipment and methods employed in the handling of geographical names. In the case of the United Kingdom, it took six weeks to prepare answers to the questions, gathering information from the various agencies. No matter how carefully such questions are prepared, the circumstances of the recipient rarely allow positive and clear answers to be given. Furthermore, the various official agencies use different equipment and procedures. Within two years, almost all the information provided by the United Kingdom was no longer valid. Such is the rate of development in the computer world that a further two years have seen even more changes in United Kingdom equipment and procedures.

Nevertheless, I considered, in New York, that there may be some merit in re-examining all the information provided by way of answers to the questionnaire. However, I have not yet been able to obtain copies of the completed questionnaires. In view of the continuing advances in computer systems, there may not be much to be gained by a re-examination of the results of the questionnaire.

In the past decade there have been remarkable advances in the hardware and software available for the handling and processing of geographical names, and there are numerous vendors offering their equipment and services. Technology applicable to geographical names exists and it must be presumed is available to all.

The most promising development at present time is the Geographical Names Processing System (GNPS), described by United States experts during the Seventeenth Session of UNGEGN. The United Kingdom has not yet acquired this system because of further developments which are proceeding. The system is a major step forward in the integration of names databases and map production. Developments of the system will be watched with great interest.

During the Seventeenth Session, I referred to the development of computer-generated characters of script for use in mapping. There are numerous alphabets and other scripts available on the market. They are almost all designed for word processing and desk-top publishing. Of them, few are suitable for high quality topographic maps. In mapping we require legibility; economy of space; a range of sizes and a certain variety of styles. Legibility, especially in small type sizes, is not easily achieved on a highly coloured map background and the other requirements are similarly not easy to satisfy. Although this is basically a cartographic problem, the close association of names databases and maps in this age makes the subject

relevant to UNGEGN.

Those who have had experience in selecting typefaces for mapping will know that of the great number of typefaces in the Roman alphabet, very few are found to be wholly suitable. For non-Roman alphabet characters, that is still more true. In those circumstances, in the absence of a ready-made typeface suitable for the purpose, it is often necessary to create one's own typefaces. The disadvantage in doing so is that others associated with the same mapping will lack the identical typefaces. For this reason, it is important that we keep abreast of the development of the kind of high quality digital characters which can be applied to mapping.

The hard-backed gazetteer is a desirable object but it is a costly publication and it suffers from the added disadvantage that it is not easily updated. Amendment leaflets are not very satisfactory and production of a revised edition is also costly.

Digital cartography affords the facility of extracting names, coordinates of location and also some degree of names classification by type of feature to which the name refers. Names extracted in this way from all the map sheets which make up a given map series furnish us with an index of the names appearing on that series. Though such an output cannot be altogether expected to conform to the specifications set down at the First Conference (Geneva, 1967) it, nonetheless, merits the name "gazetteer".

The advantages of producing a gazetteer from a digital map series are the ability to produce a new gazetteer at frequent intervals, and the possibility of providing it in hard copy, disk or tape, or through any of the digital communication channels, while at the same time guaranteeing that the date is up-to-date.

Should the need arise, gazetteers of this type can be issued for, say, 1/250,000 series or 1/50,000 series or any other scales for which the digital map data is available.

For those of us who try to maintain databases of names, there are two constant needs:

1. We need to be informed of name changes; and
2. We need to have up-to-date administrative data, together with the means of plotting it, at the largest possible scale.

Ideally, the name changes should include the former name but, most importantly, as precise a location as possible and not less accurately than one minute of latitude and longitude.

Some countries have provided information on name changes and that has been distributed by the Secretariat, but there is a need for the practice to continue and for information from more countries in view of the number of name changes occurring throughout the world nowadays.

With regard to administrative information, this is a useful element in the preparation of gazetteers and also in confirming the location of places. Information of this kind is available from various sources but, generally, at only a very small scale. What is required is information at the largest possible scale but not less than 1/1M.

In view of the remarks made earlier in this communication, I hope Experts will agree that the issue of a further questionnaire is not desirable. At the same time, information is required on how best any help can be provided where it is needed. It is therefore requested that Experts themselves state where in their Divisions procedures or equipment are felt to be deficient. The following aspects of names collection and processing are applicable, but further items can be added as required by individual Experts.

1. Field collection of names, including methods of recording and transmission;
2. Names processing in the office;

3. Questions involving names databases:
  - (i) Archival;
  - (ii) Map production;
  - (iii) Gazetteer production;
  - (iv) Questions involving feature designation in databases and gazetteers;
  - (v) Storage and integration of administrative data;
  - (vi) Gazetteer production;
  - (vii) Other outputs from names databases.

Members of UNGEGN are requested to give their views.

## B. General Remarks on UNGEGN

### H.A.G. Lewis (United Kingdom)

The Group of Experts has been in existence for almost 30 years. In that time numerous subjects have been discussed and a great many decisions taken. When such decisions reached the status of resolutions, they became documented and so were available for the Experts to take into cognizance in their work on the standardization of geographical names. However, a certain number of matters were discussed and agreed to without there being a need for them to be the subject of resolutions. They, nevertheless, formed part of the working basis of UNGEGN, providing guidance for Experts at UNGEGN Sessions and also in the Conferences. Most of those present at those early Sessions are no longer members of UNGEGN. Their successors sometimes remain unaware of what had previously transpired. As a consequence, issues are raised which had previously been rejected by UNGEGN. Matters are discussed as though for the first time when all relevant questions have been resolved in the past.

It is to be hoped that the remarks which follow will help UNGEGN to avoid spending valuable time and energy unnecessarily and in that way help it to move forward.

In 1967, ISO attended the first Conference in the capacity of an international organization. There were those, in particular J. Brey and the Swiss representatives, who were strongly in favour of our adopting ISO romanization systems. Many reasons were given for not doing so and it was concluded that UNGEGN should devise its own systems for the romanization of geographical names. At intervals after 1967, attempts were still made to persuade UNGEGN to adopt the ISO systems. They were all firmly rejected. The ISO systems are under permanent review and are subject to a five-year change. That alone makes them unsuitable for adoption by UNGEGN.

There is the eternal question of "exonyms". Discussion at the Seventeenth Session ended with open disagreement among experts as to which names are exonyms, and so after 27 years of discussion we appear to be still uncertain as to what we mean by "exonym", in spite of having adopted the terms for use by UNGEGN as long ago as 1972.

Every Session reveals how far we, the Experts, are from agreeing among ourselves on what we mean by standardization. Standardization means the use of standardized names in an

everyday context as far as possible. That means using those names on maps, in atlases, gazetteers and lists of names in order to promote their adoption nationally and internationally.

On several occasions at the Seventeenth Session, relationships with ICOS were discussed and there was evident enthusiasm on the part of several experts for closer ties with that body. Yet in 1967, in all the Conferences and UNGEGN Sessions held since then, we have unfailingly agreed that there is little to be gained by closer ties. R.R. Randall and others have reminded Experts constantly that "Onomastic is not our business". Neither is it.

In 1967, and more specifically in 1972 but also subsequently, we declared our firm intention to oppose any involvement by UNGEGN in the cultural aspects of names. UNGEGN is in no position to involve itself in such matters and it must therefore refrain from being drawn into discussions involving the cultural aspects of a nation's geographical names.

In session after session, UNGEGN devoted its time to defining its Aims, Functions and Modus Operandi. That great effort was expended to prevent UNGEGN getting lost in the byways and to keep its feet firmly on a clearly marked road. I believe the following principles need to be enunciated:

1. Onomastic and pure toponymy are not subjects with which UNGEGN should concern itself.
2. Consideration of the cultural aspects of names is a national matter. UNGEGN will not be drawn into discussion of the cultural aspects of geographical names.
3. UNGEGN must not be diverted from its goal of achieving international standardization of geographical names. This involves the encouragement of national standardization; the preparation of romanization systems and promoting their application; exchange of information to facilitate the implementation of standardization; urging the preparation of gazetteers, or lists of names where appropriate, as well as the preparation of toponymic guidelines.
4. Standardization means the adoption by the world of a single spelling for each geographical name as far as that is possible. Where two or more names have equal standing as official names, standardization rules will define the circumstances under which each has precedence.
5. Country names constitute a special category of geographical names. They are part of everyday communication in each language. From them are derived adjectives and nouns of nationality which are subject to laws of grammar. International standardization is not, therefore, a realizable goal.
6. Names of features of international extent can only be standardized in each of the world's individual languages.
7. UNGEGN will encourage the provision of technical assistance in the collection, office processing and national standardization of geographical names.

Somehow, the eye of UNGEGN has to be turned back towards its true objective - the standardization of geographical names. That is the path we should be following. The one we are on now is strewn with pitfalls. Let us please try to get back on to a road which has the right destination. If we continue to wander in the way we have been doing, we will certainly end in a technical and ethno-morass. That, I fear, would make the future of UNGEGN uncertain.



### C. The Definitions of Exonym and Endonym

#### H.A.G. Lewis (United Kingdom)

During the Seventeenth Session of UNGEGN, widely differing views were expressed on the meaning of the word "exonym". At one stage in the proceedings, discussion was brought to a halt because those differences could not be reconciled. It was suggested by the Secretariat that I contact other parties in order to achieve a common understanding in the use of this word which has become a basic part of the vocabulary of UNGEGN. Having discussed the matter with other experts, I have attempted in this communication to give a brief summary of how the term came to be adopted, with examples of the kind of basic issues over which opinions have varied. I also propose a solution which I hope Experts will accept.

The word "exonym" as applied to geographical names was coined by M. Arousseau in the 1950s, at which time he was the Secretary of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use. The term appeared in print in a book by Arousseau published in 1957.

In its absolute sense, the word means a "foreign name" or a name "from outside". That meaning cannot be eradicated. It must remain a valid definition of the word. When UNGEGN was in its infancy, J. Breu (Austria) proposed the adoption of "exonyms" as a useful term for what in the English language we had been accustomed to call "conventional names". There is no corresponding term in French. In Russian, the equivalent is "traditional name". UNGEGN therefore, adopted the word "exonym" and it has become a much used word in the period from then until now. A definition drawn up in 1972 states that "exonym" means:

"A geographical name used in a certain language for a geographical entity situated outside the area where that language has official status and differing in its form from the name used in the official languages of the area where the geographical entity is situated."

That is the definition which exactly fits the English "conventional name". It could be amplified by the addition of words stating that it had become established by usage. Speaking personally, I was opposed to the adoption of "exonym" because exonym had a more general meaning; it is a word of jargon; its adoption would lead to the introduction of "endonym", a word that, to me, made little sense. Nevertheless, the word "exonym" was adopted and defined as above. Inevitably, the word "endonym" was introduced into the working vocabulary of UNGEGN in 1975 to convey the meaning of a "local official name".

We can begin by considering the name of the city where the First Conference was held. Geneva is an exonym, by United Nations definition. It is an English conventional name. Are Ginevra and Genf exonyms? They surely are not. They are Swiss versions of the name Geneva, which UNGEGN would define as an "endonym". All three are in national languages of Switzerland. They cannot, therefore, be exonyms - foreign names. Likewise, Louvain (Belgium) is not an exonym of an endonym - Leuven. The names are just two forms of the same name in the principal languages of Belgium.

Swansea is in Wales. Its Welsh name is Abertawe. Not everybody in Swansea speaks

Welsh. Everybody speaks English. Neither name is an exonym. One is used in an English language context, the other in a Welsh language context.

Bristol is in England. It is not a Welsh-speaking city. The Welsh name for Bristol is Bryste. People in Bristol would not know that Bryste was the Welsh name for their city, unless they happen to be Welsh-speaking. Is Bryste an exonym? It certainly is not a local, official name to the inhabitants of Bristol. Yet like Genf and Ginevra, it is a name in one of the national languages of the United Kingdom. To call it an exonym would be equivalent to calling the Welsh language a foreign language, which it is not. Bryste is only an "endonym" in the Welsh language. Yet it cannot be called an "exonym", since it is a name in one of the United Kingdom's national languages and we could, if we wished, add it to official maps if we thought a bilingual name was useful.

There are clearly two issues involved here, and those are the issues which appear to cause the divisions of opinion in UNGEGN. There is the question of language and that of territory.

There are those who would argue that since Welsh is not the language of Bristol, the Welsh name is an "exonym". There are others, like myself, who maintain that names in any of the national languages cannot be exonyms. This is also the point of view put forward on various occasions by the experts from Hungary. They also appear to maintain that there are as many endonyms as there are languages used in a given country. This is especially true where more than one language is currently used in a particular place. Exonyms, therefore, are names from outside the national territory. Geneva is one example. Rome is another.

For the purposes of international standardization, the preferred name of several alternatives is a matter which can only be determined by the official national authorities. In the case of the United Kingdom, the decision as to whether official maps should contain the names Bristol and Bryste is a national matter. The classification of names into "endonyms" or "exonyms" is, likewise, a question for United Kingdom authorities alone, since the names belong to the national territory.

I still retain my original opinion that the words "exonym" and "endonym" should never have been adopted because it is so easy to argue that a place can be an exonym and, at the same time, an endonym. Since, however, there appears to be a desire to retain them, the present definitions need to be replaced. I believe the 1972 definition, suitably modified, is better for our purposes. I propose, therefore, the following definitions:

Exonym:

1. A foreign name. A name from outside the national territory.
2. For the purposes of international standardization, an exonym is regarded as being a geographical name used in a certain language for a geographical entity situated outside the area where that language has official status and differing in its form from the name used in the official languages of the area where the geographical entity is situated.

Endonym:

1. A name of a geographical entity as written in one of the officially recognized national languages.
2. When two or more names in a sovereign State are officially recognized by that State, responsibility for determining the precedence of one

name over another rests with the national authorities of the State in which the entity is situated. The definition of "conventional name" will be identical with the second part of the definition for "exonym" without the words "for the purposes of international standardization, an exonym is regarded as being....."