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

GEGN /27/9

**Twenty-seventh session
30 July and 10 August 2012, New York**

English

**Resolutions from the Ninth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names, 2007, New York***

* Submitted by UNGEGN Chairman, UNGEGN Secretariat.

Chapter III

Resolutions adopted by the Conference

IX/1. Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Noting the achievements and the progress made in the work of geographical names standardization at the national and international levels,

Noting also the essential role played by the present Conference and by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names at its twenty-fourth session,

Recognizing the necessity of continuing this important work with the support of the Economic and Social Council,

1. *Recommends* to the Economic and Social Council that the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names be convened in 2012;

2. *Also recommends* to the Council that the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be convened in the first half of 2009.

IX/2. Organization of the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the African continent

The Conference,

Noting that thus far all sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names have been held in Europe or Northern America,

Noting also the little progress made for the most part by African countries in the field of geographical names standardization,

Recognizing that the majority of African countries experience difficulties in participating at sessions of the Group of Experts in Europe and Northern America,

Affirming the important role of geographical names in economic, social and cultural development, particularly in the developing countries,

Recalling the resolution adopted by the Committee on Development Information in Africa at its fifth session, held in Addis Ababa from 29 April to 4 May 2007, concerning the organization of a session of the Group of Experts in Africa,

Recommends that the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be held on the African continent, in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa, at a United Nations duty station, provided that the necessary support facilities (including interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations) are made available.

IX/3. Creation of a Portuguese-speaking Division

The Conference,

Considering that Portuguese-speaking countries face a common set of issues from both a toponymic and a cultural point of view and that, for those countries, the opportunity to be in a common division would be likely to facilitate their participation in the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names,

Noting that, at its twenty-fourth session, the Group of Experts agreed to the establishment of a Portuguese-speaking Division,

Recommends that the Portuguese-speaking Division be granted full recognition as a linguistic/geographical division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

IX/4. Geographical names as intangible cultural heritage

The Conference,

Recalling its resolutions II/27, II/36, V/22, VII/5, VIII/1 and VIII/9,

Considering the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 17 October 2003,

Recognizing that toponyms are indeed part of the intangible cultural heritage,

Noting that the use of certain toponyms which provide a sense of identity and of continuity is under a variety of threats,

1. Encourages the official bodies responsible for toponymy to:

(a) Identify toponyms that meet the criteria for application of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;

(b) Submit them to the Committee set up by the Convention, for approval;

(c) Prepare a programme to safeguard and develop that heritage in accordance with article 2, paragraph 3, and article 18 of the Convention;

(d) Start implementing it.

2. *Calls upon* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to give sympathetic consideration to requests for support that the High Contracting Parties submit to it for such activities.

IX/5. Promotion of the recording and use of indigenous, minority and regional language group geographical names

The Conference,

Recognizing that the task set by resolution VIII/1 adopted by the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names has been completed with the publication of version 1 of a summary report of activities undertaken in various countries relating to the promotion of the recording and use of indigenous and minority group geographical names,

Noting that the promotion of the recording and use of such names is a valuable aid to the recognition, retention and revitalization of indigenous, minority and regional language group heritage,

Recommends:

(a) That version 1 of the report as published in 2007 continues to be maintained and updated;

(b) That a set of guidelines be compiled for field collection of indigenous, minority and regional language group geographical names;

(c) That, utilizing the various experiences from different countries, a range of models (particularly with regard to legislation, policies and research procedures) for the promotion of the recording and use of indigenous, minority and regional language group geographical names be gathered;

(d) That a dialogue between the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and other national and international groups and academic bodies involved with indigenous, minority and regional language group geographical names be initiated, to further the work on geographical names standardization.

IX/6. Geographical names database of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Conference,

Recalling that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names at its twenty-second session, held in New York from 20 to 29 April 2004, recommended the development of an authoritative database on country and major city names,

Considering the ongoing efforts carried out by the secretariat of the Group of Experts, within the United Nations Statistics Division, towards the building of a database that includes country names and major city names of the world in a multilingual, multi-scriptural and geo-referenced format,

Recognizing that the availability of fundamental framework data sets on national administrative divisions, as provided by the Second Administrative Level Boundaries (SALB) data set project under the umbrella of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG), is crucial for the analysis and management of socio-economic phenomena,

Recommends that the United Nations Statistics Division, with the support of the United Nations Cartographic Section for base maps and the Second Administrative Level Boundaries project for administrative divisions data sets, work in collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and member States to further develop, populate and maintain the geographical names database of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, initially containing names of countries, capitals and major cities.

IX/7. Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names

The Conference,

Recalling recommendation B of resolution I/4, adopted by the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which contained guidelines for research on the written and spoken forms of geographical names and of their meaning,

Recalling also resolution VII/9, adopted by the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which recognized the potential of the Internet to promote and realize the goals and resolutions of the Conferences, and recommended that countries create websites promoting their standardized names,

Noting that resolution VIII/9, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, called for a greater understanding of the significance of geographical names with respect to local, regional and national heritage and identity,

Recognizing that the meaning of a geographical name constitutes a valued aspect of heritage information that is likely to enrich feelings of identity and at the same time promote awareness of the universality of human naming activities,

Recommends that, wherever possible, printed or web-based national gazetteers and databases should include information on the origin and meaning of geographical names, based on popular and/or scientific sources, along with the associated technical information.

IX/8. Implementation of romanization systems by sponsoring countries

The Conference,

Recalling that resolution IV/15, adopted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, called for the consideration of romanization systems only on condition that the sponsoring nation or nations implement such systems on their own national cartographic products,

Reaffirming the general principle set out in the same resolution that systems adopted for international use should not be revised,

Recognizing, however that, subsequent to the international adoption of a romanization system, the sponsoring nation or nations may, for reasons unforeseen

at the time of adoption, experience difficulty in achieving national implementation of that system,

Recommends that the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names be able to reconsider the relevance of any internationally adopted romanization system that has not been officially implemented by the sponsoring nation or nations within ten years following the adoption of the relevant resolution, or that is no longer implemented by that nation or those nations after that same period of time.

IX/9. Romanization of Hebrew

The Conference,

Considering that the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 1977, recommended the use of the romanization system for Hebrew geographical names in its resolution III/13,

Aware that over the past fifty years there have been some changes in the pronunciation of Hebrew in Israel, resulting partly from changes in the composition of the Israeli population,

Considering that the official national authority on, inter alia, transliteration rules concerning Hebrew, namely, the Academy of the Hebrew Language, has lately decided to introduce certain changes in the romanization of Hebrew geographical names in maps and road signs which have been ratified by the Government of Israel, and which have already begun to be implemented in Israel,

Recommends the introduction of certain limited amendments to the previously approved romanization system for Hebrew, as specified below:

- (a) The letter ם as a consonant¹ is romanized as V, v, instead of W, w;
- (b) The consonant letter צ is romanized as Ts, ts, instead of Z, z;
- (c) The consonant letter ק is romanized as K, k and not as Q, q;
- (d) The letters ך and ם, both represented by ' , are represented only (and always) in the middle of a word, whereas in the past ם was represented also at the beginning and end of a word;
- (e) The shva-na (previously romanized as sheva-na') is represented by e only where it is actually sounded. Example: בְּרַק-יְבִיגָה > Bne-Brak (previously Bene-Beraq); but גְּאוּלִּים > Ge'ulim.

IX/10. Support for training and publications

The Conference,

Recalling resolution VIII/15, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names on this subject,

¹ As a pointed vowel it remains unchanged as ם (O, o) or ם (U, u).

Acknowledging the support provided by the United Nations Statistics Division for training courses on geographical names standardization,

Emphasizing the importance of such training, particularly for participants from developing countries, as an essential element of national spatial data infrastructure and as a means of safeguarding cultural heritage,

Recognizing the importance of both electronic and print versions of documents available in all official languages of the United Nations,

Recommends that the United Nations Statistics Division should:

(a) Continue to provide funding for participation in toponymic training courses;

(b) Further develop the website of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names into an effective reference and communication tool, including the uploading of previous conference documentation in all official languages of the United Nations;

(c) Include in its publication programme:

(i) Addendum pages containing additions made since 2002 to the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names* of the Group of Experts;

(ii) A press kit to assist countries in promoting the standardization of their geographical names and the work of the Group of Experts.

IX/11. Vote of thanks

The Conference,

1. *Extends its heartfelt thanks* to the United Nations for the excellent arrangements and services provided for the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names;

2. *Expresses its particular gratitude* to the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat for its excellent organization of Conference-related matters and of the associated technical exhibition;

3. *Expresses its gratitude* to the President of the Conference and the Chairs of the Technical Committees for the effective way in which they conducted the meetings;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to the officers of the Conference and Technical Committees, and to the officers and staff of the United Nations Statistics Division for their hard work and dedication, which greatly facilitated the business of the Conference.