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**IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS AND THE AIMS AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS**

**Preparation of New UNGEGN Manuals on the Standardization
of Geographical Names**

(Resolution VIII/15)

Submitted by Helen Kerfoot, (Canada) and Chair, UNGEGN

Preparation of New UNGEGN Manuals on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Resolution VIII/15)

Abstract

Resolution 15 of the Eighth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names recommended that in the biennium 2004-2005, the Statistics Division of the United Nations publish two manuals for UNGEGN. One is a “basic” manual for organizing a national geographical names standardization programme, the other a “reference” manual on Romanization, toponymic standards and formats. These texts have been submitted to the UNGEGN Secretariat, and an outline of their content is provided here.

Introduction

At the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, resolution 15 recommended that two manuals on the standardization of geographical names be included in the Statistics Division publication programme for the biennium 2004-2005.

- One was to address “basic” questions of standardization, such as the establishment of names authorities, the collection of locally used names, and record keeping.
- The other was a reference manual, to incorporate materials developed on aspects of romanization, standards and exchange formats relevant to toponymic data.

Since that Conference in 2002, considerable effort has been put into preparation of suitable texts to be passed to the UNGEGN Secretariat in New York, for the production of these two publications in the six UN languages. The task of overseeing the preparation of the two manuals fell to the UNGEGN Working Group on Publicity and Funding, convened by David Munro.

Acknowledgements

I should like to express special thanks to a number of individuals who created and provided texts and/or contributed their time and expertise in reviewing textual material: Donald Orth, Botolv Helleland, Ferjan Ormeling, Naftali Kadmon, Peeter Päll, Randall Flynn, Caroline Burgess, Sylvie Lejeune, Leo Dillon, Paul Woodman, Roger Payne, Nikko Bakker, David Munro, and Eeva Maria Närhi. In addition, there are countless

other UNGEGN experts who have contributed to individual chapters or earlier working group reports that have been incorporated into this collection of material.

Part I. Manual for the national standardization of geographical names

The cornerstone of UNGEGN work is to facilitate the establishment of national geographical names authorities and so promote the use of nationally standardized names internationally on maps and in documents. In 1990, on behalf of UNGEGN, Donald Orth of the United States contributed a thirty page document “Organization and functions of a national geographical names standardization programme: a manual” for volume XXI of the UN’s publication *World Cartography*. This document has proved a very useful reference tool over the years, and as the core (Part I) of this new manual, Orth has contributed a completely revised and updated version of this important material. Ten chapters cover information about requirements for a national names programme, types of authorities, and procedures for field collection, office treatment, and dissemination.

Part II of this manual, contains ten chapters of selected readings in areas of geographical names standardization, to provide a wider or deeper view of some technical and cultural issues introduced in Part I. Contributions to this part of the manual have been made by a number of UNGEGN experts; others have also participated in the review of this material.

Details of the chapter headings and sub-headings, as submitted to the United Nations for editing, are provided in Annex A.

Part II. Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names

Over many years, various working groups of UNGEGN have contributed their efforts to establishing common standards and approaches to assist the work of names authorities across the world. Some of the material has been gathered into publications, for instance, in 2002, the cumulative work of the Working Group on Terminology led to the UN publication *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names*. Similarly, the working groups on Romanization, Country Names, and Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers (with its special companion group on Toponymic Data Exchange Formats and Standards) have accumulated considerable reference material that should be made generally available, particularly in these times of enormous advances in digital technology. For easy reference purposes, this manual provides information from these working groups.

The Working Group on Romanization has the important task of recommending to UNGEGN and to the UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, single systems of Romanization, based on scientific principles, for each of the languages using non-Roman scripts. In Part I, Romanization systems are presented for 28 languages/scripts recommended by the United Nations and for 17 under discussion.

Part II provides material relevant to toponymic data transfer standards and formats. In particular, the user of the manual can access a master list of Roman characters required in different writing systems, together with a world survey of character encoding requirements for different languages and writing systems (ISO/Unicode). In addition, a draft proposal is included for a toponymic data exchange format.

For the Eighth UN Conference in 2002, the Working Group on Country Names produced a comprehensive document on country names in the official language(s) of the country concerned, as well as in English, French, and Spanish (E.CONF.94/CRP.11). For this manual, the list has been abridged to provide an updated version of the country names in the official language(s) and writing systems of the country.

Details of the chapter headings and sub-headings, as submitted to the United Nations for editing, are provided in Annex B.

The future

- It is certainly hoped that these manuals will be published as soon as possible, so that the information can be generally available as printed copy.
- When the publication is completed, it is hoped that the .pdf files can be made available on the UNGEGN website.
- Certainly, the UNGEGN working groups should continue their efforts to keep this information up to date and report regularly on the results to the UNGEGN sessions.
- It would be advantageous for those endeavouring to set up standardization programmes, if the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy could look at the possibility of adapting this material – in particular the “basic” manual – for use in interactive web pages. This could provide a useful tool for individual progressive learning for those embarking on programmes involving the national authorization and administration of geographical names in any part of the world.

Annex A

Manual on the national standardization of geographical names

Contents

Foreword.....

Introduction

- This manual
- Advantages of standardization
- Training courses
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Part I The basics of a national programme for geographical names
 standardization

Donald J. Orth (United States)

Acknowledgements

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 *Helen Kerfoot (Canada)*

Chapter 2: Language and the Conversion of Geographical Names
 *Naftali Kadmon (Israel)*

Chapter 3: Some examples of legislation concerning geographical names authorities *Helen Kerfoot (Canada)*

Chapter 4: Office Processing – Storing the Data and Maintaining the Records: Some Basic Thoughts on Data Fields
..... *Helen Kerfoot (Canada)*

Chapter 5: Social and Cultural Values of Geographical Names
.....*Botolv Helleland (Norway)*

Chapter 6: Exonyms, also called Conventional Names
..... *Naftali Kadmon (Israel)*

Chapter 7: From fieldwork to authorized names: the “Owner Decides” Principle followed in the Netherlands
.....*Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands)*

Chapter 8: Example from the Netherlands of written instructions to surveyors for collecting toponyms in the field
..... *Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands)*
..... *Nico Bakker (Netherlands)*

Chapter 9: Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors, for International Use (1970s to 2000s)..*Helen Kerfoot (Canada)*
.....*Eeva Maria Närhi (Finland)*

Chapter 10: Some Selected Websites relevant to Geographical Names Standardization..... *compiled by Helen Kerfoot (Canada)*

Annexes

Annex A: Texts of Selected Resolutions from United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names

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Annex B

**Technical reference manual on the
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Mongolian (in China), Nepali, Oriya, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Serbian,
Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tibetan, Uighur, Urdu*
- Other languages/scripts.....
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