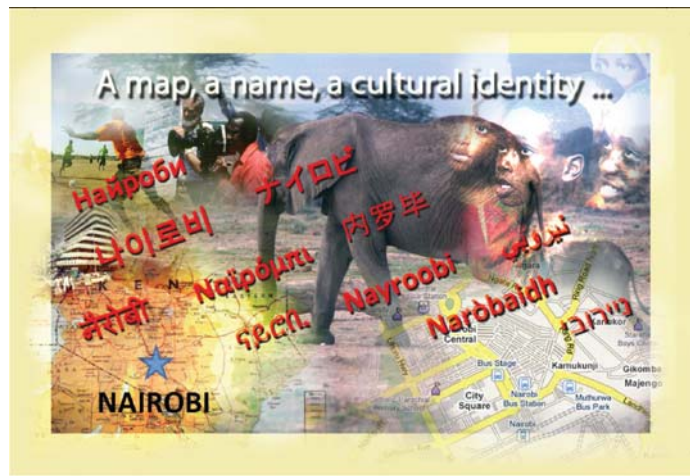


# THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES (UNGEGN) - PROMOTING THE CONSISTENT USE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

## UNGEGN MEDIA KIT

Wherever we go in the world and whatever we do – walking around town, looking up a telephone number, surfing the internet, reading a recipe book or shopping for new clothes – we encounter place names. They surround us all day long, providing us not only with a sense of place but also with a means of finding our way about, searching for information and organizing and managing the world we live in. For all of us a place name is a reference point of our language and our identity.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, names of places and features have become vital keys to accessing our digital world. They are an indispensable locational component of any spatially organized information system and help enable the integration of digital data sets which become essential and powerful decision-making tools for policy makers and managers in every sector of business and government. Geographical names are, therefore, more than just place names on a map, they are a fundamental means of communication aiding cooperation among local, national and international organizations.



Because the world is constantly changing and language is, by its very nature, flexible, the name of a geographical feature can have different forms. This is a problem for the cartographer or data base manager who requires clear, unmistakable geographical references. The avoidance of ambiguity and confusion in written form is facilitated by the standardization of geographical names at a national level or by international convention that includes the correspondence between different languages and writing systems.

Since it was established in 1946, the United Nations has addressed the need for geographical names standardization, recognizing it as a key element of the communication needed to enable it to become the world's most effective voice for international cooperation on behalf of peace, development, human rights and the environment. A series of meetings, debates and recommendations on this subject led to the formation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and, since 1967, the holding of the quinquennial United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Through its specialist Working Groups, Divisions and Task Teams, UNGEGN facilitates the development and dissemination of principles, policies and methods suitable for resolving the problems of consistency in the use of geographical names. By helping to establish standardization guidelines and by encouraging individual countries to provide officially approved names, the United Nations aims to enhance the creation of usable and consistent written forms of geographical names throughout the world.

Noting the need to increase the interest of the wider international community in the standardization of geographical names and the work of UNGEGN, the 6<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names passed a resolution (VI/5) establishing a Working Group on Publicity and Funding.

This Media Kit has been prepared by the Working Group to help UNGEGN experts promote the work that they do and raise awareness of issues relating to place names.

Within this Media Kit you will find pages addressing core topics including:

- Geographical names – part of our social and cultural values
- Geographical names in a changing world
- Geographical names – from cards to online databases: facing today’s digital challenges
- What is the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and what does it do?
- How does UNGEGN work?
- Resolutions of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names
- Why do we need geographical name standardization?
- Where to find out more about geographical names
- Other organizations involved in the standardization of geographical names
- Frequently asked questions
- What’s in a name? “Quotable Quotes”