

GAZETTEMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN TANZANIA

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Introduction

The gazettelement of geographical names for use on maps in Tanzania is not a new phenomenon. Already a British East Africa Gazetteer for Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar was published in 1956. The gazetteer for Tanzania was produced thirteen years later. The names for the Tanzania gazetteer (1969) were supplied by the United States Geographic Names Bureau by transferring geographical names from old edition maps. The surveys and Mapping Division of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development was approving the geographical names for adoption and printing on the new edition maps of Tanzania.

The density of geographical names in an area increases with the intensity of socio-economic change. Changes in development generate new names and lead to revision of old editions of existing maps. The density of geographical names is also associated with the amount of detail and scale of the map. While all named features in a desert area can be adequately displayed at a scale of 1:250,000, thinly populated and relatively undeveloped areas require maps at a scale of 1:100,000. Areas of medium population density and levels of development require maps at a scale of 1:50,000. Area of high population density and relatively high levels of socio-economic

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development require maps at a scale of 1:25,000. Map for urban areas must be large enough to show individual streets and other land uses. Map scales of 1:10,000 and 1:2,500 are the most appropriate. It is, however, generally accepted that, the basic map scales for field work in collecting geographical names in rural areas be 1:50,000 and 1:10,000 or 1:2,500 in urban areas.¹

The transfer of geographical names from old maps onto new edition ones is unsatisfactory. It leads to, not only names being applied to wrong features, but also leads to new names being omitted completely. The longer a name remains in use incorrectly the more difficult it becomes to change. These problems are particularly true for a country like Tanzania at a formative stage of development, lacking complete coverage of basic topographical mapping and having many indigenous languages without text books of grammar or dictionaries.² The National Geographical Names standardisation Committee was established by the Geographical Names Standardisation act No. 23 of 1982, to advise the Ministry for Lands, Housing and Urban Development (or the appropriate Minister), on the correct geographical names and names spellings, to be adopted and published on maps in Tanzania, having due regard to their historical, orthographical and ethnic considerations.³ The tasks of the Committee range from determination of orthography, variations of forms of names in use in areas occupied by minority linguistic groups, commemorative names, names with same meaning but written in local and foreign languages, description of features and compilation of glossaries to a determination of names designations.

This paper is an initial attempt to propose a procedure for the collection of geographical names in the field, preparation of place names lists for checking by consultants, principles for accepting the spelling of place names on maps by the National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee of Tanzania and finally to recommend final stages of work in documenting geographical names for gazettelement in Tanzania.

Collection and Preparation of Geographical Names in the Field

Collection of Geographical Names in the field

The task of collecting geographical names in the field, processing through to printing on new edition maps and maintaining of records should be presided over by the Ministry of Lands, Water, Housing and Urban Development.

The supporting workforce for the collection of geographical names in the field should be undertaken by the surveys and Mapping Division, as part of the normal mapping and map-updating schedule, of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. Now that mapping and map-updating are done by photogrammetric and remote sensing techniques collection of geographical names in the field should be a separate exercise.

The optimum personnel requirements for successful collection of geographical names in the field include a land surveyor, local guide and resident inhabitants. The initial collection and preparation of geographical names in the field should be done by a land surveyor or topographer. The land surveyor requires some mechanical means of

transportation to speed up his work in the field. The land surveyor will require the assistance of a local guide who knows the geography and language of the area being surveyed. The land surveyor must collect the geographical names by local inquiry. A National Geographical Names Documentation Form (NGNDF) has been prepared.⁴ The Topographer should make entries in the appropriate columns on the form. In order to facilitate consistency the following procedure should be followed:

- (a) If the local written forms of geographical names in the area are available he should copy them. If the written forms of geographical names in an area are not available, the topographer should record what he hears, using Kiswahili orthography. The land surveyor's spellings should be checked by local resident inhabitants whose recommendations, together with information on language, meaning and alternative names, should be recorded. By questioning a sufficient number of local resident inhabitants the land surveyor will be able to insert the geographical names in their correct position on the map. Current usage of geographical names for features in an area should outweigh historical evidence. Where there is doubt, on the correct name of geographical features, alternative names should be recorded on the map in parenthesis, after the name commanding the most support.
- (b) In making the entries on the NGNDF the topographer should start in the north-west corner of the map and work east across the top row of grid squares listing all names in each grid square in turn.

- (c) The topographer should work west to east along all the rows of grid squares of the field map until the whole map is covered.
- (d) Features names extending over several grid squares should be entered in the square in which the initial letter of the name occurs.
- (e) Entries may be made in columns 5, 6 and 7 if known.
- (f) Columns 4 and 8 must be left blank.
- (g) About half an inch should be left between each entry on the form to allow room for comments later, if required.
- (h) The topographer should hand in their data to the National Cartographic Office for onward transmission to the draughtsmen.

Preparation of Geographical Names Lists for Checking by Consultants.

A list of geographical names, induplicate, should be prepared for each 1:50,000 1:10,000; 1:2,500 topographical sheet, using data collected by local topographical inquiry, by two draughtsmen working independently. In order to facilitate check the following procedure should be followed:

- (a) The draughtsman should start listing geographical names in the north-west corner of the map.
- (b) Then the draughtsman should work east across the top row of grid squares listing all names in each grid square in turn.
- (c) The draughtsman should work west to east along all the rows of grid squares until the whole map is covered.
- (d) Features names extending over several grid squares should be listed against the square in which the initial letter of the name occurs.

- (e) Map reference should be given using four figures only.
- (f) Occupiers of areas should not be entered on the lists.
- (g) Descriptions of unnamed features like Dams, Boreholes, Cattle Dips and Factories should not be entered on the lists.
- (h) If a name refers to more than one feature at one place all features should be mentioned in one entry.
- (i) If the same name appears for several features in several places then each should be listed in separate lines.
- (j) If a feature in one square ends its name in another, the name should be listed in the square in which the feature is located.
- (k) In the event that a topographical map sheet has more than one administrative division, then, the list must deal with one administrative division first. A new form must be used for names in the other administrative division.
- (l) The lists drawn up by two draughtsmen, working independently, should be compared and corrected. After comparison and correction the two lists should be passed on to the Secretariat of the National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee of Tanzania. The Secretary of the National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee will then convene a meeting of the National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee members, to discuss the names for adoption on the maps of Tanzania.

Principles Guiding the Geographical Names Standardisation Committee in Accepting Place Names Spellings on the Maps of Tanzania

1. The Kiswahili Orthography, in the latin alphabet as set out in standard grammars and dictionaries, should be primarily used to name geographical features on the maps of Tanzania.
2. Tanzanian vernacular names may be accepted, but the names should be so written, that when pronounced according to rules of Kiswahili pronunciation, they sound as nearly as possible correct.
3. Where the spelling of a geographical name in local orthography has become established by usage, it should be adopted. The correct spelling of the name in vernacular must be given and recorded by the National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee secretariat. The NGNSC Secretariat must seek the international phonetic symbols for the name accepted.
4. Foreign imported names into the country shall be written as originally spelt.
5. Private names shall be written as originally spelt.
6. Established wrong spellings for certain names in the country for towns, railway stations and other features, which have been in use for a long time, should not be corrected, but where there is a major difference, the correct spelling should be given in parenthesis on the map.
7. Consonants should not be doubled unless there is a special stress: eg. Serengetti should be written Serengeti.
8. Descriptions of rivers and other features should not be recorded as part of the name.

9. Diacritical marks, apostrophes and hyphens, which may be confused with topographical detail, should not be printed on maps.
10. Alternative names of features, which occur in more than one vernacular, should be recognised and recorded.
11. Wherever they are known, the language, derivation and meaning of all names adopted, should be recorded.

Final Stages of Work in Gazettement of Geographical Names for Printing on Maps of Tanzania

The final stages of work in the gazettement of geographical names include the recommendations of the NGNSC to the Minister for Lands, Water, Housing and Urban Development; publication of names lists in the government gazette; entry of place names in a card index for storage and printing of place names on maps.

The National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee shall advise the Minister for Lands, Water, Housing and Urban Development (or the appropriate Minister) on the spelling of all geographical names on maps of Tanzania having due regard to their historical, orthographical and ethnic considerations. The NGNSC had advisory powers only. It can recommend names and spellings to be published on maps, but it cannot enforce their adoption in other spheres of activities.

All names approved by the NGNSC shall be sent to the Minister for Lands, Water Housing and Urban Development for approval and publication. Sufficient time should be set aside to deal with objections and recommendations from the public and other interested parties. These observations must be dealt with adequately by the NGNSC members.

A card must be created for each approved name by the committee. The cards must be sorted and stored alphabetically. An alphabetic list for publication in the Gazettee must be made stating the map sheet, district, name and feature to which it refers.

Copies of approved names lists should be supplied to the government Cartographic office, to enter changes on the revision copies of maps. Copies of the maps and approved names lists, should be sent to the Gazetteer for printing of maps in Tanzania. The cards must then be put away alphabetically in index cabinets.

Some Organisational and Technical Problems Needing Attention by the NGNSC

Organisational Problems

The National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee cannot encompass among its membership sufficient geographical and linguistic knowledge to decide on the correctness of position and spelling of all the names on national maps. This task could partly be delegated to regional geographical names standardisation committees. This arrangement could do away with initial ambiguities and objections likely to emerge after the names have been published.

The National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee should prepare and lay down policy and general principles, prepare work programmes, coordinate, compare and approve the contribution done by the Regional Geographical Names Standardisation Committees. The NGNSC should be able to arrange for publication of approved names, deal adequately and quickly with objections and ensure that finally adopted names are brought into official use. To perform these

functions the NGNSC must have authority written into national legislation. It must have adequate resources and have the autonomy to use these resources to further the work programmes determined by it without interferences from other government departments.

Technical Problems

The NGNSC must do research in the country and seek opinion of established similar committees in neighbouring countries or elsewhere, in order to issue a principle which will be followed in deciding upon names of geographical features which, hitherto, have not been named.

The NGNSC should decide upon a principle to be followed in deciding upon variations of forms of names in use in areas occupied by minority linguistics groups in the country. This is important in areas where no formal written forms of language exist, eg. In Maasailand there exist the Uaso, Waso, Ewaso and Ewuaso forms, all meaning a river. The Standing Committee on the Standardisation of Geographical Names in Kenya has adopted the last variation. Tanzania will have to come up with an agreed upon variation. This should apply in all neighbouring geographical zones where ethnic groups cross the national boundaries.

The NGNSC should seek assistance and clarification on how to deal with commemorative names.

The NGNSC should seek advice on what to do in changing established names.

The NGNSC should find out what to do with names having the same meaning but written in several languages. eg. Uhuru Street vs Independence avenue.

The NGNSC should find out from the authorities in Zanzibar on how to deal with variations in names. A market remains a Soko on the Tanzania mainland but a market is a Marikiti on the Islands.

The NGNSC should deal adequately with the problem of definition of geographical entities and compilation of glossaries. eg. In proper English a dam refers to a bank of stone or earth which empound water. In Kenya, a dam refers to the water itself. What should Tanzania adopt?

The NGNSC must find a principle to deal with names designations. Generally the generic term is omitted from maps because, it refers to a feature, which is self-evident. Problems arise when the specific part of the name is an adjective.

e.g. Mwamba Rubanda cannot be written as Mwamba.

SUMMARY

The paper has shown the procedure of collecting geographical names in the field, preparing geographical names lists for checking by consultants, principles to be followed in accepting place names spellings, final stages of work in gazettelement of geographical names for printing on maps in Tanzania and some organisational and technical bottlenecks which should be solved. These ideas have been proposed as a guide, to the national geographical names standardisation committee, to enhance the gazettelement of geographical names in Tanzania.

Footnotes

1. Loxton, J. Report on the Progress made in the Standardisation of Geographical Names in Kenya. In: United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names, Geneva, September, 1967.
2. United Nations: Report of a Group of Experts in Geographical Names, World Cartography, Vol. V11 March, 1962.
3. United Republic of Tanzania, Geographical Names Standardisation Act No. 23, 1982, Government Printer, Dar es Salaam, 1982.
4. See Appendix 1.

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APPENDIX 1

NGNDF FORM

NAME OF FIELD TOPOGRAPHER MAP NUMBER AND NAME

DESIGNATION DISTRICT EDITION

MAP REFERENCE	TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURE	NAME ON EXISTING MAP OR DRAFT	PROPOSED CARTO- GRAPHIC SPELLING AND ALTERNATIVE NAME IF ANY	VERNACULAR SPELLING AND ALTERNATIVE NAME IF ANY	LANGUAGE	MEANING HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS REMARKS	INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC SYSTEM SPELLING