

CHAPTER 186

THE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES STANDARDISATION ACT

[PRINCIPAL LEGISLATION]

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section Title

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.
3. Establishment of Committee.
4. Functions of Committee.
5. Relevant considerations.
6. Secretary.
7. Implementation of Committee's recommendations.
8. Meeting.
9. Working parties.
10. Decisions of Committee.



SCHEDULE

CHAPTER 186

THE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES STANDARDISATION ACT

An Act to establish a National Geographical Names Standardisation Committee, to provide for the standardisation of geographical names and for connected matters.

[1st May, 1983]

[GN. No. 52 of 1983]

Act No.
23 of 1982

Short title 1. This Act, may be cited as the Geographical Names Standardisation Act.

Interpretation 2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires-
“Committee” means the Geographical Names Standardisation Committee established by section 3;
“member” means a member of the Committee and includes the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee;
“Minister” means the Minister responsible for matters relating to land surveys and mapping;
“Ministry” means the Ministry responsible for matters relating to land surveys and mapping.

Establishment of Committee 3.-(1) There is hereby established a Committee to be known as the Geographical Names Standardisation Committee.
(2) The provisions of the Schedule to this Act shall have effect as to the constitution and proceedings of, and otherwise in relation in the Committee.
(3) The Minister may, by order published in the *Gazette*, amend the Schedule to this Act.

Functions of Committee 4. The functions of the Committee shall be to-
(a) call for or receive and decide upon proposals from public authorities and members of the public generally

on matters related to the standardisation of geographical names in Tanzania;

- (b) assume responsibilities for the standardisation of geographical names in Tanzania;
- (c) co-operate with other national names authorities and national cartographic agencies to carry out research in and to promote the proper use of geographical names on existing modern maps;
- (d) keep record and publish in the *Gazette* standardised names and design methods to ensure their prompt and wide use;
- (e) keep a glossary of all geographical names in Tanzania;
- (f) give advice on such matters as may be requested by the government, public authorities and individuals with respect to standard geographical names.

Relevant considerations

5. In carrying out the functions outlined in section 4, the Committee shall have regard to the need-

- (a) for carrying out proper research for the purposes of providing and synchronizing such information as-
 - (i) spelling on old maps;
 - (ii) spelling on modern maps;
 - (iii) spelling in cadastral documents and in registers;
 - (iv) the written and spoken form of the name and its meaning according to the local inhabitants, where possible providing for the recording of the name in precise phonetic notation;
- (b) for the decisions on names of individual geographical entities to be based on broad general principles clearly stated and widely observed or deduced from the habits and attitudes of indigenous people towards geographic names;
- (c) to have a systematic treatment in producing standard forms more cheaply, quickly and uniformly where names are yet to be standardised;

- (d) to take appropriate measures to reduce the use of the same name for several geographical entities and to formulate a statement of the degree of duplication that is considered tolerable;
- (e) to ensure that where names have already been fixed by law, the process of assigning new names or of changing existing names provides for consultation with the Committee;
- (f) to consult members of the general public affected by the standard use of a name or spelling that differs from that in local usage;
- (g) to establish the exact feature when standardising the names of physical features;
- (h) to specify, where appropriate, the names of the entities to which a collective name refers when standardising collective names such as those referring to an agglomeration of inhabited places;
- (i) to ensure certainty of optional names where existing names have optional parts;
- (j) to ensure that the standardisation procedure does not suppress generic terms that are used locally or regionally;
- (k) to include a glossary of the generic terms occurring in the names to be published by the Committee;
- (l) to define the standard to be adopted where names occur in parallel syntactical or grammatical forms;
- (m) to set up standards for use of abbreviations of elements in geographical names;
- (n) to set up standards for expressing the location of geographical entities within their boundaries to a degree of precision commensurate with unambiguous identification whether the location stated in terms of geographic co-ordination by reference to other established points or both;
- (o) to include in the *Gazette* such information on geographic names as gender, number, definite and indefinite

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

Secretary

6.—(1) There shall be a Secretary of the Committee who shall be appointed by the Minister, among public officers dealing in matters related to land surveys and mapping on such terms and conditions as the Minister may determine.

(2) Where the Secretary is not a member of the Committee, he shall have no right to vote at any meeting of the Committee.

(3) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Secretary shall have such functions as may be conferred upon him by the Committee.

Implementation
of Committee's
recommendations

7. The department of the government responsible for land survey and mapping shall be responsible for the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee which are accepted by the Government.

Meeting

8. The Committee shall meet at least twice in every year.

Working parties

9.—(1) The Committee may set up working parties in various districts and regions to perform such functions as may be assigned to them by the Committee.

(2) Each working party shall consist of such number of members, some of whom may be members of the Committee, as the Committee may direct.

(3) In appointing members of a working party the Committee shall have regard to the need to provide for a wide geographical representation and possession of the necessary skill and knowledge to enable them to make useful contribution to the deliberations of the working party.

(4) Subject to its terms of reference, every working party may regulate its own procedure.

Decisions
of Committee

10.—(1) A decision of the majority of the members present and voting at a meeting of the Committee shall constitute a decision of the Committee.

(2) A decision of the Committee shall be communicated to the Minister in the form of a recommendation.

(3) There shall be taken such action in respect of the recommendations of the Committee as the Minister may direct.

SCHEDULE

(Made under section 3(2))

CONSTITUTION AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Constitution
of Committee

1.—(1) The Committee shall consist of-

- (a) a Chairman who shall be appointed by the Minister;
- (b) such other members not exceeding seventeen as may, by notice published in the *Gazette*, be appointed by the Minister-
 - (i) one member representing the Ministry responsible for education;
 - (ii) one member representing the Ministry responsible for planning;
 - (iii) one member representing the National Swahili Council established under the National Swahili Council Act;
 - (iv) one member representing the Ministry responsible for minerals;
 - (v) one member representing the Prime Minister's Office;
 - (vi) one member representing the Ministry responsible for foreign affairs;
 - (vii) five members from the University of Dar es Salaam representing the disciplines of geography, research in land use, history and language respectively;
 - (viii) five other members appointed by the Minister representing such institutions in Zanzibar as the Minister may determine;
 - (ix) one member representing a professional association of surveyors;
 - (x) one member representing the Ministry responsible for land surveys and mapping.

Cap. 52

(2) A member of the Committee shall, unless his appointment is sooner terminated by the Minister or he otherwise ceases to be a member, hold office for such period as the Minister may specify in his appointment or,

if no such period is specified, for a period of three years from the date of his appointment and he shall be eligible for re-appointment.

(3) A member of the Committee may at any time resign by giving notice in writing to the Minister and from the date of the receipt by the Minister of the notice he shall cease to be a member of the Committee.

(4) If any member of the Committee is without permission absent from more than four consecutive meetings of the Committee or without such permission is absent from the United Republic for a period exceeding two years, he shall cease to be a member of the Committee.

Casual vacancies **2.** Where a member of the Committee ceases to be a member before the expiration of his term of office, the Minister, after consulting the Committee, may appoint another person in his stead to hold office until such time as the first-named person's term of office would have expired had he not ceased to be a member as aforesaid.

Vice-Chairman **3.** The Committee shall elect amongst its members a Vice-Chairman who shall hold office for one year but shall be eligible for re-election.

Quorum and procedure **4.**—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Committee shall meet at such times and places as may be necessary expedient for the transaction of business.

(2) At any meeting of the Committee nine members shall constitute a quorum.

(3) The Chairman shall preside at any meeting of the Committee, or in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall preside and if both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from any meeting, the members present at the meeting shall elect one of their number to preside at that meeting.

(4) In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to his deliberative vote.

(5) Minutes in proper form of each meeting of the Committee shall be kept and shall be confirmed by the Committee at the next meeting and signed by the Chairman of that meeting.

Vacancies not to invalidate proceedings **5.** Subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 relating to quorum, the Committee may act notwithstanding any vacancy in the membership and no act or proceeding of the Committee shall be invalid by reason only of some defect in the appointment of any member or of the attendance by a person who purports to be a member thereof.

©2025 Government of Tanzania. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or distributed without permission of OAG.