On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the author presents the historical background of the ongoing international cooperation on the unification of toponyms on a global scale. The 1967 conference in Geneva was extremely important in defining the objectives and tasks of the cooperation, setting out the main areas of action (national standardization, geographical terms, spelling systems, international exchange of information) and, through the resolutions adopted at the time, formulating detailed guidelines for standardization procedures. In the past half-century, the global organising of geographic nomenclature – although still incomplete – has gained a universally accepted institutional framework and has produced the expected results. The UNGEGN (United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names) plays a major role in organising the cyclical conferences, sessions, regional division and working group meetings, and toponymy courses, as well as inspiring the creation of unified databases and publications.

The article outlines the Polish contribution to the national and international standardization of geographical names.

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