



United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

- why, what, how and relevance to GGIM

Helen Kerfoot

UNGEGN Chair

(Natural Resources Canada)



2011



Geographical names in every day life



- ❖ We name our surroundings for many reasons
 - e.g. reference, sense of belonging
- ❖ Geographical names/place names/toponyms
 - buildings, farms, streets
 - land, hydrographic, constructed features
 - offshore – maritime and seafloor features
 - (beyond Earth)
- ❖ Benefits if names written in agreed way
 - as ‘standardized’ by an authority
 - benefits: technical, economic, social, cultural



Kyev Kiev Kyiv Kyjev

Sidney Sydney

New Zealand Aotearoa

Mumbai Bombay



Montréal Montreal

Αθήνα Athens
Athenai Athina

Cape Town Le Cap

Kaapstad Kapstadt

Uluru / Ayers Rock

Ekapa Kapkaupunki
eKapa





Lack of standardized data ...

- ❖ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
 - Earthquake in Pakistan, 2005
 - problem of delays in providing assistance to remote villages
 - difficult to obtain - standardized names, coordinates of villages, gazetteers, population statistics, maps





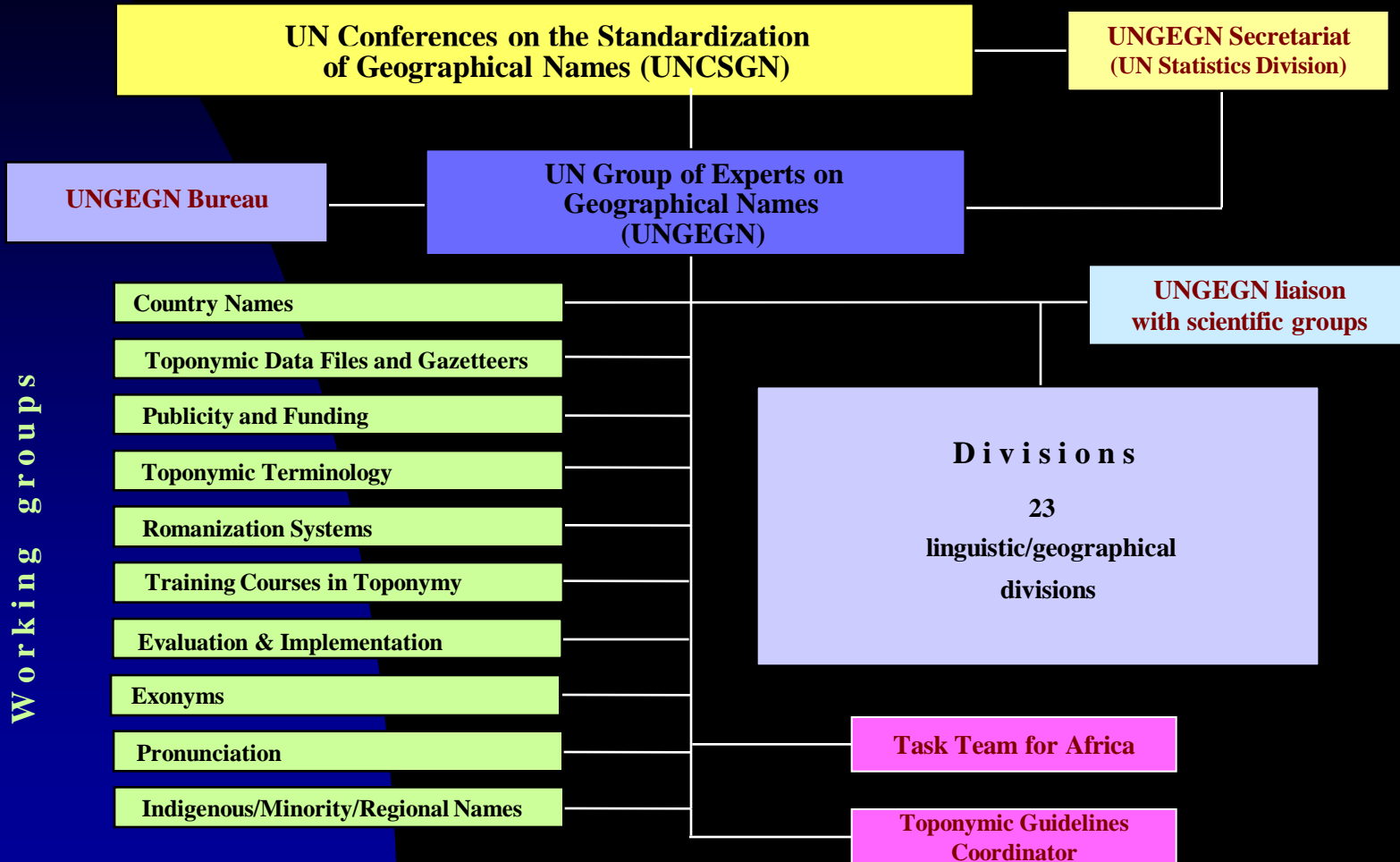
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

- ❖ **1955** ... Resolution of First Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific
- ❖ **1959** ... ECOSOC Resolution 715 (XXVII)
- ❖ **1960** ... First UN Experts Group meeting, New York
- ❖ **1967** ... First UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Geneva





UNGEGN structure





UNGEGN aims

- ❖ See national names authorities created
 - backed by legislation
 - respect local usage of names
 - collect, store and disseminate authorized names
 - for government and public use
- ❖ Develop single scientifically-based systems of romanization
- ❖ Today - encourage multi-national datasets



Nairobi

What is important

?



Urban growth – greater name demands

China (Dai, 2006)



20,000 new urban names each year

Ongoing training needed to administer

The World (You, 2009)

❖ Urban dwellers (UN data)

- 37% 1970
- 50% 2008
- over 80% 2030



Geographical names pivotal role



Reference points

Geographical names

Cultural links

Database queries

Key media points





UNEGN

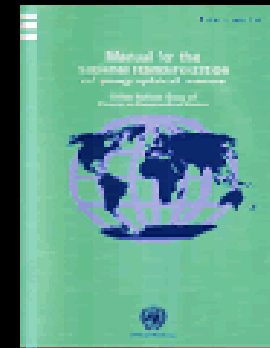
UNEGN website

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/>



UNEGN World Geographical Names Database

A multilingual, multiscriptural and geo-referenced database of names for countries, capitals and major cities.

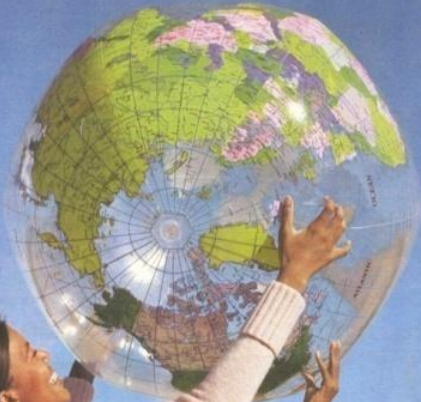




UNGEEN

United Nations Group of
Experts on Geographical Names

Olhe para o mundo
com outros olhos



unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEEN

UNGEEN, 27th Session and
10th UN Conference on the Standardization
of Geographical Names

New York, 30 July-10 August, 2012

geoinfo_unsd@un.org

Contact: Sabine Warschburger

Helen Kerfoot

hkerfoot@nrcan.gc.ca

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